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**Quick Prep Edition**

# \* SAT FOR DUMMIES® A Wiley Brand

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**Geraldine Woods**

*SAT test-prep expert*

**Ron Woldoff**

*Founder, National Test Prep*

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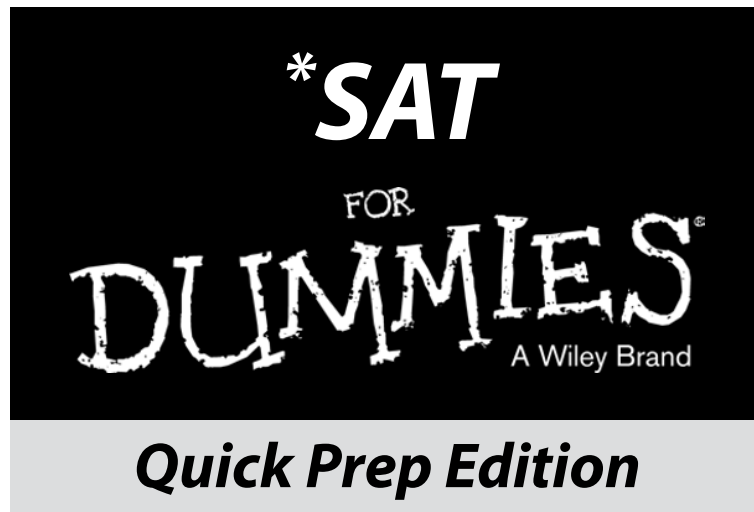




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FOR  
**DUMMIES®**  
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**by Geraldine Woods and Ron Woldoff**

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# Contents at a Glance



<b><i>Introduction .....</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b><i>Part I: Getting Started with the SAT.....</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>
Chapter 1: Erasing the Worry: Getting to Know the New SAT .....	7
Chapter 2: Slow and Steady (Breathing) Wins the Race: Preparing for the Test .....	19
Chapter 3: Examining the Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Sections .....	27
<b><i>Part II: The Moment of Truth: Taking a Practice Test .....</i></b>	<b><i>51</i></b>
Chapter 4: Section I: Reading .....	53
Chapter 5: Section II: Writing and Language .....	69
Chapter 6: Section III: Math .....	87
Chapter 7: Answers and Explanations .....	107
<b><i>Appendix.....</i></b>	<b><i>129</i></b>
<b><i>Index .....</i></b>	<b><i>137</i></b>





# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
About This Book .....	1
Foolish Assumptions .....	2
Icons Used in This Book .....	3
Where to Go from Here .....	3

## ***Part 1: Getting Started with the SAT .....*** 5

### **Chapter 1: Erasing the Worry: Getting to Know the New SAT .....** 7

Not an ACT: Getting Real with the SAT .....	7
A Whole New Ballgame: Comparing the Old and New SAT .....	8
Signing Up Before Sitting Down: Registering for the SAT .....	9
How to register .....	9
When to take the test .....	10
Meeting Special Needs .....	11
Learning disabilities .....	11
Physical issues .....	12
Financial help .....	12
Examining Your Mind: What the New SAT Tests .....	12
Reading .....	13
Writing and language .....	14
The essay .....	14
Multiple-choice questions .....	15
Mathematics .....	15
Scoring on the New SAT .....	16
Types of scores .....	16
Score reporting .....	17

### **Chapter 2: Slow and Steady (Breathing) Wins the Race: Preparing for the Test .....** 19

Starting Early: A Long-Range Plan .....	19
Avoiding Extremes: A Medium-Range Plan .....	20
Cutting It Close: A Short-Range Plan .....	21
Coping with SAT-Night Fever .....	22
Smoothing Out SAT-Day Morning .....	23
Bringing the right stuff .....	23
Easing test tension .....	24
Starting off .....	24
Focusing during the test .....	25
Pacing yourself .....	25

