

Intro to the SAT

What the SAT Measures Using This Guide

Using This Guide

We've created this guide to help you:

- Become familiar with the test so that you're not surprised or confused on test day.
- Learn the test directions. The directions for answering the questions in this booklet are the same as those on the actual test.
- Review the sample questions. The more familiar you are with the question formats, the more comfortable you'll feel when you see similar questions on the actual test. In particular, be sure to practice writing answers to the student-produced response questions on the Math Test (see page 27). Find additional sample questions at sat.org.
- Understand how the tests are scored. You get one point for each correct answer. Hard questions count the same as easier questions. You won't lose any points for guessing, so try to answer every question.

What the SAT Measures

The SAT[®] is focused on the skills and knowledge at the heart of education. It measures:

- What you learn in high school.
- What you need to succeed in college and career training.

The same habits and choices that lead to success in school will help you get ready for the SAT. The best way to prepare for the test is to:

- Take challenging courses.
- Do your homework.
- Prepare for tests and quizzes.
- Ask and answer lots of questions.

Organization of the SAT

The SAT has four tests, with the SAT Essay being optional. The three tests that everyone will take are the Reading Test, the Writing and Language Test, and the Math Test. The tests break down as shown in the table in the next column.

As part of scoring, every test goes through an equating process. Equating is a statistical process we use to ensure that scores mean the same thing no matter which version of the test you take or when you take it. In order to assist with future testing, the College Board may conduct research studies in connection with the testing of a subset of students.

Test	Time Allotted (minutes)	Number of Questions/Tasks
Reading	65	52
Writing and Language	35	44
Math	80	58
Essay (optional)	50	1
Total	180 (230 with Essay)	154 (155 with Essay)

We occasionally pretest new test questions to determine whether they should be included in a future SAT test form. These questions may appear in any of the test sections, and testing time will be extended by 20 minutes so students have time to answer them. These questions will not be included in computing your scores. Students must complete all sections of the test. If you leave before dismissal, your scores will be canceled.

Practice for the SAT

The College Board has partnered with **Khan Academy**[®] to give you free, personalized practice you can access anytime, anywhere.

Don't miss out on these practice tools:

- Personalized recommendations for practice on the skills you need to attend to most
- Thousands of questions, reviewed and approved by the people who develop the SAT
- Video lessons that explain problems step-by-step
- Full-length practice tests
- Practice tests in assistive technology compatible (ATC) and MP3 audio formats for students who need them

Make practice part of your routine—anyplace, anytime. Answer a question a day on the **Daily Practice for the New SAT** app and get immediate feedback. The free app makes it easy to:

- Answer an exclusive, official Reading, Writing and Language, or Math question.
- Reveal a hint if you're stuck.
- Read answer explanations and learn from your mistakes.
- Keep at it—daily practice can only sharpen your skills.

We offer other free and affordable resources to help you do your best. Visit sat.org/practice.

On Test Day

Items to Bring for Testing

What to Bring:

- Printed admission ticket, which is required for entry to the test center
- Acceptable photo ID (see sat.org/photo for more information)
- Two No. 2 pencils with soft erasers
- An acceptable calculator for math sections/tests that permit them (see "Calculator Use" later in this guide)

Nice to Have:

- A watch (without an audible alarm or communication/recording capabilities; smartwatches will be collected before testing)
- A bag or backpack (which must be stored under the desk during testing)
- Snacks and drinks (which must be packed away during testing)
- Extra batteries and backup equipment

What Not to Bring

The following devices and aids are prohibited, except in the case of approved accommodations:

- Cell phones or smartphones (phones and wearable technology will be collected before the test and returned before dismissal)
- Audio players or recorders
- Tablets, laptops, notebooks, or any other personal computing devices, including wearable technology
- Separate timers of any type
- Cameras or any other photographic equipment
- Smartwatches and any other devices that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content
- Protractors, compasses, rulers
- Highlighters, colored pens, colored pencils
- Pamphlets or papers of any kind
- Dictionaries or other books

Phones and Electronic Devices Policy

Devices that can be used to communicate test content or share answers are not allowed in the test center. You may not bring electronics of any kind with you on test day (an exception may apply for medically required devices).

