

# ACT/SAT

Pinellas County Schools

Eliot Schrefer

"Dazzling, unhearted-as-victims-as-the-action-is, it's the nuanced portraits of characters, human and ape, that make the story so deeply absorbing." —THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

# ENDANGERED



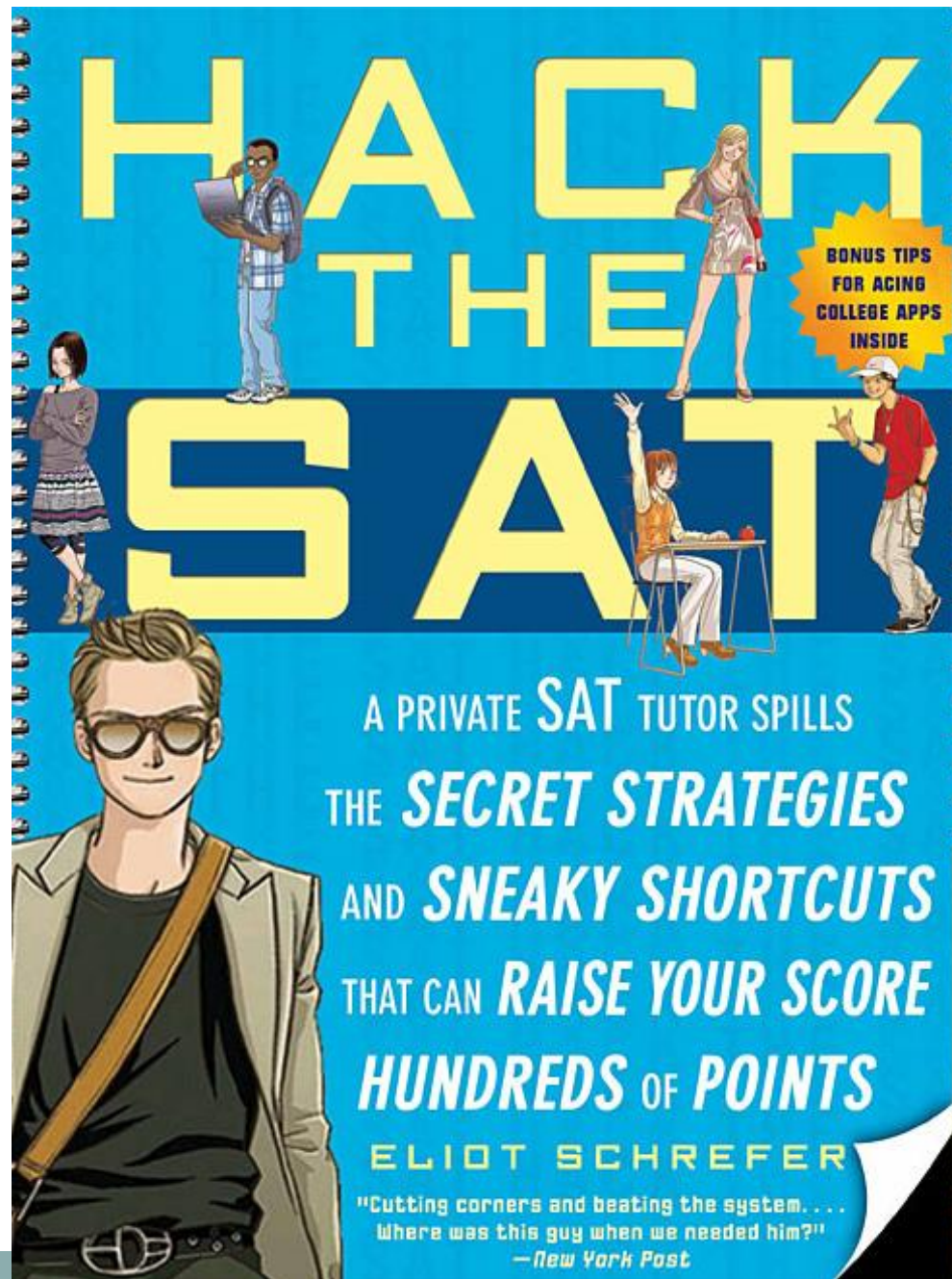
ELIOT SCHREFER



# THREATENED

AUTHOR OF THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST *ENDANGERED*

ELIOT SCHREFER



# “I Stand for Nothing”



- 1901: Scholastic Achievement Test
- 1941: Scholastic Aptitude Test
- 1990: Scholastic Assessment Test
- 1994: S A T

