

Contact us for SAT Courses and Tutoring!

151 West 46th Street, Suite 900 New York, NY 10036
sat.bellcurves.com | 877-223-3828

"Bell Curves taught me how to avoid the kinds of mistakes on the SAT that were keeping me from reaching my full potential. Bell Curves helped me push my score beyond my goal of 2300 points – a plateau I was having trouble reaching on my own. In short, Bell Curves was a GREAT help. I could not have done it without them."

- Emmanuel M.

10 Winning Strategies

to beat the SAT[®]



Bell Curves

Get Ahead of the Curve!

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SAT Registration

Test Date	Registration Deadline
Early October	Late August
Early November	Late September
Early December	Late October
Late January	Mid December
Mid March	Late January
Early May	Late March
Early June	Late April

When: The SAT is always offered on a Saturday morning (or Sunday morning for those who observe Saturday Sabbath).

How often: The SAT can be taken as many times as you choose, but in most cases it should be taken only 2–3 times.

How much: The cost is \$50.00. (Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch typically qualify for fee waivers, check with your college counselor.)

Score reporting: Your scores will be kept on record for five years and will be reported to schools upon your request. When you register for the SAT, you may select up to four schools to receive your scores at no cost to you. After you have completed the test, you can send additional reports at a cost of \$11.00 per school.

Contact info: Visit www.collegeboard.com or call 866-756-7346.



The SAT offers Score Choice™, but in many cases you don't need to use it since most colleges will automatically use the best score from every SAT test you've taken.

Know what you need!

The SAT is one of the top three factors used by most colleges to determine which applicants are admitted. Since the SAT is so important to colleges, you should know what score will make you attractive to the schools you want to attend. The chart below shows the 25th to 75th percentiles of combined SAT scores for some popular schools.

School	SAT Range (Math + Reading + Writing)	SAT Subject Tests
Columbia University	2080 - 2350	2 required
Duke University	2020 - 2300	2 required
University of Notre Dame	1970 - 2250	Required for some applicants
Emory University	1960 - 2250	Recommended
New York University	1900 - 2790	2 required
UCLA	1760 - 2140	2 required
SUNY Binghamton	1800 - 2060	Considered if submitted
Butler University	1590 - 1880	—
University of Connecticut	1670 - 1960	—
Howard University	1330 - 1980	—
Florida State University	1680 - 1960	Considered if submitted
Michigan State University	1430 - 1870	—
SUNY Purchase	1480 - 1800	—
Virginia Commonwealth University	1450 - 1780	—
Temple University	1510 - 1810	—
Morehouse University	1380 - 1740	—
Florida A&M University	1280 - 1530	—
University of North Carolina at Charlotte	1280 - 1960	—
Boston University	1780 - 2050	—

Students scoring below the average SAT score for a particular college may still gain admission based on a number of other factors (such as a higher than average GPA, AP coursework, academic rigor of classes taken, etc.).

Build your endurance with real practice!

The SAT consists of almost four hours of testing. Taking practice tests will build your endurance and stamina. Like an athlete, you will perform at your best only if you train and practice regularly.

Section	Content	Timing
1	Essay	25 minutes
2–7	2 Math (one with 18 and one with 20 questions) 2 Critical Reading (24 questions each) 1 Writing (35 questions) 1 <i>experimental</i> (? questions)	25 minutes each
8–9	1 Critical Reading (19 questions) 1 Math (16 questions)	20 minutes each
10	Writing (14 questions)	10 minutes
Total Time		3 hours 45 minutes



*Each SAT test administered has one section that is considered experimental. The test-taker does not know ahead of time which section will be experimental. This section can be Math, Critical Reading, or Writing. This section is used for information gathering purposes only, and is not scored.

Bell Curves students who took three or more practice tests improved an average of 100 points more than those who took two or fewer practice tests.

Learn what will be tested!

Knowing what's going to be on the test allows you to better prepare. To get your best score, spend 2-3 months before the test reviewing rules and learning effective strategies.