<b>Chapter 3: Examining the Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Sections .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Getting Acquainted with the Reading Section .....	27
Conquering passage-based questions.....	28
Speaking factually .....	28
Defining as you read .....	30
Identifying attitude and tone .....	31
Decoding figurative language .....	32
Relating style to content.....	32
Unearthing the main idea.....	33
Making inferences.....	34
Supplying evidence.....	35
Interpreting visual elements.....	35
Making the Most of Your Time .....	36
Deciding Which to Read First: Passage or Questions .....	37
Writing for (No) Fun but Much Profit: The SAT Writing and Language Section.....	38
Multiple-choice writing and language questions .....	38
Selecting the right word: Vocabulary in context .....	38
Correcting grammar and punctuation errors.....	39
Answering “Expression of Ideas” questions .....	41
The essay .....	41
Decoding the prompt.....	42
Identifying writing techniques.....	42
Preparing, writing, and proofing the essay.....	43
Understanding your essay scores.....	44
Refreshing the Math .....	47
Algebra .....	48
Problem solving and data analysis .....	49
Geometry .....	49
Advanced math .....	50
 <b>Part II: The Moment of Truth: Taking a Practice Test.....</b>	<b>51</b>
 <b>Chapter 4: Section I: Reading .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Answer Sheet for Section 1, Reading.....	55
Reading .....	57
 <b>Chapter 5: Section II: Writing and Language .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Answer Sheet for Section 2, Writing and Language.....	71
Writing and Language .....	73
The Essay.....	81
 <b>Chapter 6: Section III: Math.....</b>	<b>87</b>
Answer Sheet for Section 3, Math.....	89
Math .....	91
Calculator Section.....	91
No-Calculator Section.....	101

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<b>Chapter 7: Answers and Explanations .....</b>	<b>107</b>
Answers for Section 1: Reading .....	107
Answers for Section 2: Writing and Language .....	112
The Essay .....	116
Answers for Section 3: Math .....	117
Calculator section.....	117
No-calculator section .....	122
Answer Key.....	127
 <b><i>Appendix .....</i></b>	 <b><i>129</i></b>
 <b><i>Index.....</i></b>	 <b><i>137</i></b>



# Introduction

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Change is good, right? So why do so many people hop on the nervous-breakdown train when they hear that the SAT is changing? Perhaps because the SAT is an important step on your journey to college, and anything to do with the admissions process is enough to give applicants an instant panic attack. Nervous or not, you have to take the SAT when you apply to most colleges or universities in the United States and to some English-speaking institutions abroad. The “old” SAT has been around since 2005 and was actually a redesign of a still older exam. The “new” SAT appears in March 2016. Because it’s new, that version of the SAT may seem extra scary.

You have nothing to worry about, though, because you’ve been preparing for this version of the SAT for many years. What? You say you haven’t been memorizing vocabulary words and drilling key math concepts since you were in your crib? How neglectful of you! Actually, you *have* been getting ready for the redesigned SAT, because you’ve been studying the necessary material during every single minute you devote to schoolwork, not counting lunch and the time you spend texting your friends from the phone hidden behind your science book. But those small lapses don’t count for much when you consider the amount of time you’ve been analyzing and uncovering meaning when you read, organizing your ideas and writing papers, and solving math problems (more than 10,000 hours between kindergarten and tenth grade, according to a recent survey).

All those skills come in handy on the new SAT. The final step in preparing for the exam is the one you’re taking now. You’re reading this book and therefore becoming acquainted with the format of the test. By the time you’re finished with *SAT For Dummies*, Quick Prep Edition, you’ll have every possible tool for conquering the 2016 SAT.

Why change at all? The old SAT was loudly criticized for several reasons. It was long, hard, and tricky. Most important, it didn’t accurately predict college success, its stated purpose. The College Board, which creates and administers the SAT, heard the complaints and hit the drawing board. What they came up with is still long and relatively hard, but the test more closely resembles the stuff you actually do in school. The reading and writing passages come from history, science, literary, and career-oriented sources. Some math questions draw on real-world situations. The new SAT also tests your ability to understand information presented visually, often in graphs or charts, and to recognize and evaluate evidence. The 2016 SAT eliminates some of its old tricks, such as the penalty for guessing, and lets you decide whether you want to write the essay. Add everything up, and you arrive at a test that concentrates on the skills you need to succeed in college and the workplace. (For details on the changes, check out Chapter 1.)

## About This Book

*SAT For Dummies*, Quick Prep Edition, is a whirlwind tour of the redesigned SAT. (If you expect to take the old SAT at some point before the spring of 2016, turn to *SAT For Dummies*, 8th Edition, by Geraldine Woods, also published by Wiley.) This book takes you through each section of the 2016 SAT, explaining what the test-makers are looking for and how you can deliver it. For example, the new SAT makes a point of testing vocabulary in

context, and that's how vocabulary shows up in *SAT For Dummies*, Quick Prep Edition. As you read, keep an eye out for words and definitions, including in paragraphs that have nothing to do with vocabulary *per se*. (By the way, *per se* means "as such" or "for itself.")

