

Who Should Read This?

- **Students** who want to make the best test-prep choices they can.
- **Parents** who want to maximize results, minimize their investment of time and money, and encourage their children's success.
- **Guidance Counselors** who want to help raise their students' scores.

About the Author:

Mike Barrett has trained thousands of students for the SAT, PSAT, GRE, GMAT, and LSAT. His methods are well-known for their innovation, simplicity, and effectiveness.

Most students get ready for standardized tests the same way they get ready for any test—they try to memorize the material they expect to see on the test.

Raising Your Test Scores With Less Work

The painful shortcomings of traditional test prep—and how to avoid them.

Millions of people will take standardized tests this year¹, which means millions of people will be frustrated by pointless study sessions and worried over bad results. You don't have to be one of them.

This white paper will explain why the most popular approach to test preparation for the SAT*, PSAT*, GRE*, LSAT*, and GMAT* is deeply flawed. More importantly, it will describe a reliable way to improve test scores—one that doesn't focus on memorizing subject matter. Through clearly illustrated examples, you'll see the traditional "studying" methods used by most students, and learn why "training" for standardized tests is the easier, faster, less costly, and more effective approach.

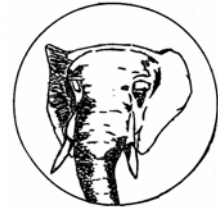
Studying: The Traditional Approach to Testing

Most people get ready for a standardized test the same way they get ready for a normal test. They get some textbooks and they start memorizing. Even if you hire a tutor or attend a class, the chances are good that the tutor or the class will still approach the test in roughly the same way, by helping you memorize.

If you're studying for a biology test, you might try to learn the genus and species of 20 different microorganisms; if you're studying for the GRE, you might try to learn the

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¹ Data compiled from www.CollegeBoard.com, www.LSAC.org, www.GMAC.com, and www.GRE.org.



definitions of thousands of words. The process is essentially the same. Only the material is different. As another example, the typical SAT prep class takes several weeks. Each week you might learn a few more mathematical concepts, a few more vocabulary words, and a few more grammar rules. On some days the class discusses how to read essays and look for structure and theme. On other days, you might go over how to write college-level essays. By the end of the course, you've covered most of the words, formulas, grammar, and skills that the SAT is supposed to test.

Studying for standardized tests involves long hours spent memorizing huge amounts of material that often don't appear on test day.

Unfortunately, when you confront actual test questions, you often find that the material you spent weeks studying is very hard to apply (see the examples below).

Why does this happen? Most students never realize that standardized tests aren't primarily designed to cover any specific facts, which means most students never realize that memorizing facts is a waste of time.

Standardized tests only exist for the purpose of ranking test-takers against one another, not for demonstrating what test-takers actually know.

What is the purpose of a standardized test?

In order to appreciate why studying for standardized tests is a bad idea, you have to know what these tests are for. (Even within the test-prep industry, very few people appreciate the crucial difference between a standardized test and a normal test you take in class.)

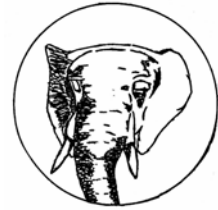
Unlike normal tests, which show an instructor whether you've mastered class material, standardized tests are used to rank you in a way that colleges can rely on.

The only reason we have standardized tests is that colleges and universities think they give consistent rankings over a period of years. For example, if you're applying to a certain law school with an LSAT score of 167, the law school uses its data on past 167-scorers to predict how well you'll probably do if you're admitted.

That's it. Standardized tests aren't designed to show anything about what you actually know.

What special limitations are placed on standardized tests?

Because standardized tests are only used to rank students, they have to follow certain rules that don't apply to regular tests.



Standardized tests have two major features you won't find in regular tests:

- (1) They're normed.*
- (2) They have to follow rules and patterns.*

Knowing the rules and patterns that govern your test is absolutely essential if you want to raise your score with minimal time and effort.

When a test is standardized, scores from different test-dates can measure the same thing with different sets of questions. That's why a 530 on the SAT Math in 2005 is the same thing as a 530 on the SAT Math in 2007.²

There are two ways to standardize a test. First, standardized tests rely on a statistical process called "norming" to generate similar score distributions for each test-date.³ Classroom tests aren't usually normed. (Smart test-takers don't worry about norming, because there's no reliable way to exploit it.⁴)

Second, and more importantly, standardized tests design their questions according to rules and patterns that are constant for a given version of the test. In other words, all SAT math questions follow certain rules. So do all LSAT logic games, all GMAT data sufficiency questions, all GRE antonyms, and so on.

