

This will apply to both PSAT/NMSQT and SAT. The PSAT 10 and the PSAT/NMSQT are the same, but easier than the SAT. (go to tools -> document outline for easy side navigation)

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Preface

Hi, I hope this guide will help you (I'm not guaranteeing you will get a 1600). If you have complaints/improvement ideas, you can send them to my reddit account: /u/ninja542. Another thing to note, please do not take my statements as true 100% of the time.

Also, please don't reveal my name on reddit, or I will remove the entire guide (gotta be threatening)

This guide does not claim to give you a 1600, so don't sue me

Part I: How to take practice tests

Most books start out with "general test taking tips" which is complete and utter waste of time for high schoolers who have taken multiple choice tests before, so I made the first chapter about "practice tests". However, maybe this part will be boring to you, so feel free to skip it.

A lot of people will tell you when asked about preparing for standardized tests, they say "take some practice tests" or maybe they say "Khan Academy". However, you can still screw up taking practice tests, so here are my tips for getting the most out of practice tests.

1. Take the actual test

Make the time to take either a full test in one go or one section of the test uninterrupted. I think taking one or two full length test is good for getting a feel for brain fatigue, but after the first two, you can just take individual sections at a time. Making time for one section is easier than blocking a huge section of time for the full test, so no more excuses for not taking practice tests!

The College Board released 8 official tests. "That's not enough!" you might complain. In my opinion, 1 test lasts a long time, and personally, I only got through 2.5 of them before the April test, so yeah, I feel like 8 is plenty. Add on the Khan Academy problems, then you seriously have enough test problems to last a long time.

If you somehow run out of these, you can repeat the Khan Academy questions or retake the practice tests. If you feel you must take a new test, then just google or look at prep books. I honestly feel like prep books aren't an accurate portrayal of the SAT, but your mileage may vary.

Obligatory website links:

collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sample-questions

Not a lot of questions, but still questions from collegeboard

collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/full-length-practice-tests

8 full tests. These are the same full length tests from Khan Academy, but Khan Academy lets you take the tests online.

khanacademy.org/sat

Khan Academy helped a lot, they break down the math, reading and writing into different skills, allowing you to choose which categories to practice in. Seriously, I depended on this. The interactive full length tests are very nice. The problems are pretty endless, and they are

extremely close to real test problems. You will hear people talk about Khan Academy, and you might be tired of hearing about it, but this is a great resource if you use the practice tests well.

[Uworld 3 month free trial \(no credit card and tons of questions\)](#) (credit to r/SAT)

[April 2017 Test](#)

[April 2017 Answer Key](#)

First link is test, second link is the answers for April 2017 and curves. No answer explanations.

2. Analyze results

So you have finished a full length test or at least a section, and graded it. You might be very sad or mediocre or happy about your score right now. Stop feeling feelings right now.

I split the questions/answers into categories:

- Guessed (usually I keep track of these through marking question marks)
- Wrong but was really sure about the answer
- Wrong bc not really sure (debating between two answers, or some doubt)

I first look at the questions that I guessed on because I had no idea what to do, and read the explanations for all four answers. You should do this for every question you guessed on, even if you guessed it right, because understanding **how** they got the answer is a million times better than knowing **what** the answer was.

Then I look at the questions that were wrong but I was sure that they were right. I examine why I chose the answer in the first place and look at the explanation for why it was wrong, and why the right answer is right.

Lastly, I look at the questions that I wasn't really sure about because two of the answers seemed plausible, and same as above, I look at the explanations for the right and wrong answers.

And this might seem like a lot of steps, but it definitely helps. Why?

For reading, you can see patterns emerge in the questions and what to look for in the answers themselves. (kinda hard to explain, but it's like finding the matrix)

For writing, it's the same as reading, and gives you a review on grammar principles.

For math, you learn math and figure out if you're making silly mistakes or you have a consistent gap in mathematical knowledge.

The key is understanding, and not just knowledge of the right answer. This applies especially to reading and writing. Math is more concrete than reading and writing, so knowledge of how to do math is important as well.

