

SAT — 2025-compliant Study Guide

This document is a corrected, reorganized, and updated version of SAT notes. It has been proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation, clarity, and organization. All time-sensitive factual claims (format, timings, device rules, calculator policy, ID rules) were verified against official College Board sources and summarized in the chat message that accompanies this document.

Basics

Full name: SAT — Scholastic Assessment Test (commonly called the SAT)

Owner / Administrator: College Board (a U.S. not-for-profit educational organization).

Purpose: Standardized assessment used primarily for college admissions and placement; also used by schools and scholarship programs.

How to register: Create an account on the College Board website (or through your school if taking the School Day SAT), choose a test date and centre, and complete registration and payment. Schools can register students for School Day administrations.

Digital delivery: Since international rollouts began in 2023–2024, the SAT is administered in a digital format for most students. The College Board's official testing application is **Bluebook**; test takers must download Bluebook and complete a short exam setup 1–5 days before test day. If a student cannot bring an approved device, device lending/loaner options are available through the College Board or the school/test centre.

What to bring: admission ticket (generated by Bluebook), approved photo ID (or school ID when testing at your school), fully charged approved device with Bluebook installed (or use a school device), power cord/portable charger, approved calculator (see policy), pencil/eraser for scratch work (scratch paper is provided). Follow the exact “What to Bring” instructions from your registration confirmation and Bluebook.

Test structure & timing (official 2025 summary)

Overview: The digital SAT consists of **two sections: Reading & Writing and Math**. Each section is divided into **two equal-length modules**. The test is **multistage adaptive** (module-to-module). Total testing time (standard timing) is **2 hours and 14 minutes, plus a scheduled 10-minute break** between the two sections.

Timing & question counts: (standard administration)

- **Reading & Writing:** 64 minutes total; **54 questions** (divided across 2 modules).
- **Math:** 70 minutes total; **44 questions** (divided across 2 modules).
- **Total questions:** 98.
- **Scheduled break:** 10 minutes between sections.

Modularity & adaptivity:

- The first module of each section contains a mix of easy, medium, and hard questions. Your performance on the first module determines whether the **second module** you receive is, on average, more difficult or less difficult. The number of questions per module is fixed; only difficulty may vary. Within a module you can navigate freely among questions until that module's time expires (you may preview, flag, and return to questions during the module).

Unscored / pretest items: A small number of unscored (non-operational / pretest) questions may be embedded within sections; they are indistinguishable to test takers and do not affect scores.

Scoring (summary)

- **Scale:** Total score ranges **400–1600**.
 - **Section scores:** Each main section (Reading & Writing, Math) is reported on a **200–800** scale; the two section scores are summed to create the total score.
 - **Raw → Scaled:** Your raw score (number of correct answers) is converted to a scaled section score using statistical equating. There is **no penalty for wrong answers** (i.e., answer every question).
 - **Reporting:** College Board provides score reports and percentiles; digital administrations use the same overall 400–1600 scale as previous forms of the SAT.
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Calculator & device policies (critical updates)

Calculator use: On the digital SAT, **you may use a calculator on all Math questions**. Bluebook includes a built-in graphing calculator. You may also bring your own approved handheld calculator.

CAS ban (recent change): The College Board updated its calculator policy in 2025: **calculators with CAS (computer algebra system) functionality are not permitted** on SAT

and PSAT administrations effective for specified 2025 sessions. Always check the College Board's official calculator policy and the permitted/prohibited lists immediately before test day.

Device (Bluebook) requirements: Bluebook runs on Windows, macOS, iPadOS, and school-managed Chromebooks (specific OS and hardware requirements vary). Your device must pass the Bluebook technical readiness checks during exam setup. Bring a power cord / portable charger; devices must maintain charge for the entire test session.

Test-day ID & admission checklist (short)

- Bring the **admission ticket** generated in Bluebook (1–5 days before test day).
 - Bring the **same photo ID** you used when registering (government ID or school photo ID if testing at your school) or an approved College Board Student ID form when necessary. If you fail to present valid ID, you may be refused entry.
 - Bring your **device with Bluebook installed and exam setup complete** (or confirm that the test centre will provide a device loaner).
 - Bring an **approved calculator**, power cord, and the admission materials.
 - **Prohibited items:** phones, smartwatches, unauthorized electronics, notes, textbooks, and other materials. Follow proctor instructions exactly.
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Reading & Writing (R&W) — what to expect

Time & items: 64 minutes; 54 questions total (two 32-minute modules).

