

FREE GUIDE FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

The Complete SAT. Guide.

Everything Indian students need to know about the Digital SAT — schedule, subjects, exam pattern, timeline, scoring and free mock tests, built for students applying to US & global universities.

2h 14m

Total Test Time

98

Total Questions

400–1600

Score Range

§ What's Inside This Guide

A complete, structured walkthrough — from understanding the Digital SAT format, to a full exam-day schedule, subject-wise breakdown, scoring, mock tests and a preparation timeline that gets you a competitive score.

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Why This Guide?

Prepared by the EduQuest counselling team for Indian students applying to US & global universities — the same team that guides students through UCAT, MCAT, LSAT and ACT admissions.

01 What Is the Digital SAT & Who Needs It

The **SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)** is a standardised college-admissions exam administered by the **College Board**. Since 2024, it is delivered as the fully computer-based **Digital SAT** through the College Board's Bluebook app — the paper SAT is no longer offered anywhere.

For Indian students, the SAT remains one of the most widely accepted tests for undergraduate admissions to US universities, and is also accepted by a growing number of universities in Canada, the UK, Singapore and elsewhere. It measures reading, grammar/writing, and math skills built up through high school — not specialised subject knowledge.

2h 14m

TESTING TIME

2

SECTIONS

98

TOTAL QUESTIONS

4

ADAPTIVE MODULES

02 Exam Format & The Two Sections

The Digital SAT has two main sections — Reading and Writing, followed by Math — each split into two separately timed, **adaptive modules**. Every student sees the same Module 1 for a section; performance on Module 1 determines whether Module 2 is drawn from an easier or harder question pool.

Section	Modules	Questions	Time
Reading and Writing	2 modules × 27 Q	54	64 min (32 min/module)
Math	2 modules × 22 Q	44	70 min (35 min/module)

Test Delivery

The SAT is taken on a laptop or tablet through the Bluebook app, at an approved test centre or via school-day testing. A built-in Desmos graphing calculator is available for the *entire* Math section — you no longer need to bring your own, though an approved physical calculator is still permitted.

03 Test-Day Schedule, Minute by Minute

Total seat time on test day — including check-in, setup, and the built-in break — runs close to **2 hours 44 minutes**, even though actual timed testing is 2 hours 14 minutes.

Segment	Approx. Duration
Check-in & device/app setup	~15–20 min
Reading and Writing — Module 1	32 min
Reading and Writing — Module 2	32 min
Break	10 min
Math — Module 1	35 min
Math — Module 2	35 min

There is no break between the two modules within the same section — the system moves you into Module 2 automatically once Module 1 time ends.

04 Subject-Wise Content Breakdown

Reading and Writing

- **Information and Ideas** — central ideas, details, inferences, command of evidence
- **Craft and Structure** — vocabulary in context, text structure, cross-text connections
- **Expression of Ideas** — rhetorical synthesis, effective transitions
- **Standard English Conventions** — grammar, usage, punctuation

Passages are short (25–150 words) with one question each — no lengthy multi-question passages like the old paper SAT.

Math

- **Algebra** — linear equations, systems, inequalities
- **Advanced Math** — quadratics, exponential functions, nonlinear equations
- **Problem-Solving & Data Analysis** — ratios, percentages, statistics, data interpretation
- **Geometry and Trigonometry** — area, volume, lines/angles, trig ratios

05 How Adaptive Scoring Works

The Digital SAT uses **multistage adaptive testing** within each section — this is the single biggest structural difference from the old paper SAT, and it changes test-day strategy.

- Every student starts each section with the **same** Module 1, which mixes easy, medium and hard questions.
- Your Module 1 performance determines whether Module 2 is drawn from a **harder** or **easier** question pool.
- Scoring above roughly **600** in a section generally requires being routed to the harder Module 2.
- You can move freely and review answers *within* a module, but once a module is submitted you cannot return to it.

Strategic Takeaway

A strong, careful Module 1 performance is critical — it's the single decision point that determines your score ceiling for that section. Don't rush early questions to "save time" for later ones.

06 Scoring System Explained

Each section — Reading and Writing, and Math — is scored on a scale of **200 to 800**. These combine for a total score of **400 to 1600**. You also receive subscores by content domain to help identify specific strengths and gaps.

