



# Tips & Tricks for the SAT

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Hi, I'm Josh. I tutor with School on Wheels, and I've worked with lots of students who feel nervous about standardized tests. The SAT can seem intimidating at first, but once you understand its structure and practice the right way, it becomes much more manageable. This guide explains what's on the SAT, how to approach it, and strategies for when you're unsure.

## What Is the SAT?

The SAT is one of the main exams colleges use to understand your academic skills. It covers **Reading & Writing** and **Math**, with a total score ranging from **400 to 1600**. Everything tested comes from material you've already seen in school.

### **Reading & Writing**

54 questions | 64 minutes

### **Math**

44 questions | 70 minutes

*Note: The SAT no longer has an essay section.*

## SAT vs. ACT - Key Differences

	<b>SAT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
Science	No stand-alone science section	Includes a separate science section
Math	More algebra and data analysis	More geometry & trig
Calculator	Only some math problems allow it	Permitted for every math problem
Timing	Slightly more breathing room	Tighter timing
Scoring	Total score: 400-1600	Composite score: 1-36
Essay	No essay option	Optional essay available

## Which test fits you best?

Try a practice test for each. If you're comfortable moving quickly and analyzing charts, the ACT may feel smoother. If you'd rather have a little more time and you're strong in algebra, the SAT might be the better match.

## Tips & Tricks for Each Section

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### Reading & Writing – 54 Questions | 64 Minutes

- Focus on the **big picture**: main idea, author's purpose, and tone.
- For grammar questions, watch for subject-verb agreement, pronoun clarity, and comma use.
- Clear, concise answers usually win out over wordy ones.
- Always choose based on what the text actually says, not what you think should be true.

### Math – 44 Questions | 70 Minutes

- Expect a heavy emphasis on algebra, linear equations, and word problems.
- Be ready for charts, graphs, and data-based questions.
- Review essential formulas: slope, quadratic equations, circle area, probability.
- Pay attention to calculator vs. non-calculator sections so you can pace yourself properly.

### When You're Stuck

- **Rule out bad choices** - cross out answers that don't make sense.
- **Don't leave blanks** - there's no penalty, so always put something down.

### On Test Day

- Get a good night's sleep & eat breakfast.
- Take deep breaths before you start.
- Answer every question - there's no penalty for guessing.

- **Have a go-to guess** - if you're running low on time, stick with one letter (like B or C).
- **Keep moving** - if you're stuck, skip it and return later if time allows.
- Pace yourself - keep an eye on the clock.
- If you finish early, double-check your work!

Remember: the SAT doesn't define your intelligence or your future - it's just one piece of the admissions puzzle. What matters most is building consistent habits, staying calm under pressure, and showing persistence. Stick with your prep, keep practicing, and trust that effort adds up. You're more capable than you realize, and you've got this!