LEARNING TECHNIQUES

LESSON 11-7 ▲ SAT AND ACT STRATEGIES

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Outline effective methods for SAT and ACT test-taking.
* Access practice questions for each section of the SAT and ACT tests.
* Work with other students to practice SAT or ACT test taking skills.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* SAT and ACT Strategies
* Journal Page
* **Printed SAT or ACT practice tests** – one for each student
* SAT Tests: [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/full-length-practice-tests](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/full-length-practice-tests)
* ACT Tests: <http://actstudent.org/sampletest/index.html>
* **OPTIONAL:** If your students have completed the PSAT and have received their scores ask them to bring their score packets to this lesson with them.

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **FOR SCHOOLS WITH RECENTLY RECEIVED PSAT SCORES: Students review their PSAT scores.** If your school’s juniors took the PSAT in October, and if their score packets are available by the time of this lesson, ask your students to bring their score packets to this lesson (or arrange with your counseling staff to have the score packets distributed during this lesson). With students working individually (so that they do not need to share their scores with other students), help them interpret their scores using the information provided in the PSAT score packet. Have students review their work in each section.
2. **Students** **outline effective methods for SAT and ACT test-taking.** Divide students into groups of three or four and ask them to brainstorm ideas for how they can be successful on the SAT or ACT. Tell them they can use their experience with the PSAT or other standardized exams to come up with ideas. Ask each group to share one or two of their ideas and write them on the board, noting common themes. Then distribute *SAT and ACT Strategies* Handout and review it with students. Compare their ideas with the strategies listed on the handout and note the similarities and differences. Ask each student to write one or two additional strategies at the bottom of their handout, based on their group’s discussion.
3. **Students** **access practice questions for each section of the SAT and ACT tests.** Give students the chance to see a few questions from each section of the SAT and ACT, either by using the Internet or by using paper practice tests that you or your school’s Navigation101 building leader has downloaded and copied. Quickly review the rules for each section of the test with students and ask them to volunteer how the test-taking strategies you discussed could help them with each section.
4. **Students work with other students to practice SAT or ACT test taking skills.** Have students work in pairs – either on Internet or paper-based practice tests – to try a few practice questions from each section of the SAT or ACT. Remind them to read the rules for each section and discuss how the test-taking strategies could help with each type of question. When students have had a chance to review each type of question, call the group together to discuss how they could prepare for the SAT or ACT. If students have done their practicing on paper copies of the practice tests, make sure they know where they can go on the College Board (SAT) or ACT web sites to access more practice tests.
5. **Students outline a preparation plan for the SAT or ACT.** Ask students to use their Journal Page to answer these questions:

* What can I do to prepare for the SAT or ACT?
* How and when can I take practice tests? How can I use test-taking strategies successfully?
* How do I feel about taking the SAT or ACT?
* Have I begun following SAT or ACT on Twitter?

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **List of test taking strategies as identified on *SAT and ACT Strategies***
* **Completed *Journal Page***

LEARNING TECHNIQUES

LESSON 11-7 STUDENT HANDOUT

SAT AND ACT STRATEGIES

If you are planning to go to a four-year college, you will likely need to take either the SAT or the ACT. If you’re planning to enlist in the military or attend a two-year or technical college, there are other standardized tests you will need to take. Here are strategies to help you with the SAT or ACT or the other standardized tests you may have to take during the next few years.

**STRATEGY 1: KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT**

Spend a little time doing research before you take a standardized test. Use the Internet or your school’s career or counseling center to learn about each of the sections the test will contain and what types of questions will be in each section. Make sure you understand the rules for each section: for instance, whether a specific section will require multiple choice answers or an essay. Even better, download and take a practice test so that you get a feel for the types of questions you will encounter.

**STRATEGY 2: READ THE INSTRUCTIONS**

Even if you’ve done your research, make sure you read the instructions for each section of the test. Make sure you know what the section is asking you to do, what types of answers are expected, how many questions are in that section, and how much time you have. Don’t assume that a section on an exam is just like a practice test. Read the instructions before you begin!

**STRATEGY 3: PACE YOURSELF**

On most standardized tests, there is a time limit for each section. Before you begin each section, make sure you know how much time you are allowed. Check your watch or the clock in the exam room to determine when you will have to finish. Then, calculate how many questions you must answer and determine how quickly you must work (for instance, two minutes per question or ten minutes per essay).

**STRATEGY 4: ANSWER EASY QUESTIONS FIRST**

Because the test is timed, it’s important to move through it as quickly as you can. If you don’t know the answer to a question right away, move on and come back to it later, though remember to skip that question on your answer sheet as well.

**STRATEGY 5: USE THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION FOR DIFFICULT QUESTIONS**

If you don’t know the answer to a question, see if you can eliminate any answers that are obviously wrong. If you are able to eliminate several of the possible answers, you can then make an educated guess from those that remain.

Can you think of any other test-taking strategies? Write them here:

LEARNING TECHNIQUES

LESSON 11-7 STUDENT HANDOUT

JOURNAL PAGE

**DATE:**

**Lesson 11-7 | *SAT AND ACT STRATEGIES***

***Q1:*** What can I do to prepare for the SAT or ACT?

***Q2:*** How and when can I take practice tests? How can I use test-taking strategies successfully?

***Q3:*** How do I feel about taking the SAT or ACT?

***Answers:***