

10 Most Important Things To Help You Prepare For The SAT (in a crunch)

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So you waited until the last minute to prepare for the SAT and now you are in a time crunch. It is only a couple weeks away and between soccer practice, theater, friends and homework you only foresee a few open days to actually get some study time in. Don't fear, it happens to many students. The most important thing to do is stay calm and buckle down now. Below you will find 10 critical things to start accomplishing TODAY to begin preparing for the SAT.

1) Emulate the testing conditions every time you take a practice test.

By this point in the game, you might as well jump into the test cold turkey and see how you manage. It is not entirely sink or swim since there is some middle ground. However, it is important to see how you score to know where your study efforts need to be focused. Ideally you want to swim, and not just swim, but do the backstroke with flying colors, so let's set you up for success. The best way to begin a practice test is to create the exact conditions you will find yourself in on actual test day. Simulating the testing environment will help to better prepare and reduce stress on the day of the exam.

2) Give the first questions your full attention.

It is important to know that all SAT questions are ranked the exact same, meaning no one question is given anymore points than another. Whether one question is more difficult, pay no mind. You don't have to try to prove your wits on the harder problems (HINT: which are at the end of each section). Rather, give yourself the time to focus on the earlier, easier questions. Getting more points in the beginning will work in your advantage at the end, versus trying to race through easier questions just to be met with the difficulty. Sloppy test taking can lead to unnecessary mistakes.

3) Use the answers to find your answer - POE

The math question answers are generally placed lowest to highest. If you are unsure about an answer, use the middle option, plug it into an equation and see where you end up. From here, whether or not it is the correct answer, you can better determine if you need a lower or high result from the one you had already chosen. Use POE – process of elimination. Rather than seek out the correct answer, look for the wrong one, eliminating one question gets you 25% closer!

4) Prepare for the essay – it is not optional!

Although you are unable to come prepared with a predetermined essay topic, since this is provided the day of, you can at least come prepared with some historical facts to weave into any generalized SAT essay topic. The more specific you are in your essay, the more points you will receive. Dates, historical figures and notable events are given more credit. The less generalized your writing style, the better.

5) Use the booklet to write on

Get down and dirty with your test booklet, it is there to help you. Write all over it, anything you want – pertaining to the test that is. The more you get things out of your head and onto the paper, the less hard-pressed you will be to remembering them in the future, and moreover, the more space you will have in your mind for actual thinking. The memory is going to fail you with heightened states of stress. Use your resources, even if it is as simple as some paper.

6) Transfer questions at the end to save time.

I believe this is pretty self-explanatory. It is important to shave off time wherever possible. It is imperative to make the best use of every minute, you will need all of them. It is much faster to simply circle your final answers in the test book itself and later transfer them onto the scantron when you are 100% sure!

7) Slow down

No need to rush! The faster you go, the sloppier and more muddled your decisions will be, causing you to make careless, unnecessary mistakes that most likely wouldn't have happened if you were to have taken a moment to double check your work. Don't be careless.

8) Cross-check

It would be best to give yourself a few moments after coming to a conclusion with your answer to verify your decision. At the end, when you do finally transfer all your answers onto the scantron, make 100% sure you are transferring them to the correct row. It is easy to get sloppy in the mad-dash to the finish line. Refrain from being overly cavalier to prevent errors. Remain modest, attentive and focused with your test taking endeavors.

9) Don't second guess

Remember, test takers get penalized $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point for wrong answers. If you don't know an answer, it is better to skip it than guess, since zero points is better than a $\frac{1}{4}$ point reduction.

10) Study the problems you had difficulty with

After each test, look at the problems you had the most difficult time on. Whatever problems you were the weakest at are the ones that need more attention. Don't forget about the others, but prioritize the areas you had wasted the most time on due to difficulty. After focusing on those questions, repeat tips 1- 10 again and see if your focused attention paid off!

While it would be ideal to give yourself a full three months of studying in advanced, sometimes that doesn't always happen. Focus on the test itself – the practice test that is – by taking it over and over again, using the above tips. Stay as disciplined as possible, it will pay off!

Source:

http://testprep.about.com/od/tipsfortesting/a/SAT_TestTips.htm