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FEATURES

4 Practice Tests Online

Expert Strategies
Practice Sets
Study Tips

Ron Woldoff

Founder, National Test Prep



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SAT[®] Prep 2023

with Online Practice

by Ron Woldoff

**for
dummies[®]**
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SAT® Prep 2023 For Dummies® with Online Practice

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2022936687

ISBN 978-1-119-88679-2 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-88680-8 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-88681-5 (ebk)

SAT® Prep 2023 For Dummies® with Online Practice

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Introduction

Years ago, during an early gig as a consultant, I sat at a desk that had a *For Dummies* book on the shelf. The book was something office related, like *SQL For Dummies*. I took a sticky note and wrote the word “Ron” with a black marker, then placed the note over the word “Dummies” on the spine of the book, so it read, “SQL For Ron.” It fit nicely.

Since starting my test-prep company, I’ve had students who would go on to do great things, and many have had amazingly successful careers. You, too, are in this group of future success stories. How do I know? Because you’re on your way to a good school for a college degree, which will open lots of doors, and you’re oh-so-close to getting started. You just need to get past this one hurdle called the SAT.

The SAT challenges your ability to conjure up everything you’ve covered in high school — some stuff you haven’t touched in years. Really all you need is a refresher, some strategies, and practice. This book has all that and more: It goes beyond rehashing what you’ve learned (and forgotten) by providing exam-specific strategies and tips for answering questions quickly and getting through the exam. There are examples, practice questions, and practice exams to help you build your skills, identify areas you need to work on, and build your confidence for test day.

I know deep in my heart that each person I work with can do well on this exam. Right off the bat, I aim for 100 percent with each student. You’re a little rusty here, haven’t seen that there, could use a few tips, but you’ll pick it up fast and do just fine. Succeeding on the SAT is

like handling any other task: If you know what to do, and you practice, you'll be fine. I get you started with some review and guidance, and you take it from there.

About This Book

SAT Prep 2023 For Dummies with Online Practice is a whirlwind tour of the SAT. This book takes you through each section of the exam, explaining what the test-makers are looking for and how you can deliver it. This book starts at the very beginning to cover all the basic math and verbal concepts, and because you have the capacity, it then challenges you with SAT-level questions. This book also shows you how to approach the questions, avoid common mistakes, and master the intuitive tricks that help you knock it out of the park.

To earn a top score on the SAT, you have three goals:

- 1. Know what's on the exam.**

That's in this book, so read the whole thing. No matter how well you know a topic, you can discover strategies and avoid common traps, and the SAT has a way of asking a question that's different from what you're used to — or what you learned in the classroom. This book has hundreds of tried-and-true strategies so you can cut through the muck and get the most points on the SAT.

- 2. Strengthen your weak areas.**

Turn to specific sections for targeted information. This book is organized to make it easy for you to find strategies and practice for specific question types that you have trouble with.

For more practice questions, pick up *1,001 SAT Practice Questions For Dummies* (also published by

Wiley).

3. Prepare for the test-taking experience.

You'll need practice exams to get ready for the experience. Packaged with this book are four online practice exams: two in this book, and all four online. When your exam is around the corner, take one or two practice exams in real-life, dress-rehearsal settings. Flip to [Part 6](#) for ten ways to build your skills from the practice exams.

Basically, this book does it all: It prepares you for the exam by bringing your skills from the basic level to the SAT level. What else is there?

There's vocab.

To help you with vocab, as you read through this book, you'll notice that some words have a style all their own. Each SAT vocabulary word in this text appears in ***this font***, followed directly by its meaning. Fortunately, the SAT doesn't hammer vocab like it used to, and most of the vocab on the exam is in context, so it's easier to work with. That said, a good way to learn SAT vocab is to encounter it in a question and see what it means along with how it's used. When you get stuck on a vocab word, write it down. This is an effective complement to studying from a list or flash cards.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those cute little pictures that appear in the margins of this book. They indicate why you should pay special attention to the accompanying text. Here's how to decode them:



TIP

This icon points out helpful hints about strategy — what all-star test-takers know and rookies need to learn.



WARNING

This icon identifies the sand traps that the SAT writers are hoping you'll fall into as you take the test. Take note of these warnings so you know what to do (and what not to do) as you move from question to question on the real SAT.



