

SAT Test-Taking Tips

Master Time Management & Proven Strategies

■ TIME MANAGEMENT MASTERY

Digital SAT Test Structure:

Section	Time	Questions	Per Question
Reading & Writing - Module 1	32 min	27 questions	71 sec
Reading & Writing - Module 2	32 min	27 questions	71 sec
10-Minute Break	—	—	—
Math - Module 1	35 min	22 questions	95 sec
Math - Module 2	35 min	22 questions	95 sec
Total	2h 14min	98 questions	—

Pacing Strategy:

- ✓ **Use the built-in timer** - Stay aware of time remaining
- ✓ **Quick first pass** - Answer easy questions first (30-40 sec each)
- ✓ **Mark and move** - Flag difficult questions, return later
- ✓ **Second pass** - Tackle flagged questions with remaining time
- ✓ **Final 2 minutes** - Ensure all questions answered (no blanks!)

■ STRATEGIC GUESSING

NO PENALTY for wrong answers - NEVER leave blanks!

Process of Elimination (POE):

- 1. Cross out obviously wrong answers**
 - Too extreme, contradicts passage, doesn't answer question
- 2. Compare remaining choices**
 - Look for subtle differences
 - Find evidence for each in the passage/problem
- 3. Make an educated guess**
 - Even 50/50 is better than random
 - Trust your first instinct if truly stuck

When to Guess Quickly:

- You've spent 2+ minutes on one question
- Less than 5 minutes remain in section
- Question is clearly above your current skill level
- You can eliminate 2+ answers - guess from remaining

■ MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

1. Use the Calculator Wisely

- **Built-in Desmos calculator** is available for ENTIRE math section
- Graph equations to find intersections, zeros, maximums
- Use table feature to test values quickly
- Don't over-rely - some problems are faster by hand

2. Plug In Numbers (Pick Numbers)

When answers have variables:

- Choose simple numbers (2, 3, 10, 100)
- Avoid 0, 1, or numbers in the problem
- Calculate what the answer should be
- Plug your number into each answer choice
- Choose the one that matches your result

3. Backsolve (Plug In Answers)

When the question asks for a specific number:

- Start with choice C (middle value)
- Plug it back into the problem
- If too high, try smaller; if too low, try larger

4. Draw It Out

- Sketch diagrams for geometry problems
- Label all given information
- Visualize word problems with quick drawings
- Mark angles, sides, and key measurements

■ READING & WRITING STRATEGIES

1. Read Question First

- Know what you're looking for before reading passage
- Helps you focus on relevant information
- Especially useful for shorter passages

2. Annotation Strategy

Digital SAT allows highlighting and notes:

- Highlight key phrases, topic sentences
- Mark transitions (however, therefore, but)
- Note author's tone and purpose

3. Grammar Questions - Trust Your Ear

- Read sentence aloud in your head
- If it sounds wrong, it probably is
- But verify with grammar rules you know
- When in doubt, choose the shortest, clearest answer

■ TEST DAY SUCCESS

Week Before Test:

- ✓ Take one full-length practice test early in week
- ✓ Review mistakes thoroughly - don't just check answers
- ✓ Light review of formulas and strategies mid-week
- ✓ No heavy studying 2 days before - rest your brain
- ✓ Organize materials: ID, calculator (if allowed), pencils

Night Before:

- ✓ Quick review of formulas (20-30 minutes max)
- ✓ Prepare clothes, bag, snacks for morning
- ✓ Set multiple alarms
- ✓ Get 7-8 hours of sleep
- ✗ Don't cram - won't help, will hurt performance

Test Day Morning:

- ✓ Eat a good breakfast with protein
- ✓ Arrive 15-20 minutes early
- ✓ Bring water and a snack for break
- ✓ Bring valid photo ID
- ✓ For digital SAT: Ensure device is charged

During the Test:

- ✓ Use the bathroom before each section
- ✓ Do light stretches during break
- ✓ Stay hydrated - sip water during break

- ✓ If you feel anxious, take 3 deep breaths
- ✓ Don't think about previous sections - focus forward

■ MENTAL STRATEGIES

Dealing with Difficult Questions:

1. **Don't panic** - Everyone struggles with some questions
2. **Skip and return** - Flag it, move on, keep momentum
3. **Fresh eyes help** - Question may seem easier on second look
4. **Make your best guess** - Never leave blank

Managing Test Anxiety:

- **Before:** Practice under timed conditions to build comfort
- **During:** 4-7-8 breathing (inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8)
- **Remember:** You can always retake the SAT
- **Focus:** One question at a time, one section at a time

■ COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

Mistake	Solution
Spending too long on one question	Set 2-minute limit per question
Not reading full question	Read carefully, note what's being asked
Rushing through easy questions	Easy doesn't mean careless - double check
Leaving questions blank	ALWAYS guess - no penalty
Not using calculator when helpful	Graph, table features save time
Forgetting to flag questions	Mark for review, return with time left
Second-guessing correct answers	Trust first instinct unless clear error

■ FINAL WORDS

You've prepared for this. Trust your preparation.
Stay calm, stay focused, and do your best.
Every question is an opportunity to showcase what you've learned.

You've got this! Good luck! ■