To help you step up your game on the SAT, this book includes in-depth analysis and samples of each type of question that the SAT dumps on you — reading comprehension, math grid-ins, and so forth. To kill still more of your free time (and help you improve your SAT-tested skills), you get a detailed explanation with each answer so you know what you answered correctly, what you got wrong, and why. To give you a feel for how ready you are to take the new SAT, try your hand at the practice test. No, it's not a real SAT because the company that produces the actual test is sitting on those rights. The test you get on test day may not have exactly the same number of questions in exactly the same order as the ones here, because the test-makers continue to tinker with the format. But the test in this book is as close as anyone can come without invoking lawyerly attention, and it will prepare you well for the real thing. As a bonus, you may find that preparing for the SAT improves your schoolwork, too, as you sharpen your reading skills, polish your grammar, and solve math problems more efficiently.

This book also uses a few special conventions. Keep them in mind as you work your way through this book:

✓ *Italics* have three different duties:

- To introduce new terms, particularly those that apply to math, analytical reading, and writing
- To refer to portions of a question or answer choice
- To emphasize a particular word or point

✓ *This font* highlights words that may be useful when you take the SAT. Check out the definitions that follow these words, and notice the context. (Mastering words in context can really improve your score on the SAT.)

✓ **Boldface** indicates the action part of numbered steps and the main items in bulleted lists.

## Foolish Assumptions

In writing this book, we assume several things about you, the reader, including the following:

- ✓ You probably hate standardized tests (nearly everybody does!) but want to achieve a high score on the SAT with minimum effort and maximum efficiency.
- ✓ You've taken the usual math and language arts courses through, say, algebra, geometry, and sophomore English. If you haven't taken one of those classes or if you did and still feel puzzled by the subject, you may want to read some other *For Dummies* books that can help you review the material. Take a look at *English Grammar For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, for basic information, or go for grammar practice with the *English Grammar Workbook For Dummies*, 2nd Edition and *1,001 Grammar Practice Questions For Dummies* (all written by Geraldine Woods). Those of you who struggle with the math will find these books helpful: *Algebra I For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, and *Algebra II For Dummies*, by Mary Jane Sterling, and *Geometry For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, by Mark Ryan. Wiley publishes all these titles.

One assumption we haven't made is age. True, most people who take the SAT are teenagers, but not everyone follows the same life path. If you're hitting college after living a little, good for you. This book can help you remember the schoolwork you need for the SAT, no matter how many years ago have passed since you sat in a classroom.

## Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those cute little pictures that appear in the margins of this book. They indicate why you should pay special attention to the accompanying text. Here's how to decode them.



This icon points out helpful hints about strategy — what the all-star test-takers know and the rookies want to find out.



This icon identifies the sand traps that the SAT-writers are hoping you fall into as you take the test. Take note of these warnings so you know what to do (and what not to do) as you move from question to question on the real SAT.



When you see this icon, be sure to file away the information that accompanies it. The material will come in handy as you prepare for (and take) the 2016 SAT.



This icon identifies questions that resemble those on the actual SAT. Be sure to read the answer explanations that always follow the questions.

## Where to Go from Here

Okay, now that you know what's what and where to find it, you have a choice. You can read every single word of Part I first and then take the practice exam, or you can check out only the parts of the book that address your “issues,” as they say on daytime talk shows, concentrating on the kinds of questions you struggle with. (Check out Chapter 3 for an overview and sample questions similar to those on the exam.) If you're worried about when, where, and how to sign up and actually take the test, look through Chapters 1 and 2. Another good way to start is to take the sample test in Part II, score it using the appendix, and then focus on your weak spots. Feel free to check out [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com), where you'll find the “cheat sheet” (which is *not* for use during the exam) for *SAT For Dummies* and up-to-the-minute information on any changes the College Board has made to the test.

No matter what you do next, start by doing something simple: Calm down, stay loose, and score big on the SAT.





Part I  
**Getting Started  
with the SAT**



*For Dummies* can help you with lots of subjects. Check out [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) to learn more and do more with *Dummies*.