Another piece of advice I say is to forget about the problems and the answer after finishing a section¹. I am not telling you to forget how to do the problems, but the problem itself. For reading, forget about the passage. You are taking practice exams for the technique, not for memorizing precise answers. Another advantage is if so desired, you can retake the same practice test again after some months and see if you can apply the techniques again and improve on your score. This is useful if you ran out of practice tests and also shows that you can learn from your mistakes.

¹ To be honest, I am very good at forgetting stuff, so maybe this won't work for you. However, this is a book of my advice, so I'm including it here.

TL;DR:

The point of taking practice tests is to understand how to get the answers, not just what the answer is.

The difficulty of practice tests vs real tests:

I find that this is a question asked a lot on the internet. I think that sometimes the collegeboard practice tests are a bit easier, but I think they are relatively accurate.

So my experience was that my first PSAT 10 I took was 1430/1520, and then I was like “I should study harder”, so I practiced on Khan Academy. The next two practice tests were 1480 and then 1500. The PSAT/NMSQT I took next ended up being 1510/1520, and then in January, I took the real SAT and got a 1520. I didn’t feel like taking a full practice test again so I just practiced another section of reading and writing the day before the school SAT, and managed to get a 1600. So I guess for me they were pretty accurate, but I’ve seen people on reddit say that the actual SAT was harder than the practice tests.

How to effectively use Khan Academy:

One of the first steps that I highly recommend is porting your previous PSAT or SAT scores by logging in with collegeboard. I heard they have placement tests, but this is faster and easier and gives an accurate representation of the topics you need help on. If you haven’t taken anything, then take the placement tests and that should be sufficient.

I think one of the most motivating things was levelling up the skills that weren’t perfect, so I think the first thing that you should do is level up everything to level 4 in math and reading/writing. It’s really satisfying seeing everything level up. Khan Academy also has some practice recommendations, which also is based on the idea of levelling up certain skills. By following their practice recommendations, you can unlock a timed section, which is usually different content from the regular skills which is helpful. However, you don’t have to follow their recommendations.

After levelling up everything to level 4, you should take a practice test again to see what skills you should practice in. Even though it seems like you are level 4 out of 4 for every skill, the skill levels still are not the most accurate indicator, because having all level 4s doesn’t mean you’ll get a perfect score.

So once you’ve done a practice test and reviewed your guesses and wrong answers, take a little bit to breathe and write down the things that tripped you up in general. For example, I figured out that I needed to do better on fiction passages and inferring stuff for reading, and I needed figure out transitions and subject verb agreement for writing. So then I focused on doing those specific skills on Khan Academy (they list out good descriptions of the skills, so you can orient your reflections like that).

Khan Academy also has live streams and videos explaining every part of the new test. I would **avoid the live streams** because they don’t really do a good job explaining the questions

and answers and take a long time. I didn't watch the videos, but reading the articles and videos might help.

ALTHOUGH, I think that doing problems yourself is more effective than watching Sal Khan doing problems.

What should I work on first??

Easiest parts to improve is Writing and Math. Start with Math first until you get 700+ (to be honest, it's an arbitrary number that I chose) (or near perfect if you're super ambitious), and then move to Writing. Finally, work on Reading, as that's somewhat hard to improve, although if you're getting a lot of questions wrong in Reading, then you should work on that a little bit first.

Additionally, you may find the ACT easier. You will probably like the ACT if you like reading (reading + science section) or you like to move through problems faster. The SAT is for people who like to take their time answering questions.

Part II: The actual sections

probably the thing you came here for

Section 1: Reading

Reading. Used to be the bane of my existence, but it's not anymore (it turned into writing).

A thing that helps in general is to read a lot of novels and/or nonfiction articles in magazines. It's not directly related to the SAT, but it helps with building reading stamina, deciphering old-fashioned English, inferring stuff from the text, and understanding character's motives and beliefs. This probably only works if you have a lot of time before the test.

1. Eliminate 3 wrong answers

My number one tip for reading is cross off three wrong answers. Looking for the right answer in reading seems kinda hard, but figuring out which answers are wrong is a lot easier.