This is a very, very important point, so I'll make it again: **Test designers can only test the same things without recycling questions because they always follow strict rules and patterns when they write new questions.**

Unfortunately, most students, teachers, parents, guidance counselors, and test-prep companies have no idea how to exploit these rules and patterns for maximum gain. As a result, you can end up studying for weeks and still doing very poorly on test day.

Why Studying For Standardized Tests Is The Wrong Approach

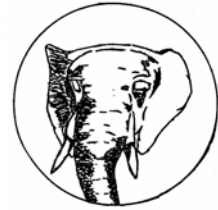
Let's look at a few examples of real test questions that resist the traditional "studying" approach.⁵

² Actually, the reliability of rankings breaks down near the middle of the scoring scale. (See Maximo Rodriguez, "Norming and Norm-Referenced Test Scores," January 1997, page 11.) At any rate, colleges and universities treat scores from different test dates identically, so you must do the same.

³ Robert Glaser. "Instructional technology and the measurement of learning outcomes." 1963.

⁴ No matter what rumors you may hear, there is no way to "time" a standardized test for a maximum score, because (a) norming is carried out against a historical sample, not just against the people who take the test when you do, and (b) it's impossible to anticipate the performance of the testing population for a particular test-date.

⁵ These examples were selected because their explanations are short and provide striking demonstrations of the differences between the studying method and the training method. While the explanations for other types of questions may require more space, rest assured that they are just as easy to learn, and just as effective.



ARABLE : CULTIVATION ::
 (A) exploited : protection
 (B) healthy : medication
 (C) insular : discovery
 (D) productive : surplus
 (E) navigable : sailing

DEFEND : UNTENABLE ::
 (A) escape : unfettered
 (B) judge : punitive
 (C) modify : invariable
 (D) flourish : vigorous
 (E) protect : dangerous

Figure 1: Two SAT analogies from a previous version of the SAT.⁶

In Figure 1 you'll see two SAT analogy questions from an older version of the test.⁶ To answer this type of question, you're expected to determine the relationship between the two capitalized words and then select the answer choice whose words have the same relationship. The traditional approach to these questions involves recalling the definitions of all 12 words in each question, and then determining their interrelationships.

RENT:
 (A) in abeyance (B) occupied
 (C) undeserved (D) turned down
 (E) made whole

NICE:
 (A) indirect (B) indecisive
 (C) imperceptible (D) imprecise
 (E) imperturbable

Figure 2: Two GRE antonym questions with uncommon meanings for common words.⁹

In order to feel confident that you've memorized the necessary vocabulary, you might turn to a list like the one provided by Barron's*, which features 3,500 words intended to be useful on the SAT.⁷ Sure enough, the list contains every word appearing in both questions in Figure 1.⁸ Still, the vast majority of the time you spend memorizing definitions is wasted as far as the test is concerned, since the SAT asks about the meanings of far fewer than 3,500 words on any given test. (Easier solutions for both questions appear below.)

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1,234 \\
 1,243 \\
 1,324 \\
 \dots \\
 \dots \\
 \dots \\
 + 4,321 \\
 \hline
 \end{array}$$

The addition problem above shows four of the 24 different integers that can be formed by using each of the digits 1, 2, 3, and 4 exactly once in each integer. What is the sum of these 24 integers?

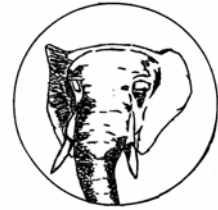
(A) 24,000
 (B) 26,664
 (C) 40,440
 (D) 60,000
 (E) 66,660

Figure 3: A GMAT Math question that would frustrate most test-takers. (Note that this math question, which is typical for standardized tests, is very different from the kinds of math questions a student sees in class.)¹⁰

The GRE antonym questions in Figure 2 expose an even bigger drawback of studying.⁹ You might try to approach these questions by recalling the meanings of the words *nice* and *rent*. Of course, you know what those words mean in everyday conversation, but here the GRE is using far less common meanings. These questions demonstrate that test-makers can outwit the traditional approach to test-taking even when you know the supposed subject matter. (Again, see below for easier solutions to both questions.)