REMEMBER

When you see this icon, be sure to file away the information that accompanies it. The material will come in handy as you prepare for (and take) the SAT.



PLAY

This icon indicates an example practice question within the regular chapter text.

Beyond the Book

Besides all the ways this book can help you perform well on the SAT, there are even more online, including these:

- » **Cheat Sheet:** At www.dummies.com, type “SAT Prep 2023 For Dummies cheat sheet” in the search box and you’ll find the book’s cheat sheet, which gives you last-minute details that you’ll want to have at your

fingertips, including a rundown of how to get the most points on each SAT Test.

- » **Nearly 600 practice questions:** You'll find hundreds of SAT-type questions online to help you build your competence and confidence. Focus on areas where you need practice and verify that you're up to speed in other areas. You can select the level of difficulty and answer the questions through untimed and timed quizzes, so you can work at your own speed and gain experience working under pressure.

To gain access to additional tests and practice online, all you have to do is register. Just follow these simple steps:

1. **Register your book or e-book at Dummies.com to get your PIN. Go to www.dummies.com/go/getaccess.**
2. **Select your product from the drop-down list on that page.**
3. **Follow the prompts to validate your product, and then check your email for a confirmation message that includes your PIN and instructions for logging in.**



TIP

If you do not receive this email within two hours, please check your spam folder before contacting us through our Technical Support website at <http://support.wiley.com> or by phone at 877-762-2974.

Now you're ready to go! You can come back to the practice material as often as you want — simply log on with the username and password you created during your initial login. No need to enter the access code a second time.

Where to Go from Here

Get started! No matter what you do next, start simple.
You have exactly what you need right here in your hands,
so breathe deep and turn the page.

Part 1

Getting Started with the SAT

IN THIS PART ...

Getting the details about what's on the SAT and how your performance is measured

Figuring out how to plan and manage your study time ahead of test day

Getting some pointers if you're retaking the exam

Knowing what you need to do to prepare for the exam (beyond studying), along with what to expect on test day

Chapter 1

What to Expect with the SAT

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Thinking about the ACT?
 - » Seeing what the SAT covers
 - » Scheduling your SAT
 - » Accommodating special needs
 - » Doing amazing even if English isn't your first language
 - » Understanding what the SAT looks for
 - » Getting the SAT scoring
-

The best and easiest way to reduce your anxiety and own the SAT is to become familiar with it. Knowing what to expect means you can plan for it, so nothing on exam day is a surprise.

In this chapter, you find the basics of the SAT, including when, where, and how often you should take it. This chapter also tells you what sort of scores you receive, explains how to deal with special needs, and gives you a peek into the structure of the exam itself. If English isn't your first language, there are some tips on getting the edge over your primarily English-speaking competition.

What About the ACT?

Most 11th and 12th graders take one of two giant exams on their way to college. One is the SAT, and the other is the ACT. Most colleges accept both, but you should check with your target schools just to be sure. When you call or email the college admissions office, among your other questions, ask these things:

- » Do you require an exam score with my application?
- » If so, do you accept both the SAT and the ACT?
- » Do you need me to write the exam essay?

The SAT and the ACT are similar in overall difficulty. The math is about 90 percent the same, but SAT math goes more in depth than ACT math, while ACT math covers more topics. (ACT math has logarithms, for example, which SAT math does not.) Some students may find ACT math easier.

The ACT's writing and language questions are about the same as the SAT's, while ACT reading questions are almost the same but don't include evidence-based questions (more on those in [Chapter 3](#)). The ACT also has a Science Test, which the SAT does not. To compensate, the SAT has science-based questions mixed into the Reading Test, but not nearly to the extent of the ACT Science Test. Students who struggle with science may prefer the SAT.

Each exam ends with an optional essay question, but the ACT essay assignment is very different. The SAT essay is covered here in [Chapter 7](#), but for more on the ACT essay, and the ACT overall, pick up the latest edition of *ACT For Dummies* by Lisa Zimmer Hatch and Scott A. Hatch (published by Wiley).

There are also SAT Subject Tests, which specialize in about 20 topics, including biology, history, math, and

languages. Depending on the school or academic program that you apply to, you may have to take one or more Subject Tests.