The justification for this is that collegeboard has to make the wrong answer definitely wrong. They can't ask you what something symbolizes, because that something could symbolize a lot of different things and people would start complaining. So the right answer has to be right, and not just half right.

Usually there's one really wrong answer, two half wrong answers, and one right answer.

Basically only choose the answer that's fully supported by the passage

If there are two answers that mean the exact same thing, then they are both wrong.

2. Reading the passage

Some people like to skim, or read the questions first then read the passage.

Note: Remember that you can refer back to the text while answering questions.

Reading first, then answering questions.

I prefer reading first on my tests because I feel like the SAT gives you plenty of time to read the passages. Some answers ask about transitions in the passage, overall tone, or what the passage as a whole is about, so that's why I prefer reading carefully + quickly before answering questions.

What do I mean by a good read? I don't mean in-depth annotation, but kind of casual reading everything. So if you decide to do a careful read the first time, it might take a little longer, but doing these two things while reading will justify the extra time:

- What the passage as a whole is about, and roughly where the main ideas are (main ideas are broken by paragraphs, and usually not in the middle of the paragraph)
- Having an overall feel of the passage (this helps with overall tone and transition of ideas/tone questions)

Another thing that might help to read the passages is to try to be interested in the passage itself. Maybe I'm a really big nerd, but most, if not all, the passages are quite interesting to me, so this helps me retain more information and read better the first time.

I still refer to the passage when answering questions, so don't think that you can just memorize the entire passage in one go.

Skimming, and then answering questions.

If you decide to skim first, then I would say just try to figure out where main points are (mark them with a star) so when you come across questions, you know roughly where to look for the answers.

I also suggest looking at the questions first to see what type of stuff you should pay attention to when skimming the passage.

Reading the questions first, and then reading/skimming

I don't really do this because I find it stressful to try to remember every single question, but if it works for you, do it.

Basically, you're trying to figure out the which part of the passage each question refers to. I don't really find it useful because the fiction passages have more overarching questions, but this could conceivably work for science and maybe history passages.

3. Vocabulary questions

The vocabulary questions are tricky sometimes. If it's a familiar word, the answer is usually not the typical meaning (because they want to test if you know the other meanings).

The usual approach is to use context clues to figure out what the definition is. Basically, you judge the meaning of the word by seeing how it is used in the sentence (aka guessing the answer before looking at the choices).

The second thing is to replace the vocab word with the answer choices (or the answer you think is right) into the passage and see if it makes sense. This usually works because the words are usually words you've seen before (if you read regularly and don't use sparknotes) (usually I use this to double check my initial guess)

The vocabulary, thankfully, is not going to be a word that is a million letters long, and will be a word you have seen before if you read for fun quite often.

4. Guessing the answer before looking

I saw this "tip" on a website on how to improve your score by 100 points. I personally never used this tip, but basically, make your own answer, and see which one matches your own answer the closest. I don't really use this because I'm really bad at making my own answers.

5. Finding the Evidence

A lot of memes focus on "find the evidence" questions and how hard they are, but honestly they are not that bad in my opinion.

If you were stuck on the previous question, then you can look at the next "find evidence" question's answer choices for four places to look for the right answer to the previous question. This honestly helped me answer so many confusing questions (especially for fiction where the different topics are not as clear, while with science, it's a bit more broken down).

If the previous question was easy, then the "find evidence" should be pretty easy because you were probably already looking at a specific place in the passage to get the answer for the previous question.

Another tip is to use the main idea of the sentences to see which one supports your answer. One example would be "How does the character feel about her father's death?" and then the answer would be the line that talks about her reaction to her father's death. Since all the answers are actual lines from the text, usually only one will actually be relevant to your answer/the previous question. (sometimes there's one line that's close, but still wrong)

This means that two questions are done at roughly the same time.

I personally would avoid random guessing on these question pairs (regular question + find evidence) because they connect and help each other.

Even though sometimes I am confident where my evidence is located, I still look at every line number mentioned in the answers. Read the answers over, and if the sentence has nothing to do with the previous question, cross it off, and hopefully you only have one answer left.

If you have two answers left, then here's a couple of last resorts. One, see if one matches more with the previous question. Or two, see if it matches your previous answer. Or three, see if it matches any of the answers to the previous question.