# The “new” SAT



- Essay
- Math
- Guessing Strategy
- Vocab

# ACT Logistics



- Established in 1959 to compete with the SAT
- As of 2011 has surpassed the SAT in number of students taking it (1.6 million a year).
- Why does it exist?
- Extra time accommodations.

# Major Differences--Now Minor Differences



- Type of student who takes it.
- Timing versus reasoning.
- No significant regional differences any longer.

# What the ACT is made of



- **English: 1-36 score**
  - 45 minutes, 75 questions (divided into 5 passages).
- **Math: 1-36 score**
  - 60 minutes, 60 questions.
- **Reading: 1-36 score**
  - 35 minutes, 40 questions (divided into 4 passages).
- **Science: 1-36 score**
  - 35 minutes, 40 questions (divided into 7 passages).
- (Overall score is average of 4 sub-sections, rounded up, with an average around 19-20)

# What the SAT is made of

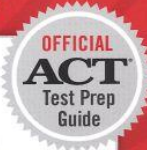


- **Evidence-Based Reading & Writing: 200-800 score**
  - Reading section, 65 minutes for 52 questions
  - Writing and Language section, 35 minutes for approximately 44 questions
- **Math: 200-800 score**
  - No-calculator section, 25 minutes for 20 questions.
  - Calculator section, 55 minutes for 38 questions
- Both scores are reported individually, for a total score between 400-1600, with an average of about 1000.



# THE *Real* ACT<sup>®</sup> Prep Guide

3rd Edition  
From the Makers of the ACT<sup>®</sup>



The Only Guide to Include **5 Real ACT<sup>®</sup> Tests**

- Get insider test-taking tips
- Learn strategies to do your best on the ACT
- Find all the facts about the optional ACT Writing Test

CollegeBoard

# The Official SAT<sup>®</sup> Study Guide

Your first look at the redesigned SAT<sup>®</sup> — direct from the maker of the test.

This guide is for you **ONLY** if you're taking the SAT in  
**MARCH 2016 & BEYOND**

Includes:

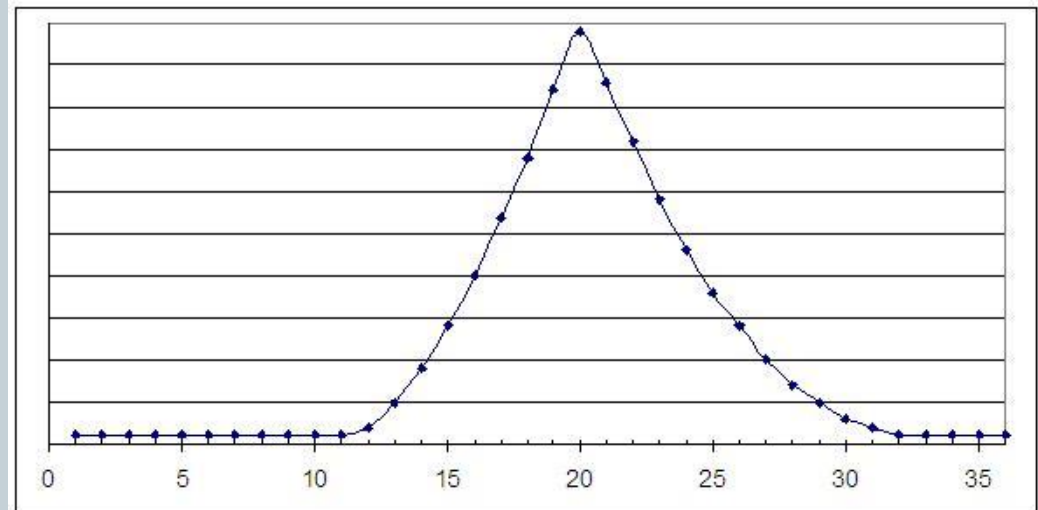
**4 Real SATs**

and official answer explanations

# Overall tips



- These are tests of long-term **focus** above all else.
  - Practice is essential. (My students take 10-15 practice tests)
- You should put an answer down for each question.
- Average score corresponds to getting roughly half the questions right.
  - Don't be a perfectionist.