Critical Reading

(67 multiple-choice questions)

The Critical Reading sections measure your ability to:

- determine the meanings of words
- understand an author's purpose and reasoning
- make multiple, layered inferences
- understand the central idea
- identify the relationship of ideas within and across different texts

Mathematics

(44 multiple-choice questions, 10 grid-in questions)

The Mathematics sections test math learned in 7th through 10th grades. Specifically, the Math sections include questions on:

- number operations and definitions
- algebra and functions
- geometry and measurement
- word problems and mathematical reasoning
- data analysis, statistics, and probability

Writing Skills

(49 multiple-choice questions, 1 Essay)

The Writing Skills sections measure your ability to effectively use the rules of standard written English. Specifically, the Writing Skills sections test your ability to:

- manage word choice and grammatical relationships between words
- manage grammatical structures used to modify or compare
- manage phrases and clauses in a sentence

Knowing what to expect on the SAT will make you more confident and enable you to do better!

Work smarter, not harder...

Most students attempt to answer every question on the SAT, but shouldn't!



Belle Curves

Test: BC Diagnostic 4A2D

Date: April 29, 2012

Class: Mon/Wed Class {May SAT}

Subject	Raw Score	Scaled Score
Critical Reading	24	460
Math	24	490
Writing	15	450
Essay	9	-
Total	-	1400

Overview	Critical Reading								Math					Writing						
Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Difficulty	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5
Correct	A	A	E	E	D	B	C	D	D	D	C	D	B	E	E	A	C	D	D	B
Student	✓	✓	✓	B	B	✓	✓	C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	C	E	E	C	
Section 3	Raw Score: 8.75				Easy: 6/9				Medium: 5/7				Hard: 0/4			Total: 11/20				

Hard questions are usually at the end of each section.

Question	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
Difficulty	1 1 2 2 3 3 3 5 1 2 2 3 3 4 3 4 4 5
Correct	D C E D B B E C 9 .2 or 1/5 28 0<x<1.5 or 0<x<3/2 4 36 4.5 or 9/2 9360 240 1.2 or 6/5
Student	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ E ✓ A A 29 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 14 - - - -
Section 7	Raw Score: 9 Easy: 6/7 Medium: 3/6 Hard: 0/5 Total: 9/18

Question	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
Difficulty	1 1 1 2 1 3 3 3 3 3 3 4 3 4 5 4
Correct	D C A C B E C B D B A E D C E E
Student	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ - B ✓ A ✓ ✓ C A - C
Section 8	Raw Score: 6.75 Easy: 5/5 Medium: 3/7 Hard: 0/4 Total: 8/12

Points were lost by answering hard questions incorrectly.

Raw Scores

Correct Answers = +1
Wrong Answers = -1/4
Blank = 0

Current Pacing Performance							
Difficulty	Attempted	Right	Wrong	Skip	Accuracy(%)	Hit Ratio™(%)	Raw
Easy	21	17	4	0	81%	81%	16
Medium	18	11	7	2	55%	62%	9.25
Hard	8	0	8	5	0%	0%	-2
Total	Scaled Score: 480						Raw: 23.25

Optimized Pacing Performance								
Difficulty	Attempts	Target	Right	Wrong	Skip	Hit Ratio™(%)	Raw	
Easy	21	99%	21	0	0	100%	21	
Medium	12	81%	10	2	9	83%	9.5	
Hard	0	-	0	0	12	-	0	
Total	Optimized Scaled Score: 550						Raw: 30.5	

Since harder questions come in predictable locations and you lose points for wrong answers, you can increase your score by slowing down and focusing on the easy and medium questions.

...by focusing on accuracy, not speed!

To get a great score, you should focus on being as accurate as possible rather than finishing as quickly as possible.



Belle Curves

Test: BC Diagnostic 2A2C

Date: May 12, 2012

Class: Mon/Wed Class {May SAT}

Subject	Raw Score	Scaled Score
Critical Reading	29	490
Math	33	580
Writing	18	500
Essay	10	-
Total	-	1570

Overview			Critical Reading				Math					Writing								
Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Difficulty	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5
Correct	D	B	D	C	B	E	A	C	C	D	E	E	D	A	A	A	A	D	C	D
Student	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	D	✓	✓	✓	✓	E	✓		-	-	-	
Section 2	Raw Score: 12.5				Easy: 9/9				Medium: 4/7				Hard: 0/4				Total: 12/20			

Skipping harder questions can positively impact your score.