Be specific when finding evidence. Just because the narrator was happy in the first paragraph doesn't mean they would be happy about some major death.

Also, the surrounding lines around a piece of evidence will almost never impact whether the answer is right or wrong. All you need to know will be within the evidence itself.

A reddit thread on evidence:

[/r/Sat/comments/6nufvi/sat_reading_how_do_i_stop_using_wrong_evidence/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Sat/comments/6nufvi/sat_reading_how_do_i_stop_using_wrong_evidence/)

6. Summarizing passages

The best question to ask yourself when you're doing a "summarize the passage" question is this: Why did the author write this passage? or What inspired the author to write this passage? **Basically, you have to ask yourself this question: if the author of this passage were to put a TL:DR at the end of it, what would it say?**

General question tips

- Don't blindly match words in the passage with words in the answer. Consider the context.
- "You need to narrow your thinking to zero in on exactly when/where the passage is asking."
- On the first pass of the test, answer everything as normal, and mark the questions that you are unsure of. After going through the entire passage, try to review/do the questions that you were unsure of/skipped. Definitely double check your answers

Types of readings

There is one fiction, two historical/social studies, and two science passages. One passage is a two perspectives type (either historical or science-based)

Fiction:

In my experience, the practice tests use old-fashioned fiction/literature, while the actual ones have been quite modern fiction. The old-fashioned fiction is slightly harder than modern fiction because of the "old-fashioned" speak, but I think the questions are both similar anyways.

The second (but close first) hardest passage on the test.

A lot of inference questions (questions that have answers that aren't spelled out in the text).

Note: even if you've read the text before in class, read the passage again.

Historical/Social Studies:

Usually helps if you know the context, but it's not that important. These passages mostly advocate for something like civil rights, women's rights or the constitution (I haven't found any other subjects yet), so questions will mostly be about details of what they are advocating for and the overall purpose of the passage. This is the hardest section in my opinion. These passages also use "old-fashioned" language which is a bit dense.

Science:

Questions are mostly information-based. Definitely expect reading graphs. Quite easy, since there's no subtext to infer.

Two perspectives:

These questions are usually typical of the subject, but they also throw in:
compare/contrast questions

"what is something they would both agree on?"

I would either mentally or physically write notes on how both passages stand on the issue like what they agree on or disagree on.

This is usually a science topic, but this year's April 11th test used history (surprisingly).

Tackling the Literature passage

The literature passage is the very first passage you come across when you open the first page. The questions are usually about characterization and inferring stuff from the passage.

A literature paragraph usually doesn't put the purpose in the top or bottom. The purpose of a literature paragraph is to develop the story, so look for "how does the main character change" or "what does this do for the story?" example: set the scene, introduce a new character, antagonize the protagonist, etc. This kinda helps with the "how does the focus of the story change throughout the passage".

The most annoying thing about the fiction passage is inferring crap. Basically you have to make sure that the inference is supported by the rest of the passage, which usually gives you some big hints into what the correct inference is.

Tackling the History passage

These passages always use some form of "old-fashioned English". It's kinda hard to adjust to, especially when you're starting out preparing for the SAT. The only advice I can give is to do a decent amount of history practice on Khan Academy. I guess I do have another tip: read *Pride and Prejudice*. "That's a cheesy romance novel, come on bro, why should I read that?!" you might ask. Well, I thought *Pride and Prejudice* would be kinda stupid too, but I read the novel during 10th grade because my English teacher was a strong believer in reading a lot. One of my goals in second semester was to read more "classic" literature, so I read *Pride and Prejudice*. I think it helped me a lot with deciphering old-fashioned syntax. If you don't have time to read an entire novel, then I guess doing Khan Academy practice is sufficient. The English takes some time to get used to because it's sometimes strange, especially to people who are just getting started preparing for the SAT. There's no shortcut other than doing Khan Academy practice with history passages, or reading old classics. *Pride and Prejudice* is not the only novel with old-fashioned English, but my point is that reading classic literature helps with deciphering history passages.