Besides contacting your target schools and checking their websites, you can find more on the application requirements by checking a college guide. A *college guide* is a *compendium* (thorough collection) of school listings and admission requirements. Many libraries and bookstores carry college guides, and you can also talk with your college counselor, who may also have one.

If college isn't in your immediate future, you may want to take the SAT just to get it out of the way, while the test topics are still fresh in your head. If your plans include a stint in the armed forces or the Peace Corps before hitting higher education, you can keep your options open by taking the SAT before you go. Then when you're ready to get back into the classroom, you'll have some scores to send to the college of your choice. As of this writing, your SAT scores are officially valid for five years, but the college you apply to may require newer scores. Just keep that in mind.

So ... What's on the SAT?

What are you getting into here? Well, it's nothing you can't handle, but it helps to know what's coming up. Here is the SAT testing experience, in this order:

- » SAT Reading Test: 52 questions, 65 minutes
- » SAT Writing and Language Test: 44 questions, 35 minutes
- » 10-minute break
- » SAT Math Test, No Calculator Allowed: 20 questions, 25 minutes

- » SAT Math Test, Calculator Allowed: 38 questions, 55 minutes
- » 10-minute break (if you're staying for the essay)
- » SAT Essay (optional), 1 essay question, 50 minutes

The SAT Will Be Going Online

College Board is ever working to make the SAT more relevant to college admissions and accessible to today's high school students and college applicants — in other words, you. For example, no one in college sits through a five-hour exam, so the online SAT is shorter, to better predict and reflect your college performance. These changes are significant improvements, so hopefully they're in place by the time it's your turn. Here are some of the changes that you may expect:

- » **Online only:** You will take the exam on a computer.
- » **Shorter experience:** The exam duration will be reduced by about two hours.
- » **Shorter passages:** Reading and Writing passages will be shorter, with each passage tied to one question.
- » **Easier problem solving:** Math word problems will be more concise.
- » **On-screen timer:** You will always know the time remaining for the section you're in, without needing a wristwatch.
- » **Flag questions for review:** Instead of circling the question number in your testing booklet, you flag it onscreen.

- » **Built-in graphing calculator:** You may use your own calculator, but one is provided onscreen.

At the time of this writing, College Board has not released further details on these changes. New information is always appearing, so you'll definitely find new details or changes on the College Board's updates page, sat.org/digital.

College Board did, however, provide a timeline:

- » **March 2023:** All students taking the SAT outside the U.S. will take it online.
- » **Fall 2023:** All students taking the PSAT will take it online.
- » **Spring 2024:** All students taking the SAT will take it online.

This book focuses on the current paper-based SAT that you will be taking if you're taking it in 2023 in the U.S. The SAT 2024 for Dummies, out mid-2023, will include revised strategies for the new online experience.

Signing Up Before Sitting Down: Registering for the SAT

The SAT is given at multiple times at select high schools throughout the United States and in English-speaking schools in many other countries. Homeschoolers can also take the SAT. This section explains how and when to register for an exam and the acceptable methods of payment.

How to register

You can register for the SAT online, by mail, or, if you've taken the SAT before, by phone.

Online registration is simple: Go to www.sat.collegeboard.org/register to create an account, sign up, and choose a test center and date. You need a credit card or PayPal account and a digital photo of yourself ready to upload. Be sure the photo meets College Board's standards: a headshot where your whole face is visible and you're the only one in the photo. Head coverings are okay if they're religious in nature.

You can also register by mail. At the time of this writing, you have to register by mail if you're younger than 13 or older than 21 or if you need to take the exam on a Sunday for religious reasons. However, also at the time of this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic is changing the rules everywhere, so registration may be different by the time it's your turn.

You can also ask your school guidance counselor for a registration form. If you're homeschooled, call the nearest public or private high school, or call College Board Customer Service Center for help. If you register by mail, you'll have to attach a photo and enclose registration payment (credit card number, a check from a United States bank, or a bank draft).

College Board Customer Service line within the U.S. is 866-756-7346 and outside the U.S. is 212-713-7789.

Hearing-impaired test-takers can call the TTY Customer Service number, which within the U.S. is 888-857-2477 and outside the U.S. is 609-882-4118. You can also contact College Board by mail at this address: College Board SSD Program, P.O. Box 8060, Mount Vernon, IL 62864-0060.