If, however, you forget to leave a device at home, you'll be instructed to turn off all electronic devices and give

cell phones and wearable technology to the staff in your testing room before the test begins. Be sure to turn off your watch alarm, if you have one. Test centers are serious about security and ensuring a quiet testing environment, so prohibited devices must not make any sounds during testing.

If your device makes noise or you are seen with it at any time, including during breaks, you may be dismissed immediately, your scores can be canceled, and the device may be collected and its contents inspected. The College Board and your test center are not responsible for loss of or damage to personal items, including electronic devices, while you're in the test center.

The College Board regularly bolsters its security efforts in order to protect the integrity of the test and ensure a fair SAT administration. From time to time, the College Board, ETS, and its testing staff may employ enhanced security measures, such as the use of metal detecting wands to detect mobile phones and other electronic devices. Test takers should be prepared to undergo these security measures to ensure a fair testing environment.

The test administration staff are authorized to collect and hold phones and other prohibited electronic devices during the test administration, including break periods, or to deny admission to anyone in possession of a prohibited electronic device.

Taking the Tests

Testing Guidelines

Use these guidelines as you take your seat in the test room.

- Plan ahead and bring equipment that's in good working order. Test center staff won't have extra batteries or calculators.
- When marking answers:
 - ♦ Use a No. 2 pencil with a soft eraser on all parts of the answer sheet. Do not use a pen or mechanical pencil.
 - ♦ Make sure you fill in the entire bubble darkly and completely.
 - ♦ Erase any changes you make as completely as possible.
- On the SAT, there's no penalty for guessing; you simply earn points for the questions you answer correctly. Try to give your best answer to every question—there's no advantage to leaving them blank.
- Use a watch to time yourself—no separate timers or alarms are allowed, as they distract other test takers. Choose a watch that doesn't have advanced communication or recording features (these are not

allowed and will be collected from you in the testing room).

- Don't skip sections, and don't leave your answer sheet blank. Doing this could result in score cancellation and/or delays.
- If you've chosen to take the optional SAT Essay and decide not to write the essay, your official score report will include an SAT Essay score of zero. Also, if you leave the room before testing ends, your scores will be canceled.
- Store any snacks you bring out of sight in your backpack or a paper bag. You may only eat snacks during breaks. The testing staff will tell you where you can go to have your snack.
- Keep your ID and admission ticket with you at all times, especially if you leave the testing room. You may be asked to show your ID or admission ticket at any time while in the test center. Don't write on the admission ticket.

Calculator Rules

You may only use certain kinds of calculators, as explained in the Math Test section of this guide. Here are the other rules to bear in mind:

- You may not share your calculator.
- If you use your calculator to share or exchange information during the test or to remove test questions or answers from the test room, you'll be dismissed and your scores will be canceled.
- If you're using a calculator with a large (characters one inch high or more) or raised display that might be visible to other test takers, the associate supervisor may move you to another seat.

Adding or Dropping the SAT Essay

When you register for the SAT, you should consider carefully whether to choose the optional SAT Essay or not. It's a good idea to check the policies of the institutions you're interested in at sat.org/register (select "College SAT Essay Policies") to see if they require it for admission.

If you change your mind, you might be able to change from the SAT to SAT with Essay (or the reverse) on test day.

Changes to the Essay Option on Test Day:

- Must be requested at check-in. Students requesting a change will be seated after the other registered students, but before waitlist students, on a first-come, first-served basis, if materials and space allow.
- Aren't guaranteed and will be made at the discretion of the test center staff at check-in. Changes may be declined by test center staff for various reasons, including lack of sufficient materials, staff, or seats to accommodate the change.
- Aren't available to waitlist students or test takers 21 and over.
- May not be permitted in certain test centers—see sat.org/international for details.
- Can't be made after you're checked in and assigned a room. If you try to change your essay option after check-in, you'll be dismissed from the center and your scores will be canceled.