This passage so far has been mostly US history centered (needs verification). I'm not telling you to cram US history knowledge, but it's generally helpful to know about the major social movements like the creation of the new Constitution, Civil Rights movement, Women's suffrage, etc. It will usually be really old and not current events.

These passages are persuasive in nature. Whether it's a speech, or an article calling for action, this passage has a very obvious purpose: arguing for change (usually) or keeping things the same (sometimes).

Tackling the Science passage

So this passage is really standard, but if this passage was not your strong suit, I'm really sorry for suggesting it was a really easy section earlier in this guide, I promise I'm not trying to make fun of you.

I think science passages can be broken up into two types of content questions, and maybe some vocabulary questions thrown in.

Content: This will be "Read the graph" questions, and "Scientific concept" questions. Read the graph questions are usually very obvious. They start with "According to the graph/chart..." and this means that you should read the graph.

Reading the graph shouldn't be too hard, but the x-axis has some variable (usually time) with the y-axis having the dependent variable, and you just match the y-coordinate with the x-coordinate.

Advanced graph reading: Sometimes there will be special points or different greys to differentiate multiple sets of data. The questions might try to throw you off by asking for the number of not the whole data, but a specific subset, so be careful. Charts are supposedly more straightforward, but sometimes I messed those up by mislabelling the chart in my head, so don't do that. You can try making pencil marks to make the graph easier to read and to avoid mixing up stuff.

The scientific concept questions are usually taken right out of the passage, which means as long as you get a general understanding of the scientific concepts from the passage, the questions will be easier. Usually things are explicitly mentioned in the passage, so it shouldn't be too hard. I would definitely recommend reading/skimming the whole passage first so you have a pretty good idea of where everything is so you don't have to scramble to find stuff in the passage.

Tackling the Two Perspective passage

If it's about science or history, the passage will contain questions that usually fall under the subject. These questions usually refer to only one passage. The questions will include some special questions though. Like comparing and contrasting the two points, and asking what would the two people agree on. This usually can be taken from the passage itself, and the asking what the two people would agree on usually is something that they mention in the passages too.

The patterns

I mentioned the matrix in “how to take practice tests”, and someone asked about the patterns, so here’s what I typed out:

So you probably know that questions are usually very similar and predictable for the different types of readings. Science passages are usually the most concrete ones, but history and literature questions look more subjective, but I feel like after doing a lot of Khan Academy the patterns that emerge are mostly:

- what questions they ask for the categories of passages
- what the questions assess (inferring, finding info, support w/ evidence)
- what to look at for answers being wrong (for process of elimination)

It’s really hard to list out what I’ve noticed about these patterns but if you keep these in mind and take practice tests, you’ll probably figure it out.

Section 2: Writing

Before reading the rest

I think that reading the whole passage for writing is a good idea, because you need to answer like general questions like “should the author include this sentence” or “should this paragraph be deleted”. Also sometimes grammar depends on the context.

1. Know your grammar rules

I don’t think any tips or tricks will help if you don’t have a basic knowledge of grammar, so you should brush up on grammar. Khan Academy has a nice list of all the grammar stuff they will test, but maybe I’ll write a list over here later. The easiest way to bring up your score.

Guide from reddit: drive.google.com/file/d/0B_yV7ABkP1NzVzdvNnYyZGxCelk/view

damn commas

Commas can be used to separate lists.

Commas also join two independent clauses together with a FANBOY (for, and, nor, but, or, yet). If there isn’t a FANBOY, you have a comma splice, which is forbidden. You can also use a comma to join dependent clauses to independent clauses. You do not need a FANBOY for that. You may not join subordinate clauses with a comma.

Independent Clause: clause with both a subject and predicate (action). Another way to tell is if the clause makes sense by itself.

Dependent Clause: Clause that modifies an independent clause, but can’t stand by itself.

Subordinate Clause: Clause that has a conjunction that’s not a FANBOY. This is not a complete sentence either, but because it has a conjunction, you can’t use a comma with them. Ex: “because I was cold”.

Right: I wore my coat because I was cold.