Of course, the problems with "studying" aren't limited to vocabulary. People typically prep for math sections by memorizing formulas and going over class material, even though very few of the questions on standardized tests resemble questions from math classes. As a result, you probably feel unprepared for the math questions you see on test day, no matter how much time you've spent getting ready. You end up looking for complicated solutions to questions that should actually be fairly simple. Figure 3 shows a GMAT math question that you can answer without picking up a pencil.¹⁰

⁶ College Board. *10 Real SATs*. 2000. Page 375.
⁷ Sharon Weiner Green, Ph.D., and Ira K. Wolf. *How to Prepare for the SAT: 2006 – 2007*. 2006. Page 146.
⁸ We're assuming for the sake of argument that all of the words in Figure 1 were already on the Barron's list before 1995, when the questions in Figure 1 appeared on the SAT.
⁹ Educational Testing Service. *GRE: Practicing to Take the General Test*. 2002. Pages 252 and 324.
¹⁰ Graduate Management Admissions Council. *The Official Guide for GMAT Review*. 2003. Page 99.



Rhonda will see the movie tomorrow afternoon only if Paul goes to the concert in the afternoon. Paul will not go to the concert unless Ted agrees to go to the concert. However, Ted refuses to go to the concert. So Rhonda will not see the movie tomorrow afternoon.

The pattern of reasoning displayed above is most closely paralleled in which one of the following?

- (A) If Janice comes to visit, Mary will not pay the bills tomorrow. Janice will not come to visit unless she locates a babysitter. However, Janice has located a babysitter, so she will visit Mary.
- (B) Gary will do his laundry tomorrow only if Peter has to go to work. Unless Cathy is ill, Peter will not have to go to work. Since Cathy is not ill, Gary will not do his laundry tomorrow.
- (C) Kelly will barbecue fish tonight if it does not rain and the market has fresh trout. Although the forecast does not call for rain, the market does not have fresh trout. So Kelly will not barbecue fish tonight.
- (D) Lisa will attend the family reunion next week only if one of her brothers, Jared or Karl, also attends. Karl will not attend the reunion, but Jared will. So Lisa will attend the reunion.
- (E) George will not go to the museum tomorrow unless Mark agrees to go. Mark will go to the museum only if he can postpone most of his appointments. Mark has postponed some of his appointments, so he will go to the museum.

Figure 4: An LSAT analytical reasoning question that seems more complicated than it is.¹¹

Unfortunately, most test-takers who encounter this problem after studying math formulas for weeks will try to solve it by finding permutations and doing a lot of addition. The result is a calculation that takes a few minutes and offers many opportunities for mistakes, especially in the high-pressure environment of test day.

Now consider the sample LSAT question in Figure 4.¹¹ If you studied for the LSAT in the traditional way, you'd spend several days learning logical constructs like the contrapositive or fallacies like *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Then you would try to find these constructs and fallacies in LSAT questions that often don't contain them (as, indeed, the question in Figure 3 does not). Most students find this extremely frustrating, but they usually assume that the way to fix the problem is with even more studying. (See below for a solution to the question in Figure 4 that relies on rules and patterns instead.)

Because it allows you to avoid the kinds of problems detailed above, the training method is vastly superior to the studying method.

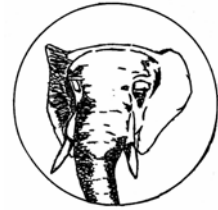
Training: The Key To Effective Test Prep

Instead of memorizing thousands of vocabulary words and dozens of mathematical formulas and having no idea which items will be on the test, smart test-takers concentrate on the rules and patterns that don't change. This approach takes far less time to perfect, which means it tends to bring higher scores with less frustration and a smaller investment.

When you focus on the rules and patterns of the test, there are only a few pieces of information to learn. Most students can learn to attack a given question type in well under an hour. This means you can learn all the ground rules for a test quickly, and spend the rest of your time training to apply them.

This stripped-down, mechanical approach to test prep lets you answer questions with far less confusion. The training-based solutions to a test question are direct, intuitive, and often surprising to a person who's not familiar with them. Let's take a look at some of those solutions now.

¹¹ Law School Admission Council. *10 More Actual, Official LSAT PrepTests*. 2002. Page 65.



Unlike the “studying” approach, the “training” approach isn’t powerless against test questions that seem strange to most test-takers.

Why Training Is The Best Approach For Standardized Tests

In Figures 1 – 4 above, you saw examples of typical standardized test questions that don’t respond well to the traditional “studying” method of test prep. Now let’s try the “training” approach.