Scale Score	Raw Scores				Scale Score
	Test 1 English	Test 2 Mathematics	Test 3 Reading	Test 4 Science	
36	75	59-60	40	40	36
35	73-74	57-58	39	39	35
34	71-72	55-56	38	38	34
33	70	54	—	37	33
32	69	53	37	—	32
31	68	52	36	36	31
30	67	50-51	35	35	30
29	66	49	34	34	29
28	64-65	47-48	33	33	28
27	62-63	45-46	32	31-32	27
26	60-61	43-44	31	30	26
25	58-59	41-42	30	28-29	25
24	56-57	38-40	29	26-27	24
23	53-55	36-37	27-28	24-25	23
22	51-52	34-35	26	23	22
21	48-50	33	25	21-22	21
20	45-47	31-32	23-24	19-20	20
19	42-44	29-30	22	17-18	19
18	40-41	27-28	20-21	16	18
17	38-39	24-26	19	14-15	17
16	35-37	19-23	18	13	16
15	33-34	15-18	16-17	12	15
14	30-32	12-14	14-15	11	14
13	29	10-11	13	10	13
12	27-28	8-9	11-12	9	12
11	25-26	6-7	9-10	8	11
10	23-24	5	8	7	10
9	20-22	4	7	6	9
8	17-19	—	6	5	8
7	14-16	3	5	4	7
6	11-13	—	4	3	6
5	9-10	2	3	—	5
4	6-8	—	—	2	4
3	5	1	2	1	3
2	3-4	—	1	—	2
1	0-2	0	0	0	1

# Overall tips



- Keep an eye out for the words “NOT” or “EXCEPT”
- You have to get a handle on your timing.
- Be sure to answer the question being asked.
- Don’t sweat the essay too much.

# Prep Schedule and Test Dates



- ACT: September, October, December, February, April, June.
- SAT: August, October, November, December, March, May, June.

# The English (Grammar) Section



- Find a pace that will allow you to finish
- Most reliable score increase.

# Grammar



- The shortest one is correct 50% of the time.
- If a question asks about verb tense or transition words (“therefore” vs. “however”), read the whole paragraph, not just the surrounding line.
- In a question asking you to choose an answer that does something specific (i.e. “Which of the following additions would provide a concrete example”) worry about satisfying that condition more than which answer choice has the best grammar/style.

# Commas



- Know where to put the commas in the following:
  - Unlike all the other kids Becky has to wear a retainer.
  - I have been to Florida North Carolina and Georgia.
  - Luke of all the Smith children is the tallest.





**“THE AUDIENCE OF  
PARENTS, TEACHERS,  
AND STUDENTS ARE  
GETTING READY TO  
APPLAUD.”**



**“ITS VERSATILITY AND  
LOW ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT MAKES THE  
HYBRID CAR A SMART  
CHOICE.”**



●  
**“THE CONTENT ON THE  
PHYSICS EXAM IS HARDER  
THAN THE MATH EXAM.”**

# Math



- This time it's NOT crucial that you finish the section, as the questions go from easy to hard.
  - Still put an answer down for everything.
- Brush up on:
  - SohCahToa
  - Lines and slopes ( $y=mx+b$ , rise/run)

# 3 Keys to Math Success



- 1. Underline Key Words
- 2. Write all Steps
- 3. Re-read the Question before Bubbling in the Answer

# Plugging in Numbers



- Ex. A horse travels four times as fast as Ken. If Ken travels  $x$  miles per hour, how long would it take the horse to travel 400 miles, in terms of  $x$ ?
  - A.  $400/x$
  - B.  $400x$
  - C.  $100/x$
  - D.  $100x$
  - E.  $100/x^2$

# Plugging in Numbers



4. If  $a$  is an odd integer and  $b$  is an even integer, which of the following is an odd integer?
- (A)  $3b$
  - (B)  $a + 3$
  - (C)  $2(a + b)$
  - (D)  $a + 2b$
  - (E)  $2a + b$

# Plugging in Numbers



7. If the average (arithmetic mean) of  $t$  and  $t + 2$  is  $x$  and if the average of  $t$  and  $t - 2$  is  $y$ , what is the average of  $x$  and  $y$ ?