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Difficulty	1	1	2	3	3	5	4	4	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	4
Correct	A	E	C	B	A	E	E	A	12	2	60<x<65	2025	1	67	20/3 or 6.66 or 6.67	2/3 or .666 or .667	2000	90
Student	✓	✓	✓	✓	E	✓	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	14	-	-	-	-
Section 6	Raw Score: 9.25				Easy: 6/6				Medium: 3/4				Hard: 1/5		Total: 10/16			

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Difficulty	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5
Correct	A	D	D	D	C	A	B	E	C	B	D	E	E	C	C	B
Student	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	C	✓	✓	✓	B	-	✓	-	✓
Section 9	Raw Score: 9.5 Easy: 5/5 Medium: 4/6 Hard: 1/5 Total: 10/16															

Focusing on accuracy makes a difference!

Improving your Hit Ratio increases scores!

Scaled Scores

Raw Score	Critical Reading	Math	Writing Skills	Essay
33	520	570	580	560
32	510	560	570	550
31	500	550	560	540
30	500	540	550	530
29	490	540	540	520
28	480	530	530	510
27	480	520	520	510
26	470	510	510	500
25	460	500	500	490
24	460	490	480	480
23	450	480	470	470
22	440	480	460	460
21	440	470	450	450
20	430	460	440	450
19	420	450	430	440
18	410	440	420	430
17	430	410	420	420
16	420	410	410	410

Current Pacing Performance						
Difficulty	Attempted	Right	Wrong	Skip	Accuracy(%)	Hit Ratio™(%)
Easy	20	20	0	0	100%	100%
Medium	16	11	5	2	61%	69%
Hard	5	2	3	11	13%	40%
Total	Scaled Score: 560					Raw: 32

Optimized Pacing Performance						
Difficulty	Attempts	Target	Right	Wrong	Skip	Hit Ratio™(%)
Easy	21	100%	21	0	0	100%
Medium	14	93%	13	1	0	93%
Hard	6	60%	4	2	13	67%
Total	Optimized Scaled Score: 620					Raw: 37.25

The best way to do well on the SAT is to have a high "Hit Ratio" - the number of correct questions/number of questions attempted. Answering every question, especially the hardest ones, may negatively impact your Hit Ratio.

Plug in numbers when given variables!

Multiple-Choice Questions

Easy

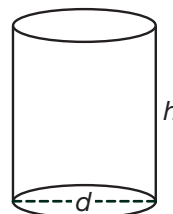
1. Jason has built computers for 6 years less than Christina has. If Christina has built computers for c years, which of the following expressions represents the number of years that Jason has built computers?

(A) $c + 6$
 (B) $c - 6$
 (C) $2c - 6$
 (D) $2c + 6$
 (E) $6 - 2c$

Medium

2. If for all positive integers y , $x = y^3$ and $z = x^2 + x$, what is z in terms of y ?

(A) y^9
 (B) $y^6 + y^3$
 (C) $y^5 + y^3$
 (D) y^4
 (E) $y^2 + y$



Hard

3. The right circular cylinder shown above has diameter d and height h . Which of the following expressions represents the volume of the smallest rectangular box that completely contains the cylinder?

(A) $(d + h)^2$
 (B) d^2h^2
 (C) dh^2
 (D) d^2h
 (E) dh

Answers: B, B, D

SAT math questions are often made more difficult by testing multiple concepts at the same time.

Answer Critical Reading questions in your own words before looking at the choices!

Sentence Completions

Easy

4. The success of *Do the Right Thing* ----- director Spike Lee as one of the most ----- African American directors of the last two decades.

(A) established . . prominent
(B) buoyed . . irrelevant
(C) surrendered . . prolific
(D) decried . . cynical
(E) categorized . . mundane

Hard

6. The producer complained that the show's basic premise was downright -----, having no more pep and vigor than a -----.

(A) inchoate . . lullaby
(B) sprightly . . eulogy
(C) facetious . . ballad
(D) lugubrious . . dirge
(E) monotonous . . jingle

Medium

5. Adam gained a reputation for being a ----- because he was punished several times for bullying other children.

(A) stickler (B) naysayer (C) daredevil
(D) vandal (E) ruffian

Answers: A, E, D

Learning vocabulary words will help your performance in both sentence completions and passage-based reading.

Lugubrious: extremely mournful, sad

Inchoate: just beginning to develop

Facetious: joking (often inappropriately)

Dirge: funeral hymn or music

Eulogy: spoken or written tribute to someone dead

Sprightly: full of life and vigor

Monotonous: repetitious or uninteresting

Read only what you need to answer the given question!

