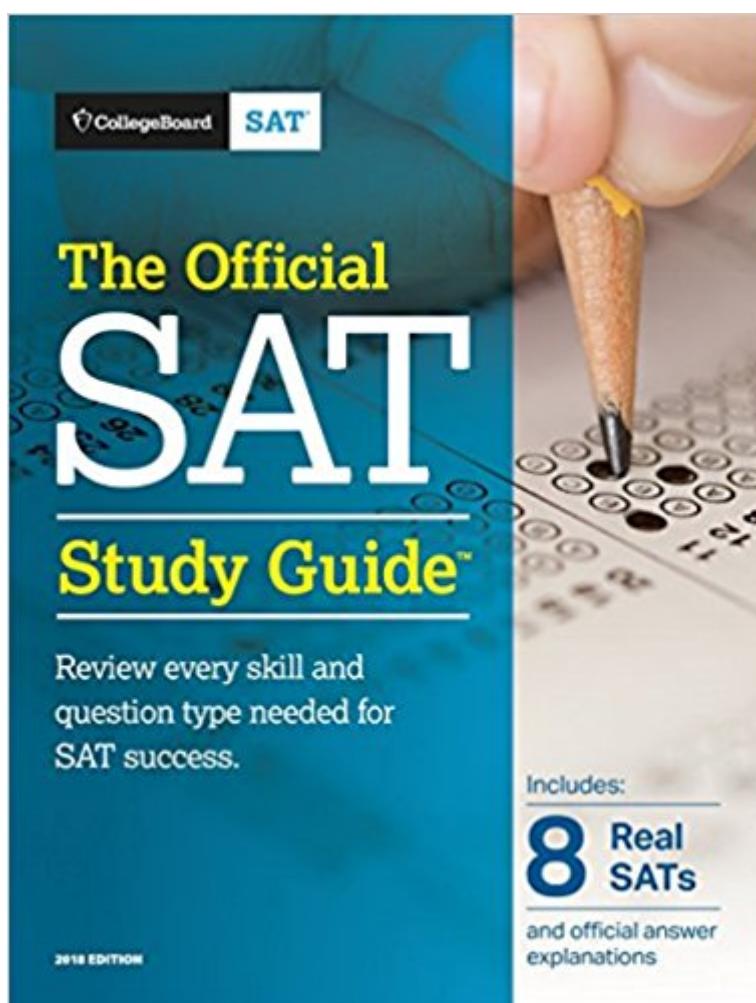


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# The Official SAT Study Guide, 2018 Edition (Official Study Guide For The New Sat)