You won't be charged a change fee. You'll be automatically refunded or billed for the difference between your registration choice and the test you take on test day. We'll process the refund/charge using the payment method you used when you registered. Fee waivers cover any changes to the essay option.

How the SAT Is Scored

All multiple-choice questions are scored the same way: one point for each correct answer and zero points for incorrect answers. No points are subtracted for incorrect answers or answers left blank. The table below shows all the scores you'll receive on the SAT.

SAT Score Reported	Details	Score Range
Total Score	Sum of the two section scores	400–1600
Section Scores (2)	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Math	200–800
Test Scores (3)	Reading, Writing and Language, and Math	10–40
Essay Scores (3) (The SAT Essay is optional.)	Reading, Analysis, and Writing	2–8
Cross-Test Scores (2)	Analysis in History/Social Studies and Analysis in Science: Based on select questions in the Reading Test, Writing and Language Test, and Math Test. These scores show how well you use your skills to analyze texts and solve problems in these subject areas.	10–40
Subscores (7)	Reading and Writing and Language: Command of Evidence and Words in Context. Writing and Language: Expression of Ideas and Standard English Conventions. Math: Heart of Algebra, Problem Solving and Data Analysis, and Passport to Advanced Math.	1–15

Score Reporting

The online score report gives you the meaning behind your numbers by providing a summary of how you did on each section, including how many answers you got right, got wrong, or omitted. You can access your online score report through your free College Board account. The report offers insight into your strengths and weaknesses by showing your results grouped by content area and level of difficulty. The SAT online score report contains:

- Percentiles that let you see how your results compare with those of other students taking the test.
- A search tool for career and college majors, with suggestions based on information you provide in your profile.
- The prompt for the optional SAT Essay (if you took it) and a scanned copy of your response.

Score Choice

With Score Choice™, you can put your best foot forward by choosing which scores you send to colleges. Choose by test date for the SAT and by individual test for SAT Subject Tests™—but keep in mind that some colleges and scholarship programs require you to send all your scores.

This service is optional. If you do not select Score Choice when registering, all your scores will be sent to

institutions receiving your results. **Colleges consider your best scores when they review your application**, so having them all sent will not have a negative impact. However, if you want only your highest scores to be seen, you should elect Score Choice. Each school or program has its own deadlines and policies for how scores are used. Information is listed on the Score Choice site for each participating institution, but check with the individual school or scholarship program to make sure you're following its guidelines.

Protecting Your Privacy

Privacy Policy

When a student takes a College Board test, including the SAT, they can "opt in" to Student Search Service. If they do, the College Board can provide that student's basic information to eligible colleges and universities, scholarship programs, and certain higher education enrichment opportunities.

We never sell or share student information with test prep companies, nor are we affiliated with any test preparation companies. The College Board recommends that students take advantage of our free and low-cost practice tools to help them do their best on test day.

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section is composed of two tests that assess different but related skills and knowledge. The Reading Test gives you a chance to show how well you understand what you read. The Writing and Language Test asks you to revise and edit text.

Reading Test Overview

- Total questions: 52 passage-based reading questions with multiple-choice responses.
- Time allotted: 65 minutes.
- Calculators may not be used or be on your desk.
- All questions are worth one point regardless of the type or difficulty. You're not penalized for guessing, so it's to your advantage to answer each question as best you can.
- The questions often include line references to direct you to relevant part(s) of the passage(s).

What the Reading Test Is Like

When you take the Reading Test, you'll read passages and interpret informational graphics. Then you'll use what you've read to answer questions. Some questions ask you to locate a piece of information or an idea stated directly. But you'll also need to understand what the author's words or a graphic's data imply.

What You'll Read

To succeed in college and career, you'll need to apply reading skills in all sorts of subjects. Not coincidentally, you'll also need those skills to do well on the Reading Test.

