

## History of the SAT:

- In 1926: SAT - Scholastic APTITUDE Test"
- In 1994: SAT - Scholastic ASSESSMENT Test
- Currently: SAT - Acronym, "SAT"
- SAT I vs. SAT II: Reasoning vs. Subject Matter Tests

The SAT was originally designed to be an aptitude test, not an achievement test. **Aptitude** is linked to a Student's **ability** to perform, **not** to what a student learned in school. An Aptitude Test is a test of potential rather than achievement. The Math & Verbal SAT I was designed to be a test of math and verbal reasoning skills.

In education, the term "Assessment" usually refers to a test, set of tests, or testing program that is used to measure a wide range of student attributes such as, their academic achievement (e.g. statewide tests assess mastery of content standards of a state's curriculum); their comparison to other students nationwide (e.g. nationwide tests compare an individual student's performance to that of a national norm group); or behavior, disabilities, disorders (e.g. tests administered by school specialists determine whether or not students qualify for special education services.)

Since all tests can be considered to be assessments of something, such as achievement, aptitude, intelligence, disabilities etc. the term, "Assessment Test" is something of a misnomer. Recognizing this shortly after they made the name change from Aptitude to Assessment, the College Board quickly dropped the new name and simply replaced it by its well-known acronym, the "S-A-T." So the test is now known as the SAT and the initials no longer stand for any specific words!

However, even though it has changed its name, the College Board claims that the SAT I is still a test of reasoning & thinking skills, as opposed to being simply an achievement test. The SAT II subject matter tests are Achievement tests. This is the main difference between the SAT I (a test of reasoning) and the ACT, which is simply a test of Achievement.

It was at the request of Harvard University in the 1920s that researchers developed a test that would predict college success. Harvard made this request because it wanted to expand its elite applicant pool, which primarily consisted of the children of Harvard alumni. Harvard wanted all students, who could demonstrate that they had the potential to succeed in college, to apply to Harvard. And so the researchers developed the SAT I in 1926. Since the best predictors for school success are the 3 R's (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic,) the original SAT I was constructed on the basis of 2 of these 3 predictors. The result was the SAT I Math and the SAT I Verbal tests.

## Purpose of the new changes made to the SAT:

- To improve alignment of the SAT I to school course work and school instructional practices
- To help colleges make better admission decisions by providing a third predictor of college success, Writing skills
- Research supports change

Change is not new to the SAT. There was a major change in 1994, when it was decided to align the SAT I with classroom practices more closely; to encourage some calculator use; to add Open-Ended Math items; to add longer Reading passages; and to DROP ANTONYMS from the Verbal section! The SAT is the most researched test in worldwide, and the College Board claims that research supports the latest changes.

**Reasons for the new changes made to the SAT:** The bottom line was money. The University of California, who is the SATs biggest client, complained that even after the 1994 changes, the SAT was still not linked CLOSELY enough to schoolwork. Because of that, the UC claimed that the SAT was unfair to many of its students, especially minority students and those for whom English was not their first language. [CA has a larger number of these students than most other states.] The UC threatened to stop using the SATs as a requirement for admission unless the College Board made the changes. They agreed and the changes will be reflected in the new SAT I.

- Current SAT I Core Exam  
2 Components: Math & Verbal – 3 hours total time
- New SAT I Core Exam  
3 Components: Math, Reading, Writing – 3 ½ hours total
- Time framework: March, 2005 – for class of '06

Changes in the new SAT I begin with the Core Exam itself. This is the first time the core of the SAT has been changed since the test was developed in 1926. The current SAT I uses two measures to predict college success (math and reading). The new SAT I will have three measures to predict college success: math, reading, and writing.

