How to Pace the SAT

A JAKEPREP GUIDE

The test gives you questions in the wrong order. Here's the right one.

SECTION 1

Reading & Writing

Change the order.

1 **Start around question 15.**
The grammar and punctuation questions start roughly in the middle of the section. They're fast and mechanical; they basically pace themselves.

2 **Continue through to the end.**
The last 5 or so questions tend to be easy. Do them next.

3 **Then go back to the beginning.**
The first few questions are vocabulary. Also quick. Work through them next.

4 **Save the reading for last.**
The long comprehension questions are the hardest and slowest. Do them last.

J WHY IT WORKS

The SAT puts its easiest questions at the end and its hardest in the middle. This order does the easy ones first and leaves the hard ones for when it doesn't matter if the clock runs out. Run out of time on one hard charts question? Honestly it won't affect the score too much. Run out of time on five easy questions? That's a disaster.

SECTION 2

Math

Work in three passes.

1 **Pass 1 — easy questions only.**
Work through every question. The moment something makes you pause, *bookmark it and move on.* Don't spend time on hard questions while easy ones are waiting.

2 **Pass 2 — bookmarked questions.**
Go back to everything you skipped. Now that the easy questions are done, you can spend real time on the harder ones.

3 **Pass 3 — guess the rest.**
If questions remain with little time left, guess. Most students should be guessing on at least 1–2 questions per module. There's no penalty for wrong answers.

J WHY IT WORKS

Hard questions are only worth a little more than easy ones, but they can often take up to five times longer to solve — and that's only if you get them right. Guessing doesn't cost you points; sinking your time into a wrong answer does. That's a lot to think about on test day, but if you adopt a three-pass strategy, you don't have to. The pacing takes care of itself.

The guessing rule *How much should your kid be guessing?*

GUESS MORE

Getting questions wrong you didn't guess on? You're being too careful. Spend more time on the questions you attempt.

HOLD STEADY

Only getting guessed questions wrong? The strategy is working. You're likely at 750+. Handle with care.

GUESS LESS

Guessing on 10+ questions and still missing them? Guessing more isn't the answer, better strategies are.