Reading Test passages range in length from about 500 to 750 words. The Reading Test always includes:

- One passage from a classic or contemporary work of U.S. or world literature.
- One passage or a pair of passages from either a U.S. founding document (such as an essay by James Madison) or a text in the Great Global Conversation (such as a speech by Nelson Mandela).
- One passage on a social science topic from a field such as economics, psychology, or sociology.
- Two science passages (or one passage and one passage pair) that examine foundational concepts or recent developments in Earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics.

What the Reading Test Measures

A lot more goes into reading than you might realize—and the Reading Test measures a range of reading skills. You'll be asked questions that require you to draw on the reading skills needed most to succeed in the subjects the passages are drawn from. For instance, you might read about an experiment and then see questions that ask you to examine hypotheses, interpret data, or consider implications.

Answers are based only on the content stated in or implied by the passages and in any supplementary material, such as tables, graphs, and charts.

Command of Evidence

Some questions ask you to:

- Find evidence in a passage (or pair of passages) that best supports the answer to a previous question or serves as the basis for a reasonable conclusion.
- Identify how authors use evidence to support their claims.
- Locate or interpret data in an informational graphic, or understand a relationship between a graphic and the passage it's paired with.

Words in Context

Some questions focus on important, widely used words and phrases that you'll find in texts in many different subjects. The words and phrases are ones that you'll use in college and the workplace long after test day.

The SAT focuses on your ability to:

- Figure out the meaning of words or phrases in context.
- Decide how an author's word choice shapes meaning, style, and tone.

Sample Reading Test Materials

Following are samples of the kinds of passages and questions that may appear on the Reading Test. For each set of sample materials:

- Read the passage(s) and any supplementary material carefully.
- Decide on the best answer to each question.
- Read the explanation for the best answer to each question and for the answer you chose (if the two are different).

On the actual test, each passage will be followed by 10 or 11 questions. The directions on the next page match what you'll encounter on the actual test.

the modern-day Republican and Democratic parties. Jordan anticipates that listeners to her speech might misinterpret her use of Hamilton's quotation as suggesting that she thinks impeachment is essentially a tool of organized political parties to achieve partisan ends, with one party attacking and another defending the president. Throughout the passage, and notably in the seventh paragraph (lines 55-63), Jordan makes clear that she thinks impeachment should be reserved only for the most serious of offenses—ones that should rattle people of any political affiliation.

Choice B is incorrect because Jordan offers no objection to Hamilton's notion that impeachment proceedings excite passions. Indeed, she quotes Hamilton extensively in a way that indicates that she fundamentally agrees with his view on impeachment. Moreover, she acknowledges that her own speech is impassioned—that she feels a “solemnness” (line 2) and a willingness to indulge in “hyperbole” (line 1).

Choice C is incorrect because Jordan offers no objection to Hamilton's level of support for the concept of impeachment. Indeed, she quotes Hamilton extensively in a way that indicates that she fundamentally agrees with his view on impeachment.

Choice D is incorrect because Jordan suggests that she and her fellow members of Congress are “trying to be big” (line 71), or high-minded, rather than decide the present case on the basis of politics. Indeed, throughout the last four paragraphs of the passage (lines 37-72), she elaborates on the principled, just basis on which impeachment should proceed. Moreover, throughout the passage, Jordan is focused on the present impeachment hearings, not on the justice or injustice of impeachments generally.

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Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 13-17 (“It . . . office”)
- B) Lines 20-24 (“The division . . . astute”)
- C) Lines 55-58 (“The drawing . . . misdemeanors”)
- D) Lines 65-68 (“Congress . . . transportation”)

Estimated Difficulty: Hard

Key: C

Choice C is the best answer because in lines 55-58, Jordan draws a contrast between political motivations and “high crime[s] and misdemeanors” as the basis for impeachment and argues that impeachment “must proceed within the confines” of

the latter concept. These lines thus serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice A is incorrect because lines 13-17 only address a misconception that Jordan contends some people have about what a vote for impeachment means. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice B is incorrect because lines 20-24 only speak to a division of responsibility between the two houses of the U.S. Congress. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice D is incorrect because lines 65-68 serve mainly to indicate that the U.S. Congress has an extensive and important agenda. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Writing and Language Test Overview

The SAT Writing and Language Test asks you to be an editor and improve passages that were written especially for the test—and that include deliberate errors.