## Synopsis

Review every skill and question type needed for SAT success. Now with eight total practice tests. The 2018 edition of The Official SAT Study Guide doubles the number of official SAT® practice tests to eight—all of them created by the test maker. As part of the College Board's commitment to transparency, all practice tests are available on the College Board's website, but The Official SAT Study Guide is the only place to find them in print along with over 250 pages of additional instruction, guidance, and test information. With updated guidance and practice problems that reflect the most recent information, this new edition takes the best-selling SAT guide and makes it even more relevant and useful. Be ready for the SAT with strategies and up-to-date information straight from the exam writers. The Official SAT Study Guide will help students get ready for the SAT with: 8 official SAT practice tests, written in the exact same process and by the same team of authors as the actual exam; detailed descriptions of the math and evidenced-based reading and writing sections; targeted practice questions for each SAT question type; guidance on the new optional essay, including practice essay questions with sample responses; seamless integration with Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy. There's also a complete chapter on the PSAT/NMSQT®, which is aligned to the content and scores of the new SAT. The PSAT/NMSQT also has over \$180 million of scholarships connected to student performance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm a Harvard grad, SAT/ACT perfect scorer, and professional SAT tutor since 2002. The Official SAT Study Guide, 2018 Edition (currently \$16) is the most essential preparation book for the new, revised SAT and PSAT, which began in March 2016 and October 2015, respectively, because it's the only physical source of official revised SATs. The practice SATs in other third-party books are nothing more than subpar imitations of the real thing. However, the PDFs of all 8 tests in this book, along with moderately helpful answer explanations, can also be downloaded from the College Board / Khan Academy websites for free (google "SAT Practice Tests - The College Board"). In addition, there are no score conversion tables provided: you will have to download the "Daily Practice for the New SAT" mobile app for iOS/Android, which allows you to take a picture of your answer sheet on your cell phone, then have it scored automatically, or to visit the College Board website (google "Scoring your SAT Practice Test #1") in order to manually convert your raw scores (total number correct on each section) into scaled scores (400-1600 scale, with additional sub-scores). Thus, there is no need to buy this book--it's incomplete, and as I stated earlier, all 8 tests can be easily accessed online. On the other hand, the physical book does still have its advantages over a bunch of PDFs. Perhaps most importantly, the tests are already printed out for you (for now, the SAT is still a paper and pencil test, and you are allowed to write on the test, so in the interest of practicing the way you play, you should never attempt to take it on a computer screen). Those of you who have printers at home know how frustrating and/or expensive it can be to print out a 64-page test (68 if you include the essay portion, and 70 if you include the answer sheets). Even if you print double-sided, which you should, that's still 35 pieces of paper and a lot of printer ink. And if you want the detailed answer explanations, then you'll have to print out twice as much. That's more than 100 pages of printing per test! Never mind the hassle of trying to keep all those pages organized. Do you staple them? Put them in a three-ring binder? The physical book solves these problems easily, keeps everything ordered and in one place, and obviates the need for internet access, at a fraction of what it might cost to print it out yourself (\$16 / 1280 pages total = only 1 cent per page). Even if you were to only print out the 8 practice tests, then the book would still come out to less than 3 cents per page. Depending on your personal printing situation, this may or may not be a bargain for you (some of you may be able to print the PDFs for free at your high schools, for example), but you also have to factor in the convenience and organization of the pre-printed book. More about me: I'm a full-time test prep tutor in San Diego, specializing in SAT, ACT, GRE, and

GMAT. Since 2002, I have amassed over 15 years and 15,000 hours of full-time teaching and private tutoring experience, both in-person and online via Skype. I'm also a Harvard grad (class of 2002) with honors and SAT/ACT perfect scorer who continues to take the test 2-3 times a year, so I like to think that I understand the SAT better than nearly anyone. And I've already reviewed all 8 of these new tests with my students, since they've already been available online for several weeks. Many of the one-star, harshly negative reviews of this book will have nothing to do with the quality of the book and practice tests themselves; it's simply that the reviewers had expected 8 different practice SATs from the ones already released on the College Board / Khan Academy websites, and were thus disappointed when they saw the same tests in this book. (Having worked in this industry for a long while, I was not surprised--it takes a long time to create new tests.) I don't see this as the College Board trying to rip anyone off; I see it as its providing a free, digital option to students (which, by the way, it had never done before), as well as a more convenient, pre-printed option for less than \$20. In addition to the 8 tests, this book contains many additional pages of SAT prep advice, some of which cannot be found anywhere else, along with the practice tests and answer explanations that can be also found online. Although much of the first part of the book is superfluous, and most of it is also available online through Khan Academy, it does offer some moderately helpful tips in its introduction, including a test structure recap, concept overview, practice questions and explanations, as well as an essay rubric, scoring guidelines, and sample essays. As I've always said, asking the College Board for advice on the SAT is like asking the IRS for tax advice: the writers are not going to be overly forthcoming. However, I must applaud the College Board for increasing its level of transparency, and for releasing the tests in PDF form to benefit those who cannot afford to buy the book, as well as adding detailed answer explanations (though very often, the explanation provided in the book is not the simplest way to solve the question). Oh, and the College Board \*really\* wants you to use the free online tools provided by Khan Academy. I would encourage you to make use of these online tools, practice questions and diagnostics, even though as a professional SAT tutor I am aware of their limitations. Quick tip: when taking practice sections or full tests in this book, don't bother filling in the bubbles--just circle your answers (unless you plan to score your test using the "Daily Practice" app). For the essay, I recommend that you rip out the pages from the book--it's hard to write without doing so-- and that you practice using the actual essay space, to get a feel for the proper length. Always write by hand, unless you are injured or have a disability, and try to avoid the temptation to type it--good typists can type 2-3 times as fast as the average person can write by hand. For some reason there is currently