Wrong: I wore my coat, because I was cold

Commas can also set off unimportant clauses from the rest of the sentence. To see if you should surround a phrase with commas, read the sentence without the phrase to see if it makes sense. If it does, put commas. A similar thing happens but with dashes and parentheses. Make sure the beginning punctuation to set off the unimportant phrase is the same as the ending punctuation.

Semicolons and colons:

Semicolons and colons look kind of similar, but they are completely different.

A semicolon is like a comma and a FANBOY in just one punctuation mark. You just use it to join two sentences together. Sometimes a semicolon is used to separate items in a list with items that contain commas, like a list of cities and their countries. For sentences with words like “however” or “therefore”, you need to use a semicolon with them (shocking, I know).

Ex: I like cats; however, I dislike white cats.

“I like cats” and “I dislike white cats” are two independent clauses, and you need a semicolon to separate the two clauses. However is not a conjunction like FANBOY.

A colon is used to set off a list or sometimes just one item (not as common). The one thing I do is replace the colon (or potential colon place) with “namely” and see if it makes sense. (Colons have to follow complete sentences)

Ex: I would like to see the following people: Bob, Anna, and Dylan.

- I would like to see the following people, namely, Bob, Anna, and Dylan.

It looks weird, but it usually does the trick.

Subject-Verb Agreement

This sounds really easy, but it’s easy to mess up because prepositions with nouns make it easy to choose the wrong verb. So cross out prepositions out of sentences for every problem (or just the ones that are about verb agreement).

Make sure that you identify the subject correctly, sometimes the subject is after the verb.

Another thing is that there are some words like “everyone” that look like plural subjects, but they’re actually singular.

Everyone, Anyone, Someone, No one, Nobody, Each, Neither, Either are always singular subjects.

The word “and” usually makes the subject plural because you’re combining things

Ex: Anna and Brian love cakes.

Not: Anna and Brian loves cakes.

The word “or” means that you take the subject from the last item in the list, don’t think this is tested.

Ex: I hope Craig, Diane, or Everett eats the last slice of pizza.

Ex: I think Craig, Dave, or these football dudes fight pretty well.

2. Rewriting to change the tone

The right answer is almost always the formal one. None of these passages are “informal”.

3. Rewriting for conciseness

The right answer is never the redundant answer. If any part of the answer repeats itself, you can cross it off.

Sometimes they ask you to rewrite a sentence/phrase that’s usually redundant, and the right answer is very very often the shortest answer. (please make sure it’s the right answer though)

4. Reordering passages

Passages will be mixed up in one of two ways:

- Cause and effect
- Chronological order

If it’s cause and effect, the cause always goes before the effect.

If it’s chronological order, just order the sentences by which one goes first time-wise.

Another way passages are mixed up is putting something that breaks the flow of the passage or the logic. Usually, the odd sentence out is obvious.

If you’re doubting your answer, read the whole paragraph in the order that you put as the answer and see if it makes sense.

5. Deleting/Adding sentences

The collegeboard is evil because the sentences they give you are always somewhat connected to the topic.

Delete the sentence if:

- It has nothing to do with the main idea of the paragraph
- Explains something very loosely related, but only adds extraneous info that’s not needed.
- Doesn’t really connect the two sentences.

Add the sentence if:

- It clarifies something that wasn’t really clear.
- Logically follows the sentence before.

6. Transitions

This was the second most common thing I messed up on. Choosing transition words. It sounds like it shouldn’t be hard because the transition words are usually one word, words you’ve seen before, and very simple to define. However, they really tripped me up sometimes

because I was choosing them based on my gut and how I thought the sentences should sound rather than using a more logical method of choosing.

So what was this logical step? It sounds kinda stupid, but look at the clause before and the clause after. What is their relationship?

- Do they build off each other? (Adding information?)
- Do they contradict each other? (Discussing the other side, bringing up exceptions, etc.)
- Is it one thing leading to another? (Cause + effect?)
- Is it a sequence? (Chronological/Logical?)

Then you choose the transition word that corresponds to this relationship.

Some important transitions that I feel are commonly used (from <https://msu.edu/~jdowell/135/transw.html>):

Additive Transitions

These show addition, introduction, similarity to other ideas, etc.