- Total questions: 44 passage-based questions with multiple-choice responses.
- Time allotted: 35 minutes.
- Calculators may not be used or be on your desk.
- Remember that all questions are worth one point regardless of the type or difficulty. You're not penalized for incorrect guesses, so it's to your advantage to answer each question as best you can.

What the Writing and Language Test Is Like

When you take the Writing and Language Test, you'll do things that people do all the time when they write and edit: read, find mistakes and weaknesses, and fix them.

The good news: You do these things every time you revise and edit your own schoolwork or workshop essays with a friend.

To answer some questions, you'll need to look closely at a single sentence. Others require thinking about the entire piece or interpreting a graphic. For instance, you might be asked to choose where a sentence should be placed or to correct a misinterpretation of a scientific chart.

What You'll Read

The passages you'll read will be informative/explanatory texts, nonfiction narratives, or arguments about careers, history/social studies, the humanities, and science.

You'll want to read passages carefully so you can make editorial decisions that improve them.

What the Writing and Language Test Measures

The Writing and Language Test measures the practical skills you use to spot and fix problems in writing—the skills you've been learning in high school and that you'll need for success in college and career.

It's worth keeping in mind the following facts about the test:

- All questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are accompanied by informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts—but no math is required.
- Prior topic knowledge is never tested.

Command of Evidence

Questions that test command of evidence ask you to improve the way passages develop information and ideas. For instance, you might choose an answer that sharpens an argumentative claim or adds a relevant supporting detail.

Words in Context

Some questions ask you to improve word choice. You'll need to choose the best words to use based on the text surrounding them. Your goal will be to make a passage more precise or concise or to improve syntax, style, or tone.

Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science

You'll be asked to read passages about topics in history/social studies and science and to make editorial decisions that improve the passages (such as revising a paragraph to be more consistent with the data presented in an informational graphic).

Expression of Ideas

Some questions ask about a passage's topic development, organization, and effective language use and impact. For instance, you'll be asked which words or structural changes improve how well a point is made and how well the sentences and paragraphs work together.

Standard English Conventions

Some questions relate to the building blocks of writing: sentence structure, usage, and punctuation. You'll be asked to change words, clauses, sentences, and punctuation.

Sample Writing and Language Test Materials

Following are samples of the kinds of passages and questions that may appear on the Writing and Language Test. For each set of sample materials:

- Read the passage carefully.
- Decide on the best answer to each question.
- Read the explanation for the best answer to each question and for the answer you chose (if the two are different).

On the actual test, the passages and questions will be in side-by-side columns, with each passage (spread over multiple pages) in the left column and associated multiple-choice questions in the right column.

The directions on the next page match what you'll encounter on the actual test.

Math

The SAT Math Test covers math practices, emphasizing problem solving, modeling, using tools strategically, and using algebraic structure. The questions test your ability to solve problems and use appropriate approaches and tools strategically.

Math Test Overview

The Math Test includes a portion that allows the use of a calculator and a portion that does not.

- Total questions: 58 (20 questions on the no-calculator portion; 38 questions on the calculator portion).
- 45 standard multiple-choice questions.
- 13 student-produced response questions.
- Time allotted for Math Test – No Calculator: 25 minutes; time allotted for Math Test – Calculator: 55 minutes.

What the Math Test Is Like

Instead of testing you on every math topic, the SAT asks you to use the math that you'll rely on most in all sorts of situations. Questions on the Math Test are designed to mirror the problem solving and modeling you'll do in:

- College math, science, and social science courses
- Jobs that you hold
- Your personal life

For instance, to answer some questions you'll need to use several steps because in the real world, a single calculation is rarely enough to get the job done.

- Most math questions will be multiple choice, but some—called student-produced responses—ask you to come up with the answer rather than select the answer.
- Some parts of the test include several questions about a single scenario.