no way to download the Essay Space PDF online (ahem, College Board, please get on this), but if you want to practice filling in the bubbles, then you can google "Answer Sheet - New SAT Practice Test." I recommend that you scan the blank essay space in the book after you rip it out, so you can re-use it later if you end up writing more than 8 practice essays. When it comes time to re-try the questions, I recommend that you either buy a 2nd copy of the book to keep blank, or that you print out a fresh copies using the free PDFs provided by the College Board. It's what I call a "blind review": going over all the questions you got wrong without first checking the correct answer/explanation, or seeing any of your previous work. In my opinion, blind review is one of the key facets of effective test prep. Thus, you should only mark your answers as correct or incorrect (this is easier when working with a partner). Most importantly, don't indicate the correct answers on the test before you get a chance to review them. In contrast, if you go over questions by checking the correct answers right away, then you can fool yourself into thinking that you understand them fully, when in fact you are still prone to those types of mistakes. The best way to know for sure is to try the questions again, from scratch, \*without\* the aid of the answer key or the answer explanations. Only then should you confirm the correct answer and read the explanation provided.

Now, let's talk about the structure of the new test.

-Entire Test: Four answer choices instead of five, no guessing penalty, essay optional (but required by the majority of colleges). Lots of sub-scores, including not only the usual Reading, Writing and Language, and Math scores (1-40), but also Cross-Test scores in "Analysis in History/Social Studies" and "Analysis in Science" (1-40), and sub-scores in "Command of Evidence," "Words in Context," "Expression of Ideas," "Standard English Conventions," "Heart of Algebra," "Problem Solving and Data Analysis," and "Passport to Advanced Math" (1-15). I'm not so sure that any of these sub-scores will matter much to colleges: most colleges are simply going to want your Reading, Writing and Math scores, as well as your overall score (now on a 400-1600 point scale). However, these sub-scores should help you figure out your specific areas of weakness.

-Reading Section: 65 minutes, 52 questions. No more sentence completions or esoteric vocabulary. Lots of question pairs where the second question in the pair asks for "the choice that provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question." For this reason, always glance at the next question for clues as to where the answer might be found. The new reading section also includes a significant number of vocab-in-context questions, as well as some graphs and charts at the end of

the passages, with corresponding questions that are usually relatively easy.

**-Writing and Language Section:** 35 minutes, 44 questions. For those of you who have taken the ACT, the SAT Writing and Language section is nearly identical to the ACT English section. No more isolated sentences like the current SAT writing--instead you are given a series of passages with underlined portions to edit.

**-Math No Calculator Section:** 25 minutes, 20 questions. New concepts such as imaginary numbers (multiplying by the conjugate of the denominator) and synthetic division are tested. In some cases you must complete the square or use the quadratic equation, and in other instances, you are given physics-type questions that involve conceptual understanding, such as the fact that velocity equals zero when a projectile reaches its highest point. Estimation is often necessary. For questions 16-20, you must provide your own response (no multiple choice).

**-Math With Calculator Section:** 55 minutes, 38 questions. Pretty much the same stuff, except with a calculator. For questions 31-38, you must provide your own response (no multiple choice).

**-Essay:** 50 minutes, analyzing an argument. Essays are given three scores from 2-8 in Reading, Analysis and Writing (two different essay readers grade each essay from 1-4 and their scores are added together). The essay portion is now optional (but most colleges will require it). The essay space provided is three pages long, not including the page provided for outlining and brainstorming. The goal of the essay is to analyze how and why the author shapes his/her argument, and its effect on the reader. If you need help with this, then I would strongly suggest that you read the sample essays on pages 214-220.

These days, many students prefer the ACT *to* the SAT. But the College Board has been fighting back by inflating SAT percentiles and making other efforts to make the SAT more palatable for students. For example, one major reason to consider taking the New SAT instead of (or in addition to) the ACT is that the SAT allows you more time per question than does the ACT. Thus, if time management is a major issue, then the SAT might be a better test for you:

SAT Reading = 1.25 minutes per question (75 seconds)
ACT Reading = .875 minutes per question (52.5 seconds)
SAT Grammar (Writing and Language) = .8 minutes per question (48 seconds)
ACT Grammar (English) = .6 minutes per question (36 seconds)
SAT Math = 1.4 minutes per question (83 seconds)
ACT Math = 1 minute per question (60 seconds)

