

GEAR UP FOR THE SAT/ACT

Setting Yourself Up for Success



While more and more colleges are going test-optional, meaning they don't require test scores, IECA members still encourage college-bound students to consider taking the SAT/ACT. You can then decide on a school-by-school basis whether you wish to submit your scores or not.

6-12 Weeks Ahead of Test Date

- Use this time to prepare: take practice tests, review your mistakes, and work on your time management for each section.

The Week Of

- Prep is winding down. Review notes, key missed problems and their correct approaches.
- Rest and sleep well. Avoid late nights and the feeling of "cramming."
- You're going to be fine! Don't add stress to a stressful situation.
- GATHER MATERIALS A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE TEST! You'll need a printout of your admission ticket, an acceptable photo ID, at least two No. 2 pencils with erasers, and an approved calculator.
- Remind yourself: you have the smarts and the skills to succeed on this test.

The Morning Of

- Wake up at least 1.5 hours before the test.
- Activate your brain. Review prep notes (5-10 minutes) or read a page of your favorite book.
- "Wear your lucky socks." You're lucky if you think you are.
- Drink some tea and eat a healthy breakfast.
- Bring a water bottle and a snack.
- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Allow proper travel time to arrive early - again, reduce outside stress.

continued >>



During the Test

Prioritize interpretation of the question

- Be ready to read 2 or 3 times as needed!
- Find the keywords that really define the problem.
- In grammar and math, ask yourself, “What concept is being tested, and what have I learned about that concept?”
- In math, answer the question the test asks, which might not be the last piece of math you did. Before choosing an answer, find the “What is...”, “How many...” or “Which of the following...” and make sure you are providing THAT answer.

Partner with the clock

- Be quick to identify the hard or time-consuming questions. Do the easier problems first.
- Don’t be “stubborn” – all problems are worth “one point,” so get as many “1’s” as you can and be sure to skip a line on the answer key if/when skipping a problem.
- Don’t let the ticking clock prevent good, thoughtful work.
- Know when you should be about halfway through – manage your time.
- Don’t leave any questions blank!

You’re in control

- If you’re losing focus or getting tired, look away from the test for a 10-second power break. Continue to breathe steadily.
- Use Answer Elimination and any other creative strategies you’ve learned as often as you can.
- Write on the test! Circle, underline, and write scratch work to help keep you organized. Find the happy medium between writing too many steps (math) and doing too much in your head.
- Like a sporting event, theater production, or a speech to a crowd, “butterflies” are okay! They can actually be channeled into something productive, and they demonstrate that you care.

Above all, trust yourself

- You’ve practiced, you’ve learned so much. You have what it takes!
- Remember the “top 3 tips” you’ve chosen for each section.
- Be proud of your problem solving. You’re making decisions with good reasoning.
- Much of your work is habitual at this point. Just read and react.
- If finished early, reviewing is fine, but don’t second guess. It’s fine to look for mistakes you may have made. Otherwise, your first instinct is usually the correct one.

IECA members guide students toward achieving their educational goals. Contact an IECA member educational consultant if you need support with the college search and application process: www.IECAonline.com (click on Find an Independent Educational Consultant)



Independent Educational Consultants Association

3251 Old Lee Highway • Suite 510
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-591-4850
info@IECAonline.com