Addition (adding more information)

indeed	further	as well (as this)	either (neither)	not only (this) but also (that) as well
also	moreover	additionally	as a matter of fact	on the other hand
and	furthermore	in addition (to this)	in fact	alternatively

Introduction (a new, but still related idea)

such as	as	particularly	including	for instance
for example	like	in particular	for one thing	to illustrate

Similarity (ideas that are similar to each other)

similarly	likewise		
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Clarification (making the previous idea more understandable)

namely	specifically	in other words	
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Emphasis (the next idea is related and super important)

even more	above all	indeed	more importantly
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Adversative Transitions:

These transitions are used to signal conflict, contradiction concession, dismissal, etc.

Conflict (introducing a different idea):

but	conversely	while	on the other hand
however	(and) yet	whereas,	though (final position)
in contrast	when in fact		

Concession (acknowledging a counter-argument):

but even so,	nevertheless,	even though,	on the other hand,	admittedly,
granted (this),	nonetheless,	despite (this),	notwithstanding (this),	albeit
(and) still,	although,	in spite of (this),	regardless (of this),	

Another thing about transitions is that if two of the transition words mean the same thing, you can cross both answers out.

Section 3: Math

Very good free math guide for SAT and ACT: mattboutte.com/SATandACTMathGuide.pdf

Math breakdown from r/SAT: reddit.com/r/Sat/wiki/complete_math_breakdown

Accidentally finding the wrong thing

This mistake is pretty common, but sometimes you find the value of a variable x but the question asked for the variable y and you bubble in the value of x . This honestly sucks, but one thing that helps is to circle what the question actually wants. Another thing that helps is to label everything. If you make up some variables, label what each variable is. It also helps if you write your scratch work neatly (not super neat, but aligned and in a column helps)

I also think this can be avoided by not relying on your calculator to solve problems for you, i.e systems of linear equations. Although, I'm not too sure because I didn't really use my calculator that much other than long calculations.

Estimate the final answer

Don't put something completely unrealistic as an answer.

"It's also helpful to think about what a likely range of answers are. With this particular problem it would not have been possible to bubble in that mistake (results in $\sim 25,000$ km/h). But

before you bubble in your answer for a context like this, just think for a brief moment if it's a realistic result. If the question asks how many gallons are in a filled bathtub the answer is not 15, or 1,500" (credit:[/u/Donald_Keyman](#))

Use dimensional analysis

Using dimensional analysis looks like a pain in the butt, but doing dimensional analysis helps make sure that you're converting your units correctly.

What is dimensional analysis? You basically draw one horizontal line, and some vertical lines. You start with the number on the leftmost upper space, and set up the scale factors so that the units cancel out. Then you multiply across the top row, and divide by the bottom row.

Video w/ better explanation: [youtube.com/watch?v=GeMmHLvn7mw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeMmHLvn7mw)

This is only good for converting stuff, not actually solving for unknown stuff.

Double checking

Double checking is really important. I can never emphasize this enough. Usually I just plug the answer back into the original question to make sure it's right. Or I use another method to try and solve the question and see if the answers match. I usually prefer directly checking the answer because it's really obvious if it works or not. If somehow that's not possible, then I use the "use another method to check"

Usually I double check after I finish a problem, since I usually finish with time at the end, however if you usually run out of time, you could look into double checking at the end with some extra time you end up with.

I think you should practice math sections and see which method of double checking flows with your workflow better.

Part III: The essay

I can't really tell you anything, other than you can google "rhetorical analysis essay" for tips? I got a 6/6/6, and it doesn't really give me any authority to give essay tips. (By the way, colleges don't really care about the essay, but please try to do decently)

Overall, the essay is about analyzing how the writer convinces the reader of his/her purpose using rhetorical devices.

The few tips I can give to you:

- Annotate the passage where you find rhetorical devices
- Read the box at the end of the passage before reading the passage. This directly gives you the purpose of the essay, which is what you will write about in your essay. It also gives you an overall frame of mind to read the passage.
- Specify how the rhetorical devices persuade the reader. Don't just list the devices, talk about their impact too.