Please keep in mind that this book is not necessarily the best source of SAT strategy. For that you should consider buying additional strategy guides, and utilizing the help of free online sources such as the aforementioned Khan Academy, as well as Magoosh, Sparknotes, YouTube, and the like. Or, if you can afford it, then buy some additional SAT strategy books, find a classroom course, or hire a qualified private tutor like me. Even in this information age, there is still great value in being taught in person (or online via Skype) by a qualified, experienced and full-time

professional. As far as test-prep books are concerned, stay away from Kaplan, Princeton and the like. These big-market SAT prep books are typically watered-down to attract the average student, and are neither rigorous nor complete enough for high scorers. My current favorite authors for serious SAT-prep books are Erica Meltzer for Reading and Writing/Language (The Critical Reader), Nielson Phu (The College Panda) for the Math and Essay sections, Richard Corn for Math, and Mike McClenathan (PWN the SAT) for Math. I also think that Ivy Global is doing a solid job, though its books are overpriced. Real SAT questions are of course always better to practice with, but for the new SAT, they are currently in short supply. So you should also try to get your hands on a copy of the October 2016 PSAT (copies were sent to students who took the test), as well as PSAT practice tests #1 and #2, which you can also download from the College Board website. Professional SAT tutors like me will obsessively collect every real SAT or PSAT we can find, and at the moment, there are few of them (14 total), so of course they are especially precious. Over time I plan to write free explanations for every question in this book. If you have any requests for specific questions, then please email them to me. And if you're interested in learning more about how to prepare and study for the SAT, then googling "SAT Action Plan - McElroy Tutoring" would be a good place to start. Thanks for reading my long but hopefully informative review! If you have any additional questions, then just let me know in the comments section and I'll be sure to respond ASAP. As you can probably tell, I'm fairly obsessed with this test and I'll make sure to give you a thoughtful response.

I'm an SAT tutor, and I just can't get excited about this book. Yes, it's the best source of practice for the SAT. But that doesn't mean it's actually \*good\*. Things I like: 1. The book provides paper versions of the tests on the College Board website. I.e., they're already online for free. But this is a feature, not a bug. Having them printed out for you is way easier than having to print them yourself. 2. There are answer explanations provided for all questions. This is helpful despite the explanations occasionally being unclear. Things I don't really like: 1. No scoring tables. Huh? I have to go online to score my test? That's annoying. 2. The peppy letter in the front of the book from a College Board executive. A couple of whoppers: "The new SAT is clearer than ever". "The questions will not be tricky." I can assure you these statements aren't true; in fact, the test is less consistent than the old SAT, which makes it trickier to predict. It's also a bit insulting to be told by the SAT that it mirrors your schoolwork and that it predicts your "college and career readiness", since I think for many students, those statements aren't believable. 3. No new tests. A note on the tests: Math questions are wordier than ever. (The SAT is working on this after getting a lot of crap

for how wordier questions were unfair to certain students - students that the SAT purportedly was redesigned to help...) Some verbal questions are ambiguous, which makes it difficult to distill what the SAT is really going for. The ACT is a better test for many, and colleges will take either an ACT or SAT score. You don't HAVE to take the SAT. Ok, so as you can tell, I don't really like this test compared to the old SAT, and I'm probably a little negative and biased as a result. But I do think the College Board could have done better: offer new tests, provide more down to earth explanations (ones that don't sound like they were written by a grad student), and refrain from insulting students' intelligence. All in all, you're going to want to buy the book. But you don't have to like it.

I am a private math tutor and author of *A Guide to the Math SAT*. The 8 official practice tests in this book are indispensable (therefore five stars) but they are the same as the ones posted on the College Board and Khan Academy web sites, so it is reasonable to ask, "Why buy this book?" The main reason is that students should take practice tests using pencil and paper because that is how the SAT is administered. Practice should mimic the real thing. You will find it easier (and possibly cheaper) to buy this book rather than download and print these tests. Like its predecessor, this edition of the book does not contain answer keys and scoring curves. You will have to take a photo of your bubble sheet and use an app to calculate your score, or view the answer keys and scoring curves on the College Board web site to calculate your score by hand. Another reason to buy this book is to get access to some supplemental materials. In my opinion these are not particularly helpful and the more helpful parts are also posted on the College Board web site, including check lists for what to bring on test day, sample problems that are not included in the practice tests, etc. Overall the only compelling reason to buy this book is convenience.

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