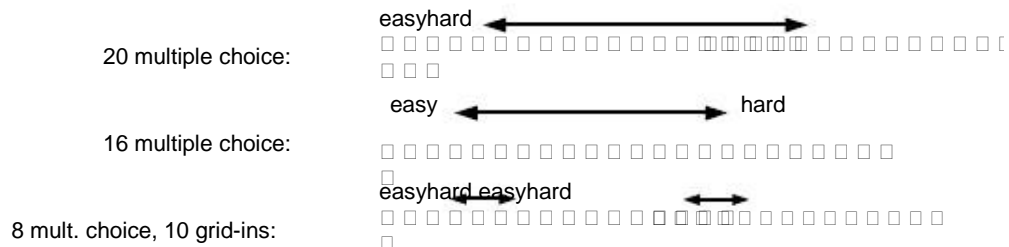


# SAT Math Strategies

- Get as many questions correct as possible with as few errors as possible. This strategy may seem obvious, but because the SAT scoring deducts an extra  $\frac{1}{4}$  point for each incorrect multiple-choice answer, it is very important to remember. You will generally achieve “maximum right, minimum wrong” by doing all the questions that are easy for you, attempting the harder questions that you think you know how to do, and skipping the rest. The table below shows how many questions you need to get correct in each of the three math sections, depending on what your desired score is.

Desired Score	20-Q Section	18-Q Section	16-Q Section	Total Correct
400	8	6	4	18
500	11	9	8	28
550	13	11	10	34
600	14	13	12	39
650	16	14	13	43
700	18	16	14	48
800	20	18	16	54

- Know where you are! Each math section is arranged easy to hard, so knowing where you are tells you how hard the question is.



The harder questions may require several steps to solve and will often have incorrect answer choices (also known as “traps”) that come from making simple mistakes. Most test takers should try to get the points

they need (see the score table above) from the easier questions, which are worth the same as the harder questions but tend to take much less time to solve.

- Work with the answers. On multiple-choice questions, if you are stuck, take advantage of the fact that the answer is printed right there as one of the choices. The correct answer is the one that works!
- Plug in real numbers. In other words, “dummy it down” by using convenient numbers in place of letters (variables) to make a problem more concrete. This very powerful strategy can be used on multiple-choice questions as well as the grid-in questions.
- No wild guessing! You should guess on a multiple-choice question only if you have worked on it and can eliminate one or more answers. Otherwise, skip the problem and move on to a question you can do.

## Other Tips and Tricks

- Connect what is being given to what is being asked. Think about what concept the question is using, what information it is giving you, and what it is asking for. Read the question two or three times.
- Before marking in your final answer, make sure you answer the question: if it asks for radius, don't give the diameter! \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Geometry questions: Draw a figure! A figure can be very useful when one isn't provided. Fill in or label the figure with all the information that the question gives.
- When a geometry problem contains algebraic terms, try to make an equation from the figure and solve the equation. Or, plug in real numbers to make the figure work.

- Figures are accurate (to scale) unless otherwise noted. If two lines look like they are the same length, then they are the same length!

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- If a figure is not drawn to scale, it is drawn in such a way as to mislead you. In this case, only go by the given information. It may help to redraw the figure.
- Mark the questions that you skip in your test booklet so that you can come back to them easily.
- Circle the multiple-choice answers that you choose in the test booklet so that you can check the answer grid against your booklet later on, if you have time.
- Grid-ins: if you have a hunch, then go ahead and guess! There is no penalty for guessing in the grid-in section. It is usually best to start the answer in the far-left column of the grid. Write in the numbers but don't forget to grid them! As with the multiple-choice, circle the answer you come up with in your test booklet so that you can check it against your grid later on.
- Grid-ins: answers can't be negative or greater than 9999. To grid a decimal answer, enter the most accurate value that the grid will permit. For example, to grid an answer such as  $\frac{2}{3}$ , you can grid in  $\frac{2}{3}$ , .666, or .667, but not .66 or .67.

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- You shouldn't have to read the instructions at the beginning of each section. Know these ahead of time. You should also know, from memory, the math formulas given at the beginning of each section.
- Limit the amount of time that you spend on any one problem. Remember your ultimate goal: get as many questions correct as possible with as few errors as possible.