- Supposedly, writing more without regard to quality helps you score higher, but this is not confirmed. (Additionally, articles written about this topic usually refer to the earlier version of the SAT when you had to produce a persuasive essay)

Part IV: random tips

- If a problem is taking too long, then you should skip it, because none of the sections are ordered by difficulty
- Sleep a lot
- Follow your normal morning routine, don't eat a big breakfast if you usually don't
- Wear a lot of clothes and layers. In my experience, the testing rooms are really cold. You don't want to be sniffing while taking the test, so try to keep yourself warm. Especially if you test is in a cafeteria, it's going to be drafty and cold. (unless you live in Florida or Texas)
- Most of my previous stupid mistakes were mislabelling stuff (like switching the names of two things), so try to avoid that
- If you skip a question, star the question so you know to skip that bubble and come back (it's ok for the machine as long as you erase it)
- Relax. Being anxious about the test isn't going to do you any good.
 - Related to this: try not to study the day before. If you really want to make yourself feel better though, take one or two sections that you're the weakest at. Don't overexert yourself.
- If you listen to music before the test, try to listen to instrumental music lest lyrics get stuck in your head and you can't read/write.

Part V: Luck

ok "luck" isn't real, but I feel like the SAT has a different difficulty level each time I take it. (imo April 11th 2017 was easier than January 2017)

Technically, it doesn't matter what SAT you take, because the curves will adjust for the difficulty of the exam. So don't sweat about which date you should choose, and focus on studying or doing stuff you love.

Which means if your score isn't as awesome as you want it to be, and you have the means to pay for another test, you should take it one more time (after some more studying, of course.)

June 2018: apparently collegeboard loves giving out easy tests and producing hard curves rip.

Conclusion

This is the end of my guide, and thank you for reading my guide. As always, cliched but true, you are much much more than your scores. Even so, I hope you do well on your SAT. You've studied hard, came a long way, and I believe that you will do awesomely well. -ninja542

A SAT guide written for satire (might cheer you up): [click here](#)

General guide from r/SAT for future ref: [reddit.com/r/sat/wiki/index](https://www.reddit.com/r/sat/wiki/index)

Changelog: [goo.gl/vBdccR](https://www.goo.gl/vBdccR)

Bonus: SAT Subject Tests

Subject tests are made by collegeboard (sigh). Some colleges require two or three. They are scored from 200 to 800, and they all take 1 hr to complete. They are all multiple choice, while chemistry and biology has some special bubbling rules at the end.

You can take up to three on the same date. You may not take the SAT and SAT subject tests on the same date.

The languages with listening are only held on October. Spanish and French is offered year round (pretty sure but without listening except Oct), but the more special languages (such as Chinese) are only offered on October.

SAT Math subject test

Math has two levels. I have no idea what Math I is about, but if you're taking Math II, take it June after Honors precalc.

A ton of people score at or near 800, so the percentiles are very lopsided. The curve is very very generous, you can get 6 questions wrong I think and still get an 800. It's still best to get 0 wrong.

Personal experience: Pretended to study, but didn't actually. Rolled out of bed, took the test, and was fine. (don't complain to me if you do this and don't get a high score)

For real, take maybe one or two practice tests (Barron's was pretty good).

SAT Physics subject test

Physics is a fast paced test, 75 questions in one hour. No calculator or formulas given. Is primarily about AP Physics 1 stuff, but also includes Electricity and Magnetism, Optics, and a little Thermodynamics. Also a hard subject test.

Will include qualitative questions, apparently a recent test had a lot of these questions.

Personal experience: I already learned most of it in AP Physics, and just did some over the summer studying with a Barron's book. Definitely study for this test.

SAT Biology subject test

I have no idea what's on the test. There's the main test, and then there's two options, Ecology and Molecular. Apparently ecology is easier, but molecular is better for people who've taken AP biology.

The main test will have a lot of plant questions (according to a surprised classmate)

SAT Chemistry subject test

Seems to be one of the hardest science subject tests. It's about chemistry? Idk man.

AP Chemistry/IB Chemistry HL might cover everything, but you want to make sure that you know everything that's going to be on the test, so borrow a prep book from the library (Barron's is commonly recommended).