

# 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!** ■