## SAT Verbal section changes:

### Current SAT I

VERBAL  
Three subtests

### New SAT I

CRITICAL READING  
Two subtests

**1) Reading Comprehension:**  
long passages

**2) Sentence Completion**  
vocabulary

**3) Verbal Analogies**

**Total time:** 75minutes

**1) Reading Comprehension**  
long & short passages

**2) Sentence Completions**  
vocabulary

**OMIT**

**Total time:** 70minutes

*Score remains same: 200-800*

On the current SAT I, the Reading Comprehension section contains several long passages to read, followed by multiple choice questions to answer. (The length of the passages was increased in '94.) The new SAT I, keeps the long passages, but adds new short paragraph length passages (called discrete passages) for students to read. The questions to answer remain multiple choice.

The biggest change on the "Verbal" test is the elimination of the Verbal Analogy section. An example of a Verbal Analogy item is, Big : Small as Long : Short [note, read the symbol ":" as "is to" so that it reads, "Big is to Small as Long is to \_\_\_\_."

- Strengthens alignment with school curriculum & instructional practices
- Measures knowledge of:
  - Genre
  - Cause & effect
  - Ability to recognize relationships
  - Vocabulary
- Reading Passages - from various fields, i.e.
  - Humanities
  - Natural Sciences
  - Social Science

The name change was made because it was thought that by eliminating the Verbal Analogies section of the old SAT I, the new SAT I would be more closely tied to achievement and less linked to aptitude. The Verbal Analogies test was considered to be more aligned with aptitude than with achievement from classroom instruction & practices. Verbal Analogies was eliminated because it also was the test deemed most "unfair" to minority students including those for whom English is a second language.

The new Critical Reading test measures students' knowledge of genre (fiction, non-fiction, etc.), cause & effect, ability to recognize relationships, and vocabulary. The reading passages, which are taken from various fields, typically ask questions about main ideas, characters, and settings, but also ask about the "tone" or attitude of the author.

The Kumon student who completes the summary and critique blocks of the Reading Program will be prepared to do well on the SAT's new Critical Reading Test.

### **SAT Math Section Changes:**

#### **Current SAT I Math**

Number & Operations

Algebra I

Geometry

Quantitative Comparisons

Total Time: 75 minutes

#### **New SAT I Math**

Number & Operations

Algebra I & Algebra II

Geometry

Some Trigonometry

OMIT

Total Time: 70 minutes

*Same Score for both: 200-800*

A scientific or graphing calculator is recommended for the new Math SAT I (use of calculators started in '94.) However, calculators will be examined and certain calculators that can send and receive messages or information are banned from the testing sites and will be confiscated.

For parents or students who think calculator use somehow replaces their need for Kumon, you may want to explain that the calculator is a mere tool, it isn't a curriculum, it doesn't teach math concepts, and it doesn't provide mastery of mathematics. You may want to refer to the Toru Kumon article on p. 33 of the February issue of Voices for an explanation of the term "calculation". Also, point out how this tool can be used by Kumon students to double check their work, to free them to spend more time on understanding math concepts and focusing on what is being asked. It is also a good tool to use for eliminating answer choices etc.

1. Number & Operations Concepts (3A – F):

Sequences Involving Exponential Growth ♦ Sets (union, intersection, elements)

2. Algebra II & Function Concepts:

Absolute Value(L) ♦ Rational Equations & Inequalities(G, H) ♦ Radical Equations ♦ Manipulation with Integer & Rational Exponents (G, H, I) ♦ Direct & Inverse Variation (H – L) ♦ Function Notation & Evaluation(H) ♦ Concepts of Domain & Range (K) ♦ Functions as Models (H) ♦ Linear Functions-Equations & Graphs(H) ♦ Quadratic Functions-Equations & Graphs (I, J, K)

3. Added Geometry & Measurement Concepts

Geometric Notation for Length, Segments, Lines, Rays & Congruence ♦ Problems in Which Trigonometry May be Used as an Alternate Method of Solution (M) ♦ Properties of Tangent Lines (K, L) ♦ Coordinate Geometry ♦ Qualitative Behavior of Graphs & Functions (H, I, J) ♦ Transformations and their Effect on Graphs & Functions (I, J, K, L)

