



# Tutoring Service of New York

## **Select Workbooks for the SAT**

The amount of quality prep materials available for the SAT is almost innumerable. While some companies do make better materials than other, finding the right practice tests and review books is in many ways about what a specific student needs.

Here, we have created a list of some of our favorite SAT practice and review materials. As you'll see, why we suggest these books, and for whom we suggest them.

All of these books are available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and on the websites of the companies that publish these books.

### **Best Practice Tests**

#### **1. 8 Official College Board Practice Tests**

(Available for free on the College Board's website)

The College Board practice tests are obviously the gold standard--they are the only practice tests that use questions directly from the organization that runs the official exam. The College Board offers students eight full length tests, with bubble sheets, an answer key, and answer explanations to match.

#### **2. Princeton Review Book of 10 Practice Tests**

The Princeton Review Book of 10 Practice Tests offers the highest number of practice tests available in any single book. Its math is at times a bit easier than the

College Board's, but many students find their reading sections similar to those of Official SATs', and the Princeton Review's book does test the correct concepts found on the official exam, even if some questions could be more challenging.

### **3. Kaplan Book of 8 Practice Tests**

The Kaplan Book of 8 Practice Tests is, arguably, the more difficult book overall. The math feels more like College Board math--in that it can be more challenging--but some students say they find the Kaplan Book's reading sections too difficult. Most students say they do not see much difference in the difficulty of the Kaplan Book's or Princeton Review's writing sections.

### **4. Ivy Global Book of 6 Practice Tests**

This Ivy Global book offers a solid opportunity for students to practice time management skills in the early days of their study. It accurately reflects the difficulty of the SAT's reading and writing sections, though its math sections contain a few questions that are, well, questionable! Overall, this book is great practice, and is especially useful as a book for lower stakes homework and practice (i.e., if you want to do one timed section a day for homework, or if you wanted to do a varied set of math problems in one sitting).

## **Best Books for General Review**

## **1. Kaplan SAT Total Prep**

This book is useful for students of all levels, though students who are really struggling with the exam, or are looking to go from 1550 to 1600 may find its value limited. The book duplicates SAT Reading and Writing problems accurately, and offers useful math practice for a variety of concepts. That said, the book doesn't offer the detail necessary for students struggling in math, especially, and does not offer enough targeted practice for students who are particularly strong in math.

Overall, this book covers every key concept on the exam. Students can review order of operations within the context of rational expressions; they can practice every kind of “special triangle.” Useful rules of all kinds are neatly presented in tables throughout the book. Plus, it comes with three full practice tests, and the opportunity to access Kaplan's expansive digital resources such as further practice tests, custom-built quizzes, and more.

## **2. Ivy Global Guide to the SAT**

A less well-known competitor to Kaplan and Princeton Review, this Canadian-based test prep company makes a review book that is perfect for students who want a general overview of the SAT before doing a deep dive into specific concepts. The Ivy Global Guide offers very clear explanations of a number of grammatical concepts, and useful test taking strategies. It effectively teaches students how to think about SAT Reading, and gives students a clear sense of what kinds of math problems one finds on the SAT. Working through this book can give students a stronger understanding not only of the exam, but also of the things they need to review further.

### **3. Princeton Review Cracking the SAT**

This is another book that gives students a clear sense of what the SAT is, and the basic strategies one can use to improve their score. Though it is useful for students at all levels of reading and writing, it does not do the best job of teaching math concepts, and many of its math problems are too easy. When using any review book, students should always be taking official practice tests every so often, to get a sense of how well their review materials are helping them.

### **Best Books for Math**

#### **1. The College Panda's SAT Math: Advanced Guide and Workbook for the New SAT**

This is a great book for students who want to take a deeper dive into math after going through a more general review book. Students often find the tone of this book a little more personal and engaging than the likes of those published by bigger companies like Kaplan. It covers a wide variety of topics specific to the SAT, but may not be perfect for students who are really struggling with the basics of SAT math, as it doesn't spend much time on concepts the College Board assumes students know well before the exam, like order of operations.

#### **2. SAT Prep Black Book: The Most Effective SAT Strategies Ever Published**

A dense book that offers detailed explanations of official College Board problems, as well as in-depth lessons on a variety of math concepts, math strategies, and general test-taking strategies. This book is an incredibly useful resource, especially when used in conjunction with a more traditional review book like the Kaplan SAT Total Prep.

### **3. Dr. Steve Warner's 500 New SAT Math Problems**

The real selling point for this book is its categorization of problems by difficulty. Students can use these varying levels of difficulty to help themselves internalize new concepts, and then test their mastery of those concepts. With 500 questions, this book offers almost nine practice tests' worth of math problems.

## **Best Books for Reading and Writing**

### **1. The Critical Reader: The Complete Guide to SAT Reading**

Both this book and its companion book, *The Critical Reader: The Ultimate Guide to SAT Grammar*, share a fatal flaw: they are both somewhat dry, difficult books. That said, they offer excellent, detailed explanations of how to answer questions on the Reading and Writing sections of the exam. They are excellent for students who understand the core concepts of the exam, but may not always know how to apply that knowledge to specific questions.

### **2. The Critical Reader: The Ultimate Guide to SAT Grammar, 4th Edition**

Everything written about the above book applies to this book as well. That said, it can be extremely beneficial for students who still find themselves relying on intuition on the Writing section of the exam. In addition to providing useful strategies, this book helps students fully understand the rules and ideas behind the questions, so they can be sure to produce more sustainable success over time.