Short Reading Questions

Line Passage 1

- One of the more striking recent changes is the wholesale adoption of the recycling ethic. This is especially true of the younger generation who give their parents humbling lectures for throwing
- 5 newspaper or metal cans in the trash can. The popularity of recycling is even more stunning when we consider the inconveniences associated with the practice. How many of us haven't been annoyed trying to decipher the
- 10 complicated rules about what can and what cannot be recycled? Plastic bottles can—but not their tops? Aluminum cans are recyclable—but not aluminum foil? People are so certain of the benefits of recycling that now, almost a
- 15 decade after the implementation of widespread recycling programs, there is no sign of the public becoming impatient with it.

Passage 2

- Mandatory recycling programs are not financially beneficial. The main benefit they
- 20 give is short term, helping only politicians and waste-management companies while diverting money from other more pressing social and environmental problems. These programs, which require extra governmental administrators
- 25 and educational public relations campaigns to explain what to recycle, consume scarce resources. Collecting recyclable items is more expensive than collecting an equal amount of garbage because trash haulers pick up less at
- 30 each stop. Recycling may actually be the most wasteful activity in modern times.

Easy

7. The author of Passage 2 would most likely characterize the “people” mentioned in line 13 as

(A) ignorant
(B) rational
(C) indecisive
(D) astute
(E) undemanding

Hard

8. The authors of both passages would most likely agree that recycling rules are

(A) unnecessary
(B) commendable
(C) unenforceable
(D) convoluted
(E) antiquated

Answers: A, D

For most Critical Reading questions you only need to read one paragraph to get your answer.

Avoid selecting “being” on writing questions!

Improving Sentences

Easy

9. Daniel believes that proper parenting requires personal attention, being the reason for his spending time with his children every day.
- (A) attention, being the reason for his spending time
 (B) attention and spending time is what is done
 (C) attention and being the reason he spends his time
 (D) attention; for this reason has been his spending time
 (E) attention; he therefore spends time

Hard

10. Mary was worried about how Joseph would react to the report, but in searching his face, he did not appear to be concerned.
- (A) in searching his face, he did not appear to be
 (B) his face being searched showed that he was not
 (C) by searching his face, it showed that he appeared not
 (D) a search of his face showed that he appeared not
 (E) searching his face, he did not appear to be

Error Identification

Easy

11. Four decades after Martin Luther King’s *I Have a Dream* speech inspire many people to discuss race tensions in their cities, new hope has been given by the 2008 election of Barack Obama.
- No error
- A
B
C
D
E

Hard

12. Chinese writer Kwok Tsun Chan is like the novelist Christopher Scott in her use of hyper nationalism, but unlike his books, she dwells on the psychological aspects of her characters. No error
- A
B
C
D
E

Answers: E, E, E, B, C

The Writing Skills section tests how clearly and consistently things are expressed. The specific grammar rules most often tested are verb agreement and tense, pronoun agreement and case, list consistency, comparison consistency, modifier clarity, and proper use of idioms.

Create a winning essay template before going to the test!

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

An excerpt of a speech by Nelson Mandela, originally written by Marianne Williamson

Assignment: Is our deepest fear that we are extremely powerful? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experiences, or observations.

Template:

Introduction : 3–5 sentences that state my position on the topic (quote part of the assignment);
Indicate the examples I plan to use

Body paragraph 1: 3–7 sentences that explain example 1 and how it supports my position

Body paragraph 2: 3–7 sentences that explain example 2 and how it supports my position

Conclusion: 3–5 sentences that summarize how my examples are clearly supportive of my position and close the essay

Our favorite sentences:

I firmly believe that (insert topic). My position is most clearly demonstrated when you consider (example 1 and example 2).

First, when one examines (example 1), it becomes clear that his life supports (position).

Our favorite examples:

Edgar Allan Poe...

- ...showed perseverance (no one liked his work during his time)
- ...demonstrates that belief in self leads to good things

World War II...

- ...showed teamwork (together, the Allies overcame what one could not alone)
- ...shows the benefits of teamwork, democracy, and community

Lord of the Flies...

- ...by William Golding; main characters Piggy, Jack, and Ralph
- ...shows the nature of man in extreme circumstances

The essay is worth up to 180 of the total possible points in the Writing Skills section. The key factors in maximizing your essay score are clarity of position, relevance of examples, and proper essay structure.