4. Added Data Analysis, Statistics & Probability Concepts

Data Interpretation, Scatterplots, and Matrices (N)  
Geometric Probability (Q)

\* (X) denotes the corresponding Kumon Level(s) that contain material relevant to the topic. All Levels E and above, are based on a strong foundation of levels 3A-D

Note: Before continuing with the new Writing Component of the SAT I, it is valuable to stop and talk about the importance of the Math-Reading Connection, because to do well on the math SAT students must be able to read and comprehend the meaning of the words in a mathematical context, the nuance of the words, etc. Most math problems contain words as well as numbers, and those who are not reading above grade level may not do as well on the math test as those who are.

- Solving Math Word Problems [Calculation in Context] – is not just a Math issue; it is a Math-Reading issue!
- To do well requires:
  - GOOD READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Above Grade Level Reading

- Understand question being asked
- Identify information needed to solve it
- Translate the Wording into a Numeric Expression or Equation (Critical Thinking Skill)
- GOOD MATH CALCULATION SKILLS
  - Skilled in both basic & advanced calculation
  - Ability to solve the equation or the problem mathematically

**To do well on standardized math tests, including the SAT, the MATH-READING CONNECTION must be understood.**

The SAT is probably the standardized test that impacts students the most since it is one of the criteria for acceptance that is used by most colleges and universities in the U.S., including the IVYs and other major universities.

**Helpful hints:**

- Read the problem aloud
- Identify the question to be answered & information given
- Learn to recognize “key words” that indicate math operations,

<b>Addition</b>	<b>Subtraction</b>	<b>Multiplication</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Equals</b>
increased by	decreased by	multiplied by	per	is, are
more than	minus	of, times	out of	was
combined	difference	product of	ratio of	were

together	between/of	Increased/decreased	quotient of	will be
total of	less/more than	by a factor of	percent	gives
sum	fewer than			yields
added to	less/more			sold for

For Kumon students who need to improve their comprehension, have them:

- 1st read the math problem aloud,
- 2nd identify the question,
- 3rd learn to automatically recognize frequently used words in math problems &
- 4th learn to automatically associate these words with their Math Expression.

Students need to make these connections automatically so that they become second nature to them.

### **New SAT Writing Section:**

- **Why Add Writing?**
  - Increases validity of predicting college success
  - Encourages writing in schools –a core skill needed for success in and after college (workplace)
- **Purpose of the Writing Test:**
  - To determine how well students use Standard Written English
- **Development of SAT I Writing Component:**
  - Based on the current SAT II Writing Test

### **Writing is the 3rd component of new SAT I**

The Writing Test Increases Predictive Validity of the SAT because it now includes all three of the best predictors of success in college: math, reading, and writing.

### **The Writing Test is NOT a test of Spoken English; it tests a student's ability to use Standard Written English.**

The College Board felt that adding a Writing Component to the SAT I, sends a strong message to high schools that good writing skills are essential for success in college. This message is "forcing" schools to reinstate grammar and other language arts skills into their school curriculum. Many states have already included writing tests as part of their states' assessment programs. This is good preparation for the new SAT I Writing Test.

Kumon's Reading Program has always included a strong language arts component, which is essential in learning how to write in "Standard Written English."

- Multiple Choice Questions – test the ability to:
  1. Identify Sentence Errors
  2. Improve Sentences
  3. Improve Paragraphs
- Written Essay – assess ability to:
  1. Demonstrate proficiency in standard written English
  2. Write on demand ( given topic, timed)
  3. Produce a first draft quality – (not finished product)

*Time for writing component – 50 minutes, approx. 25 min. each*

There are two parts to the new SAT I Writing Test:

- **The Multiple Choice Test** – is basically an old fashioned grammar test. It has 3 parts:
  1. **Identifying Sentence Errors** - (errors in grammar, sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, proper word usage, etc.) These skills are directly addressed in the Kumon Reading Program.
  2. **Improving Sentences:** & 3. **Improving Paragraphs:** require mastery of language arts skills (taught in the Reading Program and reinforced by reading good literature on the RRL.) Mastery is needed in order to recognize e.g. how proper sentence structure will improve the flow of a sentence.