What the Math Test Measures

Fluency

The Math Test is a chance to show that you:

- Carry out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and strategically.
- Solve problems quickly by identifying and using the most efficient solution approaches. This might involve solving a problem by inspection, finding a shortcut, or reorganizing the information you've been given.

Conceptual Understanding

You'll demonstrate your grasp of math concepts, operations, and relations. For instance, you might be asked to make connections between properties of linear equations, their graphs, and the contexts they represent.

Applications

Some real-world problems ask you to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and carry out a solution.

Calculator Use

Calculators are important tools, and to succeed after high school, you'll need to know how—and when—to use them. In the Math Test – Calculator portion of the test, you'll be able to focus on complex modeling and reasoning because your calculator can save you time.

However, using a calculator, like any tool, isn't always the best way to solve a problem. The Math Test includes some questions that it's better not to use a calculator for, even though you're allowed to. With these questions, you'll probably find that the structure of the problem or your reasoning skills will lead you to the answers more efficiently.

Calculator Smarts

- Bring your own calculator. You can't share one.
- Don't bring a calculator you've never used before. Bring one you know. Practice for the test using the same calculator you'll use on test day.
- It may help to do scratch work in the test book. Get your thoughts down before using your calculator.
- Make sure your calculator is in good working order with fresh batteries. The test center will not have batteries or extra calculators. If your calculator fails during testing and you have no backup, you'll have to complete the test without it.

Acceptable Calculators

Only battery-operated, handheld equipment can be used for testing. No power cords are allowed. A list of acceptable graphing calculators can be found online at sat.org/calculators. Calculators permitted during testing include:

- Most graphing calculators
- All scientific calculators that don't have the unacceptable features listed here
- All four-function calculators (not recommended)

Unacceptable Calculators

You're not allowed to use any of the following items as a calculator (unless approved as an accommodation):

- Tablets, laptops, notebooks, or any other personal computing devices, including wearable technology
- Models that can access the internet, have wireless, Bluetooth, cellular, audio/video recording and playing, camera, or any other smartphone-type feature
- Models that have QWERTY (typewriter-like) keypad, pen-input, or stylus
- Models that use electrical outlets, make noise, or have a paper tape (unless approved by the College Board as an accommodation). In addition, the use of hardware peripherals such as a stylus with an approved calculator is not permitted. Some models with touch-screen capability are not permitted (e.g., Casio ClassPad).

Answering Student-Produced Response Questions

You'll see directions in the test book for answering student-response questions. Take the time to be comfortable with the format before test day. Here are some important points:

- Mark no more than one bubble in any column.
- Only answers indicated by filling in the bubble will be scored (you won't receive credit for anything written in the boxes located above the bubbles).
- It doesn't matter in which column you begin entering your answer. As long as the correct response is recorded within the grid area, you'll receive credit.
- The grid can hold only four characters and can only accommodate positive numbers and zero.
- Unless a problem indicates otherwise, answers can be entered on the grid as a decimal or a fraction.
- Fractions like $\frac{3}{24}$ do not need to be reduced to their lowest terms.
- All mixed numbers need to be converted to decimals or improper fractions before being recorded in the grid.
- If the answer is a repeating decimal, you must grid the most accurate truncated or rounded value the grid will accommodate.

Following is a sample of the student-produced response instructions you'll see on the test.

Write answer in boxes.

Answer: $\frac{7}{12}$

Grid in result.

Fraction line

Decimal point

Answer: 2.5

Acceptable ways to grid $\frac{2}{3}$ are:

Answer: 201 – either position is correct

NOTE:
You may start your answers in any column, space permitting. Columns you don't need to use should be left blank.

Sample Math Test Materials

The sample math questions that follow show the kinds of questions that may appear on both portions of the Math Test. For these sample materials:

- Review the notes at the beginning of the section. They match what you'll see at the beginning of both sections on the actual test.
- Decide on the correct answer to each multiple-choice question, then read the explanation for the correct answer to each question and for the answer you chose (if the two are different).
- Follow the directions for the student-produced response questions, shown on page 31. The directions match what you'll see on both portions of the actual test.