(A) 1

(B)  $\frac{t}{2}$

(C)  $t$

(D)  $t + \frac{1}{2}$

(E)  $2t$



# Critical Reading



- Timing is CRUCIAL
- ACT: Finish each passage (10 questions) in 8.5 minutes.
- To Read or not to Read

# Critical Reading



- If timing is tricky for you, and it probably will be, don't do the questions in order. Start with:
  - The questions with line numbers ("In lines 15-18, the author most nearly means..."), THEN
  - The questions that mention a specific paragraph ("What is the author's intent in the third paragraph?"), THEN
  - The questions that give you something specific to search for and read. ("The author's reason for introducing the Hadron Collider into his argument is to..."), THEN
  - Only lastly will you answer the general questions. ("What is the author's primary purpose?")

# General Critical Reading Rules



- 1. Come up with your own answer first
- 2. Plot summary, not analysis
- 3. 4 lines rule
- 4. Avoid strong wording / favor the wishy-washy

# For Example



At one time, he had entertained serious doubts about wives being given the right to share equally with their husbands the disposition of property, since “the husband labors hard” while the wife might not be earning money. But his discussions with pioneers of the women’s rights movement convinced him that even though wives were not paid for their domestic labors, their work was as important to the family as that of their husbands.

**Question: The discussion of Douglass’ position on property rights for women suggests that Douglass**

- A) was extremely adept at political negotiation
- B) was flexible enough to change his views
- C) sided with women’s rights leaders on this issue so that they would support him on abolition
- D) believed that causes should be tackled one at a time
- E) believed that state laws could be easily changed

# Words to Favor



- Suggest
- Particular
- Certain
- Might
- Could
- Possibly
- Seems
- Apparently

# Words to Avoid



- Never
- Always
- Must
- Only
- Strictly
- Also:
  - Two-word combinations that intensify each other
    - ✦ (“harshly condemning” “genially tolerant”)
  - Critiques of authors

# (ACT only): Science



- 35 minutes for 7 passages. 5 minutes each.
  - Timing if CRUCIAL
- To read or not to read
- Last question of each passage requires one more step of reasoning.
- Consider saving “dueling scientists” passage to the end.

# SAT Subject Tests



- Math
- Literature
- Foreign Language
- Science
- History



# Essay



- 40 (ACT) or 50 (SAT) minutes of speed writing.  
Signifiers, not content.
  - ✦ Length
  - ✦ Punctuation
  - ✦ Structure

# Essay



- Consider for the ACT essay:
  - ACT paragraphs:
    - ✦ Intro
      - Flatter the premise in the intro.
    - ✦ Thesis
    - ✦ Antithesis
      - “Some might argue, however, that...”
    - ✦ Synthesis
    - ✦ Conclusion

# Essay



- Consider for the SAT essay:
  - SAT paragraphs:
    - ✦ Intro: What is the bind the author is in?
      - (“How to make a reader feel emotionally engaged by a matter of hard science?” “How to both introduce an issue new to the reader and get that person to take a side?”)
    - ✦ Paragraph 1: Explain logical flow of author’s argument
      - Be specific about author’s use of language. Use quotes.
    - ✦ Explain rhetorical/linguistic devices author uses
      - (Tone/diction/metaphor/direct address, etc.) Use even more quotes.
    - ✦ [OPTIONAL] Suspicious reader paragraph.
      - Take the stance of a scholar who might not be convinced.

Conclusion

# Source of Practice Materials



- <http://www.elioticschrefer.com/sat-act-materials>
- Includes: tip sheet from today's session
  - 4 practice ACTs in pdf form
  - 4 practice SATs in pdf form (the same four available through Khan Academy's free test prep online)