- **Writing an Essay** is the second half of the SAT I Writing Test. The essay is expected to be persuasive in nature. Student are asked to take a position on a given issue and support it with **reasons and evidence from their reading, experience, or observation**. Basically, students require good background knowledge to be able to provide evidence. Most of this is acquired through reading a wide variety of literature on a frequent basis. The RRL is a great source of information for students to acquire knowledge to defend their position and to provide evidence on this part of the written essay. There is no right or wrong position to take. The point is to be able to defend and support whatever position a student takes and to use appropriate evidence to do so.

1. **Identifying Sentence Errors** (*example*)

Directions: Select the choice that identifies the "grammatical" error:

"It is likely that the opening of the convention center, **previously set for** July 1, **would be** postponed **because of** the bricklayers' strike."

- A. previously
- B. set for
- C. would be
- D. because of
- E. no error

C is the correct answer because "would be" is the wrong tense of the verb in this sentence. The sentence tells when the convention center is going to open, which is a time in the future, either July 1st or later if there is a strike. Since the opening will definitely take place, the future tense, "will be," is needed here. "Would be" (the conditional tense) indicates only that an event might happen.

2. **Improving Sentences** (*example*)

Directions: ...select the choice that most improves the following sentence:

"Although several groups were absolutely opposed to the outside support given the revolutionary government, other groups **were as equal in their adamant approval of** that support."

- A. were as equal in their adamant approval of
- B. held equally adamant approval of
- C. had approved equally adamantly
- D. were equally adamant in approving
- E. held approval equally adamant of

There is nothing technically wrong with this sentence, but how can it be rewritten to improve it? The best choice to rewrite it is D because it expresses the second part of the sentence in a way that is PARALLEL to the 1st part. How do you learn that? Excellent Language Arts Skills and wide and frequent reading!

Two groups are being compared: 1) groups "absolutely opposed to" and 2) groups "equally adamant in." Choice C gives both phrases a common structure: group 1—absolutely opposed to: group 2—equally adamant in. Choice C because it expresses the second part of the sentence in a way that is parallel to the 1st part.

3. **Improving Paragraphs** (*example*)

Directions: Select the item in the passage that improves the paragraph by rewriting it:

"(1) At one point in the movie Raiders of the Lost Ark...(2)...

(3) I often think of the scene whenever I consider the record album collecting phenomenon, it being one of the more remarkable aspects of popular culture...(4)..."

Which revision is most needed in sentence 3?

- A. Insert "As a matter of fact" at the beginning.
- B. Omit the words "it being"
- C. Omit the word "scene"
- D. Change the comma to a semicolon.
- E. Change "think" to "thought" & "consider" to "considered."

The correct choice is B because the words "it being" are unnecessary (wordiness).

The 3 examples above are all questions in language arts. Half the new SAT I Writing Test measures Writing via a student's knowledge of language arts. Students who complete the Kumon Reading Program (and read the RRL books) will be well-prepared to do well on the new SAT I Writing test.

- Directions:
  - Read the passage and assignment
  - Plan & write an essay that **persuasively** explains views
  - Support position with reasons & examples

- Assignment:
  - **What is your view** of the idea in the passage:  
"Enjoying music, painting etc. does not improve people, but instead makes them less able to relate to real life?"
  - **In an essay, support your position by discussing an example(s) from literature, the arts, science and technology, current events, or your own experience or observation**

The Written Essay is the 2nd half of the Writing Test. Students MUST **Read the Directions & the Assignment** BEFORE they write their ESSAY!

Both Kumon Math & Reading Programs train students to read directions before doing their worksheets.

The Essay that students hand in is expected to be only First-Draft quality, Not a final version, this means they do not expect perfection. The Essay is not intended to be a creative work of fiction, nor do students receive any extra points for creativity!

