

## **The New SAT: What You Need to Know**

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In academic terms, the SAT is generally considered the milestone of tests, something that demonstrates success, intelligence and resilience. It is an exam that demonstrates you've reached the end of an era - out of adolescence and into adulthood. Often deemed as one of the most important education qualifiers in one's academic lifetime; apart from all those other tests one might have to take if choosing to proceed into scholarly territory, but I'll refrain from digression. If a student makes a decision to continue onto college, post high school, they will inevitably be met with standardized test hurdles. Since there is no way around them other than through, well, if you can't beat them join them, right? And by joining we mean being readily prepared so that the "hurdle" is not a struggle, but rather a well met challenge you can plow through to obtain the academic career of your dreams. From college choice to scholarship money, have the SATs work to your advantage.

The concern generally involves the question of - how does one prepare? Moreover, students are now questioning what the new, redesigned version of the SAT entails and how one switches gears after eagerly preparing for the former within the past year?

As of **March 2016** students will experience not only a new layout, but the content, time and length will also be entirely revamped. The newest version will be testing more heavily on life readiness, for both in-and-out of the classroom. Skillsets such as reasoning, data analysis and critical thinking will be given more weight in comparison to previous years, as the SATs move away from testing antiquated knowledge and into more relevant, life applicable skills, vocabulary and equations needed to thrive as a successful citizen.

How does one properly prepare for these new changes that are to come, around this time next year? Studying for the new SAT needs an entirely different approach from that of its predecessor, given that the newest version is demanding students to think at a more abstract and critical capacity than ever before. Rather than have test takers regurgitate information that was crammed while studying, the tests are instead requiring students to be contemplative and process complex problems throughout the exam. The emphasis is on student competence, rather than memorization and tricks. Preparation is therefore even more imperative to conditioning cognition in order to be able to respond and operate sharply to difficult tasks. Learning how to reason and analyze comes with training and practice, something adults take for granted given the constant need to navigate life autonomously. However, adolescence-to-young adults have limited experience in this field, and therefore need help exercising these decision-making muscles. There is little alternative to test prep for many students since the redesigned SAT format is eliminating the ability to cram or learn tricks because, well to put it

simply, those methods generally don't fly in the real world, so why test for them when preparing for reality?

Here are a few suggestions for students to better prepare for the new SAT:

### **Format & Content**

Format and content changed completely, meaning – test time, length and overall scores have been redesigned as well. Some of these differences include - no more penalties for incorrect answers and content will be based on problem solving that will better demonstrate college & career readiness. In addition, vocabulary is reflected in the reading passages, asking students to identify the vocabulary in context of the content, with a greater emphasis on words that are useful in everyday scenarios, rather than obscure lexicon only utilized in academic standardized test environments.

### **Mastery is a Must**

Tricks & cramming is becoming outdated and juvenile as life concepts are taking precedent in the standardized test world. One of the newer sections – the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Section – will include a similar format to that of the science and social science section, using charts and graphs that students are likely to experience later on in their careers. Questions will also build on one another, making it imperative for students to apply previously acquired information from the test to future problems.

### **There Are Other Tests**

Getting nervous about the changes? Look into the ACT, another perfectly fine option for college entrance. Look at all the options you can consider, understand the choices and see what would work best for your learning abilities.

### **When, When & When**

**March 2016** is when the new test will first be administered and therefore, would be affecting primarily the 2017 graduating class and beyond. If you are graduating in 2016, you are in luck! The best option would be to take the last of the older version in January 2016, before that choice is no longer an option.

Start preparing early. Begin looking for programs that work at your speed. Make sure the program you choose has had high success rates before investing [your parents] money. Not all test prep is comparable. Do your homework!

Source:

<https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/sat/redesign>

<http://time.com/13080/9-things-changing-on-the-new-sat/>

<http://blog.powerscore.com/sat/bid/338676/The-Top-10-Things-We-Know-About-the-New-SAT>