Score Band	Total Score	Approx. Percentile
Below Average	400–950	Below 40th
Average	1000–1050	~50th
Competitive	1200–1350	~80th–92nd
Highly Competitive	1400–1500	~95th–99th
Exceptional	1500+	99th+

07 Registration, Test Dates & Fees

- Registration is done through the College Board's official portal (satsuite.collegeboard.org) with a College Board account.
- The SAT is offered internationally on multiple dates across the year — typically **August, October, November, December, March, May and June** — with test centres available in most major Indian cities.
- Standard registration fee: approximately **US \$68** (international fees may include an additional surcharge); fee waivers are available for eligible US-based students.
- Registration deadlines fall roughly **4–5 weeks** before each test date, with a late-registration window available for an extra fee.
- Scores are typically released within about **2 weeks** of the test date — much faster than the old paper SAT.

08 Eligibility for Indian Students

There is no minimum age or nationality restriction — any student, at any stage of high school, can register for the SAT. Most Indian applicants take it in **Class 11 or the first half of Class 12**, leaving room for a retake before application deadlines.

- A valid passport is required as photo ID for international test-takers.
- Test centres in India are available in most metro and many tier-2 cities — book early, as seats fill up quickly closer to each date.
- Always confirm each target university's specific SAT requirement — many US universities are currently test-optional, while some have reinstated a testing requirement.

09 6-Month Study Timeline

A commonly recommended runway is 100–150 hours of dedicated study spread across 5–6 months, alongside regular schoolwork.

Phase	Duration	Focus
Phase 1 — Diagnostic & Baseline	Month 1	Take a full official Bluebook practice test; identify weak domains in R&W and Math
Phase 2 — Content Review	Months 1–3	Grammar rules, algebra/advanced math fundamentals, reading strategy by question type
Phase 3 — Domain Drilling	Months 3–4	Targeted practice sets by content domain to close specific gaps
Phase 4 — Full-Length Adaptive Tests	Months 4–5	Official Bluebook practice tests under real timing, spaced 2 weeks apart
Phase 5 — Review & Taper	Final 2 weeks	Review error log, light practice only, rest before test day

Pro Tip

Because the test is adaptive, always practise full sections (not just isolated questions) under real timing at least a few times — it's the only way to build comfort with the Module 1 → Module 2 flow and avoid surprises on test day.

Weekly Study Checklist Template

- ☐ 2–3 content review sessions (grammar rules or a math topic)
- ☐ Daily short reading/grammar practice set (15–20 minutes)
- ☐ One timed module or mixed practice set per week
- ☐ Error log review — tag mistakes by content domain
- ☐ One rest day to avoid burnout

10 Free & Official Mock Tests

The single most reliable mock-test resource is the College Board's own **Bluebook app** — it is the exact software used on real test day, so practising there also builds test-interface fluency.

Official (Free)

- Bluebook full-length practice tests (multiple official forms)
- Khan Academy's free, College Board-partnered SAT practice & personalised study plans
- College Board Question Bank (official retired questions by domain)

What to Track in Each Mock

- Section scores (200–800 each) and total score trend over time
- Accuracy by content domain, not just overall percentage
- Pacing — questions left unanswered when time runs out

11 Best Prep Resources

Structured Courses

- Khan Academy Official SAT Prep (free)
- College Board's own SAT Suite Question Bank

Reference & Drilling

- College Board Official SAT Study Guide
- Desmos graphing calculator practice (built into Bluebook)

12 Competitive Score Benchmarks

University Tier (Illustrative)	Typical SAT Range
Ivy League & Top-10 US Universities	1500–1580
Strong Top-50 Universities	1400–1490
Solid State/Private Universities	1200–1390
Standard Admission Range	1000–1190

These are illustrative bands only — always verify a specific university's published middle-50% SAT range on its official admissions page, and check its current test-optional/test-required policy.

13 Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Practising only on paper** — the adaptive, on-screen Bluebook experience (highlighting, built-in calculator, flagging) is different enough from paper practice that it needs its own rehearsal.
- **Rushing Module 1** — since it determines your Module 2 difficulty and score ceiling, treating it as a "warm-up" costs real points.
- **Ignoring domain-level data** — an overall percentage hides whether you're weak in, say, Standard English Conventions vs. Craft and Structure; review by domain.
- **Skipping full-length practice** — isolated question drilling builds skill but not the pacing and stamina needed for the real adaptive flow.
- **Registering too late** — popular test dates and Indian test centres fill up quickly close to the registration deadline.

Ready to Start Your SAT Journey?

EduQuest's counselling team helps Indian students plan their SAT timeline, choose the right test dates, and build a personalised study plan — the same support we provide for UCAT, MCAT, LSAT and ACT applicants.

What EduQuest Can Help With

- ☐ Personalised SAT study timeline based on your target intake
- ☐ Guidance on university shortlisting & test-optional strategy
- ☐ Full-length mock test reviews with domain-wise feedback
- ☐ End-to-end application & admissions counselling

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