Content: Reading comprehension, command of evidence, analysis of text, rhetorical skills, grammar and usage (editing & revising). Passages are authentic texts from literature, historical documents, social sciences, and natural sciences.

Question types: multiple choice; some items may ask about specific words in context, inference, main idea, function, structure, and data interpretation in passages.

Strategy tips: skim for main idea, annotate / highlight (Bluebook tools exist), practice pacing (≈1 minute 11 seconds per question average), anticipate question types, and practise passage mapping and evidence-based questions. Use Bluebook practice tests to become familiar with on-screen tools (highlight, strikeout, flag).

Math — what to expect

Time & items: 70 minutes; 44 questions total (two 35-minute modules).

Content domains: algebra & functions, problem solving & data analysis, geometry & trigonometry (limited), and advanced algebra. Emphasis on reasoning, modeling, and algebraic fluency.

Question types: multiple choice and student-produced responses (where you enter a numerical answer). Some items require use of the built-in graphing calculator or your own approved handheld calculator.

Strategy tips: practise entering numerical answers in Bluebook, use the built-in reference sheet when permitted, practice with the full calculator tool and speed with numeric entry. Since the test is adaptive, doing well on the first math module is important for access to the harder second module (if you're aiming for top scores).

Adaptive testing — implications & strategy

- **Module-to-module adaptivity:** performance on the first module influences the difficulty of the second module in that section.
 - **Navigation within a module:** you can move freely within a module; you cannot return to a previous module after its time expires.
 - **Strategy:** answer as accurately as possible in the first module to access the harder second module (which is necessary to reach the highest scaled scores). At the same time, do not lose points on easier questions — accuracy and time management matter.
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Common rules & scoring notes

- **No guessing penalty:** answer every question; random guessing is better than leaving blanks.
 - **Unscored pretest items:** a small number of questions may be pretest items and will not count toward scores.
 - **Score scale remains 400–1600;** section scores are 200–800.
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Practice & official resources

- College Board — SAT main pages and official practice materials (create College Board account).

- Bluebook — official testing app and device requirements.
 - Khan Academy — official SAT practice in partnership with College Board (free practice & full-length practice tests).
 - Official Digital SAT practice tests available inside Bluebook and on College Board practice pages.
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Proofreading & organisation changes made (summary)

1. Wrote a single, consolidated study guide organized into: Basics → Structure/Timing → Sections → Testing rules → Test-day checklist → Strategy tips.
 2. Fixed spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and verbose/ambiguous phrasing.
 3. Verified and updated all time-sensitive claims (digital delivery, Bluebook, module timing, break length, question counts, scoring scale, calculator policy) against official College Board sources and College Board PDFs.
 4. Used neutral, precise language and removed unsupported claims or guesses.
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Executive verdict — short

- **Core facts verified and corrected:** The SAT is now delivered digitally for most administrations; it contains **two sections** (Reading & Writing; Math), each split into **two modules**, with **64 minutes / 54 questions** for R&W and **70 minutes / 44 questions** for Math (total 98 questions and **2 hours 14 minutes** testing time). There is a **10-minute scheduled break** between sections. (College Board official pages.)
- **Scoring:** The digital SAT retains the **400–1600** total scale; each section is **200–800**. Raw scores are converted to scaled scores; **no penalty for wrong answers**. (College Board scoring guidance.)
- **Delivery & app:** Students use **Bluebook™** for exam setup, admission ticket generation, and to take the exam on approved devices (Windows, macOS, iPad, school Chromebooks). Bluebook must be installed and exam setup completed 1–5 days before test day. (College Board / Bluebook pages.)
- **Calculator policy (important 2025 change):** The College Board updated the SAT calculator rules in 2025 — **CAS (computer algebra system) calculators are prohibited** for SAT and PSAT administrations effective for specified 2025 windows. Always check the College Board’s official calculator policy and the permitted/prohibited lists before test day. (College Board calculator policy pages & PDF flyer.)
- **Adaptive testing & experimental items:** The SAT is module-to-module adaptive: performance on the first module affects the difficulty of the second. A **small number of**

indistinguishable, unscored pretest items may be embedded within sections.
(College Board test specifications and support pages.)

Short checklist (what you must verify immediately before your own test)

- Install **Bluebook** and complete exam setup 1–5 days before test day (generate admission ticket).
- Confirm **device compatibility** (Bluebook requirements) or reserve a device loaner.
- Check the **College Board calculator policy** for any updates (CAS ban effective for 2025 windows). Don't bring prohibited calculators.
- Bring valid **photo ID** per registration instructions (school ID may be acceptable if testing at your school).