

OVERALL TEST TACTICS:

1. Learn the section directions now. Use the time saved during the test to work on questions.
2. Answer easy questions first. Mark skipped questions in your exam book so you can quickly return to them later.
3. Guess...if you can eliminate at least one choice.
4. You can write in the test book: cross out wrong answers; do scratch work.
5. Take care when filling in the answer grid for the student-produced response questions.
6. Avoid stray marks on the answer sheet. A machine scores your test and can't distinguish between a correct answer and a careless doodle.
7. Easy questions usually precede hard ones.
8. Mark only one answer per question.
9. Skip any question if you haven't the faintest idea about the answer. You don't lose points.
10. Understand the scoring! You get a point for a right answer. You lose a fractional point for a wrong answer. There is no deduction for omitted answers, or for wrong answers in the math section's student-produced response questions.
11. Keep checking that you are placing your answer in the correct section and number on the answer sheet.
12. Don't spend too much time on any one question. You should spend only seconds on the easiest questions, and hesitate to spend more than 1-2 minutes on even the hardest ones.
13. Practice, practice, practice!
14. Remember that the SAT consists of a series of small, timed, mini-tests. Keep track of the time you're allotted for each one and how much time remains.
15. Bring a watch to the test center. You can't be guaranteed that there'll be a working clock there.
16. Don't change an answer unless you're sure you made an error.
17. Read the words in the question carefully. Be sure to answer the question asked and not the question you recall from a practice test.
18. Know the Question Types to Expect on the SAT I: * 19 analogies * 19 sentence completion * 40 reading comprehension * 35 math multiple-choices * 15 quantitative comparisons * 10 student-produced responses

SPECIFIC SECTIONAL STRATEGIES

VERBAL Section --- SENTENCE COMPLETION:

1. Before looking at the answers, try to complete the sentence with words that make sense to you.
2. Don't rush your selection. Consider all the answers to make the best choice.
3. Use the context of nearby words to figure out unknown words.
4. Don't overlook the reversing effect of negative words (like not) or prefixes (like un-).
5. If you're really stuck for the meaning of a word, try to think of other words that have similar prefixes, roots, or suffixes.
6. Eliminate choices in double-blank questions if the first word alone doesn't make sense in the sentence.
7. Let transition words (like although and likewise) help suggest the best answer.

VERBAL Section --- ANALOGIES:

1. First: create a sentence in your mind that uses the two capitalized words.
2. Learn to recognize common types of analogies.
3. Eliminate answer pairs that are clearly wrong.
4. Beware of possibly correct answers that appear in reverse order.
5. If more than one choice appears possible, analyze the words again.
6. Consider alternative meanings of words, as well as alternative parts of speech.
7. If you don't know the meaning a word, try to recall if you've ever heard it in an expression. The context of the expression may suggest the meaning of the word.
8. Beware of obvious answers! They may be there only to mislead you.

VERBAL Section --- READING COMPREHENSION:

1. You should base your answers to the questions solely on what is stated or implied in the passages.
 2. Read the italicized introductory text.
 3. Skip questions you don't know. Return to them after answering other easier questions.
 4. First and last sentences of each paragraph are critical.
 5. Find the right spot in a passage by using any line reference numbers that appear in the questions.
 6. Answer questions on familiar topics before unfamiliar topics.
 7. Read the passages before reading the questions.
 8. Don't waste time memorizing details.
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MATH Section --- STUDENT PRODUCED RESPONSE (GRID):

1. Guess if you can't figure it out. There is no penalty for wrong answers in this section.
2. Negative numbers are not possible as answers in this section. If your answer comes up negative, do it again.
3. You may begin to enter a short answer in any column. For instance, .6 can be entered in columns 1-2, or 2-3, or 3-4.
4. If an answer is a repeating decimal (like .33333333), just enter as many decimals as will fit in the grid (.333).
5. You may enter an equivalent decimal for a fraction as your answer, but why waste the time evaluating the fraction?
6. Do not try to enter mixed numbers. For example, if your answer is $3 \frac{1}{2}$, enter it as 3.5 or $\frac{7}{2}$.

MATH Section - STANDARD MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. Read the question well. Be sure to select the best answer for the variable, value, or expression that is requested!
2. Learn in advance all of the critical definitions, formulas, and concepts that appear in common questions.
3. Remember to use the test booklet for scratch work, as well as for marking up any diagrams/graphs.
4. Early questions in this section are easier. Spend less time on them.
5. Don't get carried away with detailed calculations. Look for a trick or a shortcut if the question seems time consuming.
6. When a question contains a weird symbol, just substitute the accompanying definition when figuring out the best answer choice.

MATH Section - QUANTITATIVE COMPARISONS:

1. Don't ever guess at Choice E. There are only four choices!
2. Always consider values that are fractional (between 0 and 1), zero, negative, or non-integer.
3. Factor out, then cancel, any common expressions or quantities in both Columns A and B. Remember that you are just trying to make relative comparisons.
4. Questions are simpler and should take less time than the Standard Multiple Choice. Look closely. The answer is often apparent without any calculations.
5. Write on any diagrams to help clarify any values, angles, sides, etc.
6. Compare; don't solve!
7. Simplify one or both sides whenever possible before comparing.