

UC Davis Project

A Message from Su Yeong Kim, Chief Researcher

We are very pleased to share with you the following information about preparing for the new SAT exam. We are planning a follow-up study in the future and ask for your continued participation. If your address or phone number changes, please update us. Our contact information is on the last page of the newsletter.

We hope that you find the newsletter informative and useful. We sincerely appreciate your participation in the project!



Strategies for Taking the Exam

In our previous newsletter, we shared with you the facts about the new SAT I and SAT II. While understanding the structure of the tests is the first step to success, building your own test-taking strategies is also important. With that in mind, we would like to share with you some test-taking tips and resources to prepare for the test.

In this newsletter, you will find test-taking tips with a focus on the different sections of the new SAT I. In general, what we find to be the most important for test-takers is planning ahead and preparing as early as possible. Studying progressively is the key. It is better to study 15 minutes everyday for several months than to cram everything in during the last few weeks of the test. Procrastinating will only drain your energy, and you may not perform as optimally on the test. In the following pages, we have included strategies to help you plan your study schedule and to better prepare for the test. There is also information on test preparation resources, such as the College Board, Kaplan, and Princeton Review.

Tips during the SAT I exam

- 1. Answer questions that you are good at first**
Each correct answer is worth the same number of points regardless of the difficulty of the questions. Get as many right answers as possible before time runs out.
- 2. Keep track of time**
Calculate the average time you can spend on one question for different sections and keep track of it. Remember to spend no more than 3 minutes per question unless you have a lot of time left.
- 3. Be meticulous**
Be sure that the question number matches the number on your answer sheet. You can record the answers in the test booklet first, and then transfer them to the answer sheet in a batch.
- 4. Never grab the first appealing answer**
Always read the questions thoroughly, eliminate answer choices one at a time, and cross them out in your test booklet.

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5. Choose direct, simple answers

Often the longer answers are designed to sound impressive so you will pick them.

6. Always make an educated guess

If you can eliminate one or two wrong answers, make an educated guess. If you have no idea, it is better to leave it blank.

7. The unknown is sometimes the right answer

If you have eliminated all but one answer, and that answer is unknown to you, pick it anyway. If the others are wrong, that one has to be right.

8. Do not waste too much time on any one question

If a question is too hard, move on to the next question. You can revisit the questions you have skipped later if there is time.

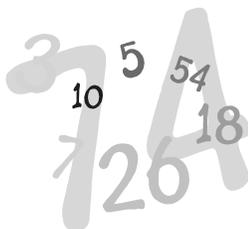
9. Study the questions and the answers for clues to the correct answer

Practice with various question types. This can help you get a sense of what they are asking for in each question type.



Tips on Math Section

1. Try to simplify the arithmetic if it looks complicated.
2. Draw pictures to visualize the problems if necessary.
3. Remember the pictures provided are not drawn to scale unless otherwise specified.
4. Convert and work the problem in one unit if different units are presented in the question.
5. When doing a geometry problem, draw a picture if it is not provided. Then, plug in information as you learn it.
6. For word problems, circle or underline key words and figures to better understand the questions.
7. Eliminate answer choices one by one.
8. If you are stumped on any questions, try the "pick and plug" method to get the answer -- pick the answer choices one by one and plug it into the question. Try every answer choices until you find the right one.



Tips on Sentence Completion

1. Read and reread the given sentence.
2. Circle key words if needed.
3. Note the key words as clues.
4. Determine the sentence type (e.g., definition, comparison, cause-and-effect).
5. Think of your own answer for the blank(s) before looking at the answer choices.
6. Eliminate answer choices one by one.

Tips on Reading Comprehension

1. Skim the questions before reading the passage.
2. Skim through questions to find the easy ones to answer first.
3. Read the passage as quickly as you can.
4. Read for what is suggested or implied but not stated.
5. Focus on the main ideas.
6. Circle or underline key words as you read the passage.
7. Isolate key facts and examples.
8. Note the central idea of each paragraph as you read it.
9. Decode attitude, style, or mood of the passage.
10. Eliminate answers one by one.
11. Avoid answers that express strong emotion.
12. For factual passages, choose neutral or positive answers.