TIP

However you register, you'll be asked whether you want to sign up for the Student Search Service. Answer yes and fill out the questionnaire. Colleges, universities, and some scholarship-granting organizations receive information about you from this service. Expect lots of emails and letters — a little annoying, perhaps, but it's good to know that the schools are interested in you. You may also discover a school or scholarship that you weren't aware of but that meets your needs perfectly.



WARNING

Scammers are interested in you too. Don't send personal or financial information to any organization unless you know it's legitimate. You know this, of course, but exam registration and college application is a new game. Not sure something is legit? Call College Board Customer Service line to check.

When to take the test

The SAT was typically offered seven times a year, but at the time of this writing, everything is being reworked due to COVID-19. SATs are regularly cancelled and postponed, so by the time you get this book, hopefully the pandemic and quarantine will have passed, but the number of yearly exams may be different.

You can take the exam as often as you want. Ideally, you take it two or three times, but the door is open if you want another chance. Most high schoolers follow this pattern:

- » **Start in the fall of your sophomore year:** Here you take the PSAT/NMSQT, which is sort of a junior SAT, for the first time. For you as a 10th grader, this exam doesn't count for much other than a practice and eye-opener of the series of exams to come.
- » **Continue in the fall of your junior year:** Here you take the PSAT/NMSQT again, only this time it counts. If you do well, it opens the door to many scholarship opportunities and special programs. No pressure now.
- » **In the spring of your junior year:** Take the SAT as a first run, which serves as a practice test, though you can send in your scores if you're pleased with them. Note that you can also practice with an unscored practice exam, but this experience isn't quite the same as the real thing. Some juniors take the SAT twice during the spring.
- » **Again in the fall of your senior year:** The SAT strikes again, but this time you're ready, and you should do well enough to use these scores for your application. You also have the chance for a few tries. If you're an early-decision candidate, you should take the test in October or November.
- » **Finally, in the winter of your senior year:** You have one more chance to get it right, or if you did get it right, you have one more chance to get that scholarship. By now you're a pro, so success should be right in your hands. There may be some juniors in the room with you.

Everyone takes the SAT on Saturday except for those who can't for religious reasons. If you fall into that category, your SAT may be on a Sunday or a Wednesday following a Saturday SAT day. Get a letter from your

religious leader on letterhead and mail it in with your registration form.



TIP

Register early to select a test site. When you register, you may request a test site, but if it's filled, you get an alternate. So don't delay — send in the form or register online as soon as you know when and where you want to take the exam. In these COVID-19 days, some exams are experimenting with home-based testing, so this may be an SAT option by the time it's your turn. Otherwise, you'll probably want to test at your own high school, if possible, where the campus setting is familiar to you.

Special Needs Considerations

Like many products and services, the SAT stresses fairness and equal access for all students, including those with special needs. Even if you don't think you belong in this category, skim this section. You may discover an option that will help you “show what you know” when it matters most.

Learning disabilities

If you have a learning disability, you may be allowed to take the SAT under special conditions. The first step is to get an Eligibility Form from your school counselor. (Homeschoolers, call the local high school.) You may also want to ask your college counseling or guidance office for a copy of the *College Board Services for Students with Disabilities Brochure*. If your school doesn't have one, contact College Board directly or check the testing

agency's website (www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities).



TIP

Once you're certified for accommodations on any College Board test (an AP, an SAT Subject Test, or the PSAT/NMSQT), you're certified for all College Board tests, unless your need arises from something that is temporary. If you fall into that category, see the next section for more information.

File the form well in advance of the time you expect to take the test. If College Board grants you the accommodation, you'll be eligible for extra time on the SAT, which could mean an extra 50 percent of time for each test. So if a regular test-taker has 50 minutes to write the essay, for example, an extended-timer gets 75 minutes.

Physical issues

At no additional charge, the SAT also provides wheelchair accessibility, large-print tests, and other accommodations for students who need them. Be sure to submit your Eligibility Form early so that College Board can request documentation and get things ready for you. You can send paper documentation or file an Eligibility Form online. Check out www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities for details.

If a physical issue (say, a broken arm) occurs shortly before your scheduled SAT and you can't easily take the exam at a later date, call College Board Customer Service, explain the situation, and have your physician fill out the forms requesting whatever accommodation you need.