

15 Tips for SAT TEST DAY

#1 Take care of yourself before the test

Try to rest and relax and get up at your normal time, if you can. Get a little exercise if you can – to help you manage stress and promote a calm and clear mind.

#2 Eat a healthy breakfast

Your brain burns a lot of energy when you are working it hard, so make sure it is fueled up for the test. Also make sure you have had enough to drink, including caffeine if you normally drink caffeine, but maybe a little less than usual since you may be feeling nervous.

#3 Be calm and confident

You got this! This is easier said than done, but try to stay calm and confident and avoid anxious thoughts. You're ready for this!

#4 Pack and arrive early

Gather your things that you have packed the night before. Plan to arrive at the test site early. Remember to leave your cell phone at home. It is not allowed at the test site. No smart-watches, or mp3 players or anything else of the sort! Also no colored pens or highlighters.

#5 Answer the easy questions first

Answer all the questions that are easy, and then return to ones you marked as hard. Every question on the SAT is worth the same amount. You do not receive extra points for more difficult questions. When you get to a question that is hard:

- Mark any answers you know or think are wrong
- Circle it to come back to later, and mark it as (H) hard
- Move to the next question.

Getting to questions that you know how to do will boost your confidence, and help you get into a groove.

#6 Guess aggressively

The SAT does not penalize you for wrong answers, which means you should answer every question in every single section, even if it means randomly filling in bubbles at the end of the test. Be sure to budget your time to allow for guessing.

Guessing won't hurt your score. In fact, if you leave blank bubbles on your SAT answer sheet, you are throwing away potential points. See our article on strategies for guessing.

#7 Use the process of elimination

Rule out any answer that you know can't be correct. Mark them out in your booklet. And if an answer seems less likely to you, make a note about that, too.

The SAT has only one correct answer for each question. You should be able to eliminate all the others. Even if you can only eliminate one possible answer, it will increase your chance of guessing the correct answer.

If you're struggling with a question, try to figure out what answers can't work rather than focusing on what answers can.

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#8 Be neat

Make sure you fill in the bubbles clearly and that they line up with the correct question.

Seriously. It pays to be careful and tidy. A machine is grading your answers. If you have stray marks or accidentally get off by a number, you might get questions wrong that you answered correctly.

#9 Budget your time

It's easy to lose track of time so make sure to pay attention to how much time is allotted for each section, and how much time you have remaining.

Ideally, you pace yourself to that you can:

- 1st ⇒ Answer easy questions
- 2nd ⇒ Answer hard questions, eliminate any wrong answers and then guess from remaining options
- 3rd ⇒ Check your work. Everyone makes careless mistakes..

#10 Your first take is usually correct

Don't change an answer unless you're certain you've made an error.

#11 Markup your test book

Write it in, mark it up, cross out answers that you know are wrong, and do scratch work on it. While you will want to be neat on the answer grid, you do not have to be neat in your test book.

#12 Bring a watch

Don't forget to bring your own watch to the testing center. There isn't always a clock at the testing center that you can see.

#13 Check your work

When you have time at the end of a section, go back and check your answers. You will be tired, but do it anyway. Seriously. It is super easy to make careless mistakes, and the only way to catch them is to review your work.

#14 One section at a time

The SAT is a series of short sections. Stay focused on the section you are working on.

#15 Put your pencil down

It can be hard to relax during a big test. One thing that works for me when I start feeling anxious, is to do a mini meditation.

- Stop. Put your pencil down. Close your eyes.
- Take several deep breaths.
- Imagine you are in a favorite, relaxing place, maybe the beach, with no worries in the world.
- Focus only on breathing for 30 seconds.
- Shake out your arms. Relax your shoulders.

After a mini meditation, you should feel more relaxed and able to focus.