Digital SAT Last-Minute Cheat Sheet

A free, unofficial quick-reference guide for the final week. Always confirm details on College Board's website and practice with official Bluebook tests.

1. Test Format at a Glance

- Two sections: Reading & Writing, then Math. Each has two modules.
- Adaptive: how you do in Module 1 decides how hard Module 2 is. Do your best on both.
- Reading & Writing: 54 questions, 64 minutes (2 modules of 27 questions, 32 minutes each).
- Math: 44 questions, 70 minutes (2 modules of 22 questions, 35 minutes each).
- Total: 98 questions, 2 hours 14 minutes, plus a 10-minute break between sections.
- Score: 400–1600 (each section 200–800). It is not a simple count of correct answers.
- No penalty for wrong answers. Never leave a question blank.
- Calculator allowed on the whole Math section (built-in Desmos graphing calculator in
- Bluebook, or your own approved calculator).
- Bluebook includes a math reference sheet. Reading & Writing passages are short, usually one question each.
- Within a module you can skip, flag, and go back. Once you submit a module, you cannot return to it.

2. Time Per Question

- Reading & Writing: about 70 seconds per question.
- Math: about 95 seconds per question.
- If a question is eating time, make your best guess, flag it, and move on.

3. Reading & Writing: What Gets Tested

- Four areas (approximate share of questions):
- Craft and Structure (~28%): words in context, text structure and purpose, cross-text connections.
- Information and Ideas (~26%): central ideas, inferences, command of evidence (text and charts).
- Standard English Conventions (~26%): grammar, punctuation, sentence structure.

- Expression of Ideas (~20%): rhetorical synthesis (using notes to meet a goal) and transitions.

Strategy

- Read the question first, then the passage, so you know what you are hunting for.
- Words in context: plug each answer choice into the sentence. Pick the one that fits meaning and tone, not the fanciest word.
- Evidence questions: the right answer is directly supported by the text. Avoid answers that are extreme, too broad, or only partly true.
- Charts: check the title, axis labels, and units before reading any answer.
- Transitions: decide the relationship first (contrast, addition, cause, example), then match the word.
- Rhetorical synthesis: the correct choice accomplishes exactly the goal in the question and uses the notes accurately.
- When two choices are grammatically fine and say the same thing, the shorter one usually wins.

4. Grammar Rules That Show Up Again and Again

- Two complete sentences cannot be joined by only a comma. Fix with a period, a semicolon, or a comma plus FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).
- A colon or dash must follow a complete sentence.
- Nonessential information goes between a pair of commas, dashes, or parentheses.
- Use matching punctuation on both sides.
- Never put a single comma between a subject and its verb.
- Subject-verb agreement: cross out phrases between the subject and verb. Each, every, either, neither, and everyone are singular.
- Pronouns must match in number (singular or plural) and have a clear reference.
- Its means belongs to it. It's means it is.
- Keep verb tenses consistent unless the time clearly changes.
- A modifying phrase must sit next to the word it describes (watch for dangling modifiers).
- Parallel structure: items in a list must match in form (running, swimming, and biking).
- Possessives: the student's book (one student), the students' books (many students).

5. Math: What Gets Tested

Four areas (approximate share of questions):

- Algebra (~35%): linear equations, inequalities, systems.
- Advanced Math (~35%): quadratics, polynomials, exponentials, functions.

- Problem-Solving and Data Analysis (~15%): ratios, percentages, statistics, probability.
- Geometry and Trigonometry (~15%): area, volume, circles, right-triangle trigonometry.

Roughly three-quarters of Math questions are multiple choice. The rest are student produced responses, where you type in your answer.

6. Math Formula Sheet

- Algebra and Functions
- Slope: m = (y2 − y1) / (x2 − x1)
- Slope-intercept form: y = mx + b
- Parallel lines have equal slopes. Perpendicular lines have slopes that are negative reciprocals.
- System with no solution: same slope, different intercepts. Infinitely many solutions: the same line.
- Quadratic formula: x = (−b ± √(b2 − 4ac)) / 2a
- Discriminant b2 − 4ac: positive means 2 real solutions, zero means 1, negative means none.
- Vertex form: y = a(x − h)2 + k, with the vertex at (h, k).
- Factored form: y = a(x − r)(x − s), with x-intercepts at r and s.
- Exponential growth: y = a(1 + r)^t. Decay: y = a(1 − r)^t.
- Percent change = (new − old) / old × 100.

Geometry

- Triangle area = 1⁄2 × base × height. Rectangle area = length × width.
- Circle: area = πr2, circumference = 2πr. Equation: (x − h)2 + (y − k)2 = r2.
- Pythagorean theorem: a2 + b2 = c2.
- Special right triangles: 45-45-90 has sides x, x, x√2. 30-60-90 has sides x, x√3, 2x.
- Triangle angles add to 180°. A circle has 360° (2π radians).
- Volumes: rectangular prism = lwh, cylinder = πr2h, sphere = (4/3)πr3, cone = (1/3)πr2h.
- Arc length and sector area are the same fraction of the circle as the angle is of 360°.

Trigonometry

- SOH CAH TOA: sin = opposite/hypotenuse, cos = adjacent/hypotenuse, tan = opposite/adjacent. sin(x) = cos(90° − x).
- Degrees to radians: multiply by π/180.

Statistics and Probability

- Mean = sum / count. The median is the middle value. An outlier pulls the mean, not the median.
- A larger spread means a larger standard deviation.
- Probability = favorable outcomes / total outcomes.
- A conclusion from a sample applies only to the population that was randomly sampled.

7. Math Time-Savers

- Use Desmos: graph both sides of an equation and read the intersection. Graph a system and read the crossing point. Type in the answer choices and compare.
- Backsolve: plug the answer choices in, starting with a middle value.
- Pick numbers: for questions with variables and no real values, choose easy numbers (like 2 or 10) and test each choice.
- Check what the question asks for: x, 2x, or x + 3. Many wrong answers are correct intermediate steps.
- Write out units and convert before calculating.
- For typed answers, keep fractions or decimals exact. Do not round early.

8. The Last 7 Days

- Days 7 to 5: take one official Bluebook practice test (if you haven't recently) and review every mistake by type, not just by question.
- Days 4 to 3: drill your two weakest skills with the Student Question Bank or Khan Academy.
- Day 2: a short, light review of this cheat sheet and your list of mistakes. No new material.
- The day before: stop studying by early evening. Pack your bag, charge your device, and sleep.
- Do not cram. Rest improves your score more than one extra hour of studying.

9. Test-Day Checklist

- Admission ticket and valid photo ID.
- Device with Bluebook installed, updated, and set up, plus its charger.
- Approved calculator (optional) and pencils.
- Water and a snack for the break.
- Arrive early and follow the rules on your admission ticket.
- Check College Board's official rules for what you can and cannot bring.

10. Mindset During the Test

- Answer every question. A guess is free.
- Don't try to guess whether Module 2 is hard or easy. Just do your best.
- If you blank, eliminate wrong answers and move on. Come back if time allows.
- Use the 10-minute break: stretch, drink water, eat something light.
- One bad question doesn't ruin a section.

11. Free Official Resources

- Bluebook app: free full-length practice tests (bluebook.collegeboard.org).
- College Board paper practice tests (PDFs, Tests 4–11) with answer explanations:
- satsuite.collegeboard.org/practice
- Student Question Bank (free College Board account).
- Khan Academy Official SAT Prep: free lessons, videos, and practice.

Unofficial study aid. Test details can change, so confirm everything on College Board's website before test day.