

## SAT Prep Tips and Advice

### General

1. The best way to improve your SAT score is to do at least 4-5 timed official practice SATs and doing written corrections for the problems you get wrong.
2. Take the SAT at least twice officially that you've actually prepared for. People usually get nervous and under-perform on the real thing their 1<sup>st</sup> time because they're not used to the pressure. Performing under pressure is its own skill that comes with exposure and experience.
3. Sometimes you get lucky with your testing experience, sometimes you don't. Don't count on them to have a clock, to give you time warnings, for the room to be totally quiet/comfortable, etc. Bring your own watch to keep your own time and don't let little things throw you.

### Reading

1. Practice helps a lot on the Reading. Once you do 4-5 timed Reading exams and do written corrections for the problems you get wrong each time, you'll have a good feel for what approach works for you and what you're missing and why.
2. Thoroughness makes a big difference on the Reading. Usually people get questions wrong because they answered from memory and didn't actually go back to the passage to confirm, they didn't re-read a big enough chunk, they read too fast and read something wrong, they didn't watch the time, they didn't look for concrete evidence, etc. Fix your habits.

### Writing and Language

1. The grammar section is 50% your actual grammar knowledge and 50% your habits. A lot of times people's grammar is fine but they just didn't read the whole sentence with all 4 choices plugged in, didn't follow the directions, etc.
2. A good rule of thumb is "Shortest and Simplest." The shortest, simplest, most straightforward answer is usually right. Not always, so don't go crazy, but it's a good rule of thumb if you're not sure.
3. It helps to use your "Inner Ear." Read through the sentence with all 4 answer choices plugged in and take big pauses where the commas are. Listen to how it sounds. Usually people have good instincts on what "sounds good" or "sounds bad" because they've been reading and listening to English their whole life, even if they don't know the actual grammar rule.

### Math

1. Math is mostly about volume. Do timed practice tests, do corrections for the ones you get wrong, do more practice tests, go back and do a 2<sup>nd</sup> copy of your corrections for the old practice tests to engrain the material, etc. You have to invest the time: there's no shortcut.
2. Once your Math score gets over a 670, not making mistakes becomes more and more important. Double-check every problem to make sure you read the directions right and that there aren't errors in your work. It's easy to get easy problems wrong because you made a careless mistake.
3. If your Math score is below a 550, don't worry about reworking every problem you get wrong because you'll get swamped with all the stuff you don't know. Focus on the easier problems and the problems that you see a lot (system of equations, SOHCAHTOA, etc.). Once you master those and your score improves, then you can worry about the others.

Matthew Knight

Tutor, Magnolia Prep

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318-286-7556, [matthew.knight@magnoliaprep.com](mailto:matthew.knight@magnoliaprep.com), [www.magnoliaprep.com](http://www.magnoliaprep.com)