

SAT Syllabus 2021: Section-wise Breakdown

Now that you are familiarized with the paper pattern of this exam, let's elaborate upon the Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Essay section of the SAT exam syllabus and what they aim to assess:

SAT Reading

Comprising of reading comprehension, every passage under this section has 10-11 questions. Having a total of 5 passages of varying lengths, this section aims to evaluate your ability to comprehend written text, understand the meaning of words in different contexts as well as their associated terms with implied meanings.

SAT Writing

Having 4 passages with 10-11 questions each, you are expected to find errors, rephrase, and rewrite highlighted sentences with alternative text, amongst others. It focuses on assessing the candidate's understanding of vocabulary as well as grammar.

SAT Mathematics

Constituted of two sub-sections divided into the 25-minute section provided with no calculator and a 55-minute section with a calculator allowed. It has 58 questions spread across varied basics of mathematics such as algebra, statistics, geometry, arithmetic, probability, data interpretation, and problem-solving questions.

SAT Essay (Optional)

Aiming to analyse one's quality of writing as well as English comprehension, this section has an essay question (650-700 words) focusing on an issue and asking the candidate to take a stance on one side of the topic. Make sure you keep your analysis limited to the given data with precise explanation and don't elaborate upon personal opinions.

SAT Writing Section

The questions in this section of the SAT syllabus will test your evidence-based reading and writing skills. In this section, your writing and reading abilities are tested. The topics for the articles or write-ups are mainly centred on generic topics that do not necessitate your prior knowledge of the subject. In fact, certain passages have supplementary graphs and charts to assess your imperative skills.

SAT Writing Exam Pattern

- You have to attend 44 multiple choice questions in 4 passages in 35 minutes
- You need to edit passages
- One of the following modes of writing will be present in the exam out of the narrative, argumentative and informative/explanatory
- The passages revolve around topics like,
 - Humanities
 - Science
 - Careers
 - History & Arts
 - Social Sciences

Type of Questions in SAT Writing

You will be expected to answer certain questions pertaining to the passages, some examples of the questions asked in the writing section of the SAT exam syllabus are:

- Sentence structure, verb tense, punctuation, parallel construction, grammar usage, subject-verb agreement, etc.
- Strengthen/weaken the argument
- Word choice for style, text or tone
- Structural changes to improve readability

SAT Reading Section

This section of the SAT exam syllabus focuses on evidence-based reading and writing. This test will especially focus on your reading abilities.

SAT Reading Exam Pattern

- The exam pattern will have 52 multiple choices in 5 passages to finish in 65 minutes.
- Two passages will be from science fields

- One literary passage will be from Classics or contemporary texts of the US or world literature
- Texts from the U.S. founding documents or Great Global Conversation on topics like dignity, human rights, freedom, etc
- Extracts from Economics, Sociology, Psychology, amongst others.
- You must answer questions by telling a story, giving an argument or explaining an experiment or study

Type of Questions in SAT Reading

- The function a phrase serves in the passage
- The tone, style, perspective, and attitude of the author
- Analyzing data on the basis of diagrams, charts, and graphs
- The central theme or main idea of the passage
- Inference of a phrase in a paragraph
- Arguments or evidence that supports the author's stance

Useful Tips: The format of the examination does not expect prior knowledge of the passage topics from you but with constant practice, you can develop a familiarity that will help you in answering the reading and writing sections of the SAT exam syllabus more effectively.

SAT Mathematics

Most students fear the mathematics section of competitive exams, but if you have a fair idea of what this part of the SAT exam syllabus comprises of, then you will be able to prepare for it in an effective manner. The mathematics section is divided into two parts – one with a calculator and another section that students need to solve without using a calculator.

SAT Mathematics Pattern

Mathematics section comprises of two sections: One with calculator. Second without Calculator

- You need to attempt a total of 58 questions in 80 minutes
- 80% of questions are multiple-choice while 20% of them are grid ins
- For Maths with a calculator: You have 30 MCQs and 8 grid-in questions
- You need to enter your derived answers in the bubble sheet you are provided
- Maths without calculator has 15 multiple choice questions and 5 grid-in questions
- You will be given a set of formulas and references at the beginning of the test
- If you are applying for courses in science, engineering or maths, pay special attention to the 'Maths without Calculator' section

Type of Questions in SAT Maths

Algebra

- Graphical representation of the linear function
- Linear equations with rational coefficients
- Linear inequalities in two variables and their systems
- System of linear equations (with no solution, infinite or finite solutions)

Data Analysis & Problem Solving

- Percentages
- Ratio and Proportion
- Unit conversion
- Equation of line or curve using a scatterplot
- Two-way tables to calculate conditional frequencies and conditional probabilities
- Association of variables or independence of events
- Estimation of a population parameter
- Calculation of mean, median, mode, range and standard deviation in statistics
- Evaluation of reports to check the appropriateness of data collection methods

Advanced Math

- Quadratic equations with rational coefficients
- Determining the form of an expression
- Polynomial equations (subtraction, multiplication, addition and division)
- Zeros and factors of polynomials
- Non-linear relationship between two variables

- Function notation
- Isolation of a variable by rearrangement of formula or equation.

Useful Tips: The only way to ace the math section is through consistent practice of the various topics of the syllabus. Since math is based heavily on practical knowledge it is important that your basics of the concepts are absolutely clear.

SAT Essay 2021

- While the essay component in the examination is optional, many universities expect you to score well in this section as well. Many universities also have it listed as a required or recommended section.
- The essay section of the SAT syllabus helps the university determine your reading, writing, and analytical skills simultaneously.
- This section is panned out in a manner where you will be expected to read a 650-700 words long passage, after reading the passage you will have to analyze how the author builds the argument and write it in a coherent manner in a 50-minute duration.

How to prepare for SAT Essays?

- While preparing for this section, it is important that you understand how to develop an analytical approach to reading the paragraph so that you can write an analysis that is not tainted by your personal opinion or bias.
- This can only be mastered through continuous practice. Also, by engaging with articles of different authors helps you get a better idea about how different authors build their arguments.

SAT Exam Preparatory Essentials

Once you have a fair idea of the SAT syllabus, you will need certain resources that will help you prepare better for the examination. Here is a list of major [books for SAT preparation](#) that you must have:

- The Official SAT Study Guide

- [SAT Prep Black Book: The Most Effective SAT Strategies Ever Published](#)
- Princeton Review 500+ Practice Questions for the new SAT
- Barron's New SAT (28th Edition)