Tips on Multiple-Choice Items in Writing Section

1. For identifying sentence errors and for the section on sentence correction, read and reread the given sentence to detect awkward structure.
2. For the section on improving paragraphs, skim the question first and read the passage as quickly as you can to detect logic errors within the paragraph.
3. Circle or underline key words as you read the sentences in the paragraph.
4. Focus on grammar, word use, sentence construction, parallelism, and subject-verb agreement.
5. Eliminate answer choices one by one.

Test Preparation Resources

There are several well-known organizations which provide free practice tests for the new SAT I and II on their websites. Test-preparation books and tutorials are also available at reasonable prices. Below are some information about free practice tests, test-preparation books and classes, and online courses.

The College Board

The College Board provides free practice questions and a full-length test for the new SAT I on the following webpage:

http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html

The College Board also publishes popular test-preparation books. The “The Official SAT Study Guide: For the New SAT” provides 8 full-length tests, hints and strategies, and exercise to improve student’s scores. “The Official SAT Online Course” is an all-in-one test preparation program that can be accessed anytime from any computer connected to the Internet. It gives additional lessons, practice, and feedback for each section. For SAT II, the book “Real SAT II: Subject Tests” provides test-taking strategies and practice questions for all 18 subjects. For language subject tests, there are also instructions for obtaining free tapes.

When you register for your first SAT I, you may want to order the “Question and Answer Service” for \$24. The QAS gives you a chance to review a copy of all sections of the SAT you took, a record of your answers, the correct answers, and scoring instructions. The service also includes information

Tips on Essay-Writing

1. Use 5 minutes to read the essay question and think about how to respond.
2. There is no “right answer” to the essay question. Instead, make sure to organize ideas logically and present strong support for the position you take.
3. Give multiple examples or an extended example to elaborate your point(s).
4. Avoid using colloquial style of writing and slang. Use standard written English.
5. Proof-read the essay if time allows. Even if you have only one minute left, check for spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, and awkward transitions.
6. Write legibly. Handwriting will not count against you, but essay readers must be able to read your writing in order to score your essay.

about the types of questions and the level of difficulty for each question, so that students can be better prepared for their next SAT I exam.

Kaplan and the Princeton Review

Both Kaplan and Princeton Review are private companies specializing in test preparation for students pursuing higher education. They offer a variety of free practice questions, full-length tests, and test-taking strategies for the new SAT I and II on their website (Kaplan: <http://www.kaptest.com>; The Princeton Review: <http://www.princetonreview.com>).

Kaplan and the Princeton Review publish test-preparation books for the new SAT I and SAT II. Courses and tutoring services are also available in order to help students with specific needs in preparing for the tests. Both Kaplan and the Princeton Review offer money-back guarantee if the student’s SAT score does not improve. Tuition fee varies with different options for courses and services. Please be advised that these courses and services can be costly, up to \$900 per course. If you are interested, please visit their websites for more information.

Free events such as college admission workshops and practice test sessions are offered by Kaplan and the Princeton Review throughout the year. If you are interested, please check out their websites to search for the latest events held in your neighborhood.

More information about test preparation is available at the companies’ websites. For official information about the tests, please visit the College Board website.

Are you Moving?

Please update your address and phone number with us!
We would like to keep in touch with you for a follow-up project in the near future.

Updating your information is easy:

By Phone: (415) 271-0390

By Phone: (866) 7-FAMILY (This is a toll-free number.)

By E-mail: projectfamilies@yahoo.com

By Web: <http://www.geocities.com/projectfamilies/davis/>

Please note our new e-mail address and website!



Reference

Carris, J. D., & Crystal, M. R. (2002). *Panic Plan for the SAT*. New Jersey: Peterson's.

The College Board website:
<http://www.collegeboard.com>

Kaplan website:
<http://www.kaptest.com>

Princeton Review website:
<http://www.princetonreview.com>

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