- Purpose of Essay is to measure the ability to:
  - organize ideas,
  - express ideas clearly,
  - support main idea,
  - use conventions of Standard Written English
- Expectation of Quality:
  - First Draft not polished final quality
- Scoring: 1 to 6:
  - 1-deficient, 2-flawed, 3-limited, 4-competent, 5-strong, 6-outstanding
  - passing scores 4, 5, 6

Learning how to organize Ideas, express them clearly, and support the main idea are skills that are learned through the language arts sections of the worksheets, the Summary and Critique blocks of the Reading Program, and by reading widely and frequently.

So, does Kumon teach Writing? Yes, through the worksheets, especially the language arts component of the Reading Program, and by creating readers who are exposed to a wide variety of good literature on the RRL and are encouraged to become avid readers.

Scoring the new SAT I written essay will be done much the same way as the old SAT II Writing Subject Test is currently scored.

The Essays will be randomly sent to two Independent trained readers, who will use a special rubric and score each on a scale of 1-6. If there is a discrepancy of more than 2 points (e.g. one reader scores the essay a 2 and another scores it a 5 - a 3-point discrepancy - it is sent to a third reader. The training of the readers, however, is so thorough and the rubric is so clear, that only 2% of the current SAT II essays ever require a 3rd reader! This demonstrates how little subjectivity is involved in the scoring process.

**Same type of essay at on the new SAT I** – in 11th grade, students must write a persuasive essay to demonstrate that

they have the ability to write with organization, logic, clarity, using examples to support ideas, and can use conventions of standard written English.

- Introductory Paragraph – thesis statement; mini-outline of 3 subtopics that develop thesis; last sentence is transitional “hook” to next paragraph
- 1st Supporting Paragraph – 1st topic sentence – strongest; 3 examples of specific support; transition
- 2nd Supporting Paragraph – 2nd topic sentence; 3 examples of specific support; transition
- 3rd Supporting Paragraph – 3rd topic sentence – least imp; 3 example of specific support; transition
- Concluding Paragraph – synthesis & conclusion of the thesis; reword main topic and 3 subtopics.

At this point, it is valuable to point out the Reading-Writing connection.

- Reading & Writing are Reciprocal Processes
- Good Readers Make Good Writers
  - the more reading a child does, the more exposure she will have to the elements of good writing. The tools of a good writer will become second nature to a student who reads widely and frequently
- Good Writing Improves Reading Comprehension
  - better writers tend to read more books of a wider variety more frequently

### **The Kumon Advantage:**

To do well on standardized tests, students need to first master the content and second know some good test-taking skills. The following show how students acquire these skills while studying Kumon.

1. Kumon Worksheets, Achievement Tests expose students to a wide variety of item-formats so encountering a variety of item formats on tests is no surprise.
2. Daily worksheets provide students with frequent opportunities to read & follow directions independently.
3. Time-management skills become 2nd nature to Kumon students who take timed placement and achievement tests, and do timed worksheets daily.
4. Timing also helps students develop strong concentration skills.
5. Kumon students develop a positive attitude toward test-taking – as they develop their confidence in their ability to do well by:
  - Starting where the work is easy, to avoid frustration
  - Mastering work that gradually gets more difficult
  - Taking and passing end-of-level achievement tests before moving on to the next level
  - Receiving frequent and genuine praise & positive reinforcement from Kumon staff and Instructors
6. Skilled Readers are good test takers and Kumon helps children develop into skilled readers – those who read fluently and with comprehension.
  - Kumon – develops fluency through oral reading
  - Kumon – develops reading comprehension (able to extract the meaning from a passage, not just able to read the words) throughout worksheets, but especially in the Summary Building Block and Critique Block of the Reading Program

**To Improve Reading Comprehension –build Vocabulary; learn Language Skills; acquire Background Knowledge; read Books; and finish the Kumon Reading Program!**