

## **8 Test Day Strategies**

When the day of the test arrives, you need to be able to march into the testing room with an SAT or ACT ego big enough to power through the exam. In order to do so, remember the following tips. While the nitty-gritty strategies for scoring high on the SAT and ACT are important, don't forget these simple and easy test-taking strategies that will surely give you the confidence needed to succeed.

### **CHOP AWAY**

The SAT and ACT is a multiple-choice test, so you won't always be able to immediately find the correct answer. However, by using the process of elimination (POE), you will be able to chop away at the wrong answers. Try to eliminate the two "ridiculous" outliers and focus on the three choices left. Remember, you don't get any points taken off for guessing!

### **CLEAR YOUR MIND**

Don't fall apart during the SAT and ACT. If you think you've "bombed" a section, close your eyes, clear your mind, refocus, and move on to the next section with confidence. Many colleges are now "cutting and pasting" scores, meaning if you take the test two or three times some colleges are looking at the best score in each section. Also remember that the tests are score choice, meaning you only have to report your best score. The SAT contains an experimental section that does not count. Perhaps the section you think you "bombed" is the experimental!

### **BREATHE DEEPLY**

If you feel yourself getting anxious, pause and take five deep breaths. This will slow your heart rate and allow you to focus on the questions in front of you. For extra relaxation, close your eyes during the deep breathing to block out the test for a moment. Yes, you are racing against the clock, but taking a moment to relax and refocus will end up making you a faster test taker!

### **MOVE ON**

The SAT and ACT is a race against the clock. Don't get stuck and waste time on one question that you may get wrong anyway when you could move on and get the next three questions correct.

### **SUCK ON CANDY**

Studies show that students who suck on candy during an exam score higher than those who don't. Bring some sucking candy to the SAT and ACT to help keep you awake and engaged. Sucking on candy is especially helpful during the reading section (s). At home, time how long it takes you to finish your sucking candy completely. During the time-

intensive reading section on test day, you will know roughly how much time has passed based on how many candies you've finished. While checking your watch is important, knowing your "candy time" will help save you from obsessively counting the seconds.

### **NO MECHANICAL PENCILS**

Although you can find #2 mechanical pencils, don't bring them to the SAT or ACT. They tend to break, and then you have to sit there, clicking away, waiting for the next piece of graphite. You don't need the added stress of mechanical pencils, so leave them at home. Plus, Scantrons may not pick up the indentations of a mechanical pencil - don't take that chance!

### **BRING EXTRAS**

You never know what to expect on the day of the SAT or ACT, so expect the worst! In addition to your calculator and your watch, bring extra batteries, pencils, erasers, tissues, clothing layers, water and snacks. Be prepared!

### **USE A WATCH**

Always be aware of time! Be strong enough to rush through questions in order to finish a section.