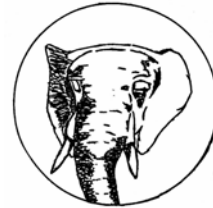
If we used the studying approach for the old SAT questions in Figure 1, we would try to recall the definitions of each of the 24 words in both analogies. But a well-trained test-taker knows that the relationships between the words are the important thing, not the words’ meanings. Knowing this, you can quickly identify the suffixes and prefixes in the capitalized words for clues to their relationships.

In the first question, the word *arable* has the suffix *-able*, meaning that it has something to do with the possibility of performing an action. (The word *cultivation* has the suffix *-ation*, but a trained test-taker realizes that this suffix only indicates a noun. It doesn’t tell you as much as the suffix *-able* does.) So the relationship between *arable* and *cultivation* must have something do with the idea of making it possible to perform an action—you know this because you know the SAT’s rules, and you know what the suffix *-able* means. Knowing only this much, you can confidently select the answer choice that also has the suffix *-able*, because its words must also have something to do with the possibility of performing an action. Actually knowing the words *arable* and *navigable* isn’t necessary.

<p>ARABLE : CULTIVATION :: (A) exploited : protection (B) health : medication (C) insular : discovery (D) productive : surplus (E) navigable : sailing</p> <p>DEFEND : UNTENABLE :: (A) escape : unfettered (B) judge : punitive (C) modify : invariable (D) flourish : vigorous (E) protect : dangerous</p>
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Figure 5: After a little training, a student sees only the important parts of the two questions from Figure 1, with no need to remember vocabulary.

The second question can be attacked in the same way. In that question, you see that *untenable* has both the suffix *-able* and the negative prefix *un-*. If you know the SAT’s rules, then you know that the relationship in this question has something to do with the idea of making something impossible. You can now settle on the answer choice with *invariable*, because its structure is so similar to the structure of *untenable*. In both questions, relying on the rules and patterns of the test allows you to be certain you’re correct without ever wondering what the words mean. Figure 5 shows the questions from Figure 1 the way they might appear to a trained test-taker. While a test-taker who “studied” diligently might spend a minute or more on each question, a trained test-taker can answer them in 10 seconds or less.



RENT:
 (A) ~~abeyance~~ (B) ~~occupied~~
 (C) ~~undeserved~~ (D) ~~turned down~~
 ✓ (E) made whole
 neg/pos

NICE:
 (A) ~~indirect~~ (B) ~~indecisive~~
 (C) ~~imperceptible~~ (D) ~~imprecise~~
 (E) ~~imperturbable~~
 neg/pos

Figure 6: Training provides test-takers with the tools necessary to rule out answer choices by relying almost exclusively on knowledge of a test's structure. This is how the relevant features of the questions in Figure 2 might appear to a trained test-taker.

In the GRE Antonym questions in Figure 2, *rent* is used as the past tense of the uncommon verb *to rent*, and *nice* is also used in an obscure sense. If you've only "studied" for the GRE, you're stuck having to make a guess with no tools besides your inadequate vocabulary. If you train, on the other hand, you can use the rules and patterns of the GRE answer choices to figure out that *rent* is probably the past tense of a verb, and is being used as an adjective. You know this because all the answer choices have to be the same part of speech as the capitalized word, and all of the answer choices are adjectival phrases. Furthermore, every answer choice except (A) has a verb in the past tense, strongly suggesting that *rent* is also a verb in the past tense. This tells you that *rent* is not the normal word *rent* that means "a monthly fee for occupying someone's property." You can then eliminate choices (A), (B), and (D) by relying on the GRE pattern that answer choices seemingly in the same subject area as the capitalized word are typically there to confuse you—all of those answer choices have to do with property ownership. (If you aren't sure of the meaning of the word *abeyance*, you can still eliminate (A) because, on the GRE, the antonym of a verb is almost always a verb.) This leaves (C) and (E). Now you can rely on the fact that the GRE antonyms of obscure words are always very negative or very positive; here, *made whole* presents a clearly positive idea, while *undeserved* presents a neutral idea.

1,234
1,243
1,324
....
....
....
+ 4,321

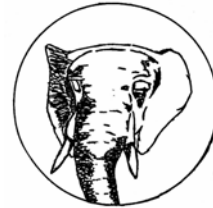
The addition problem above shows four of the 24 different integers that can be formed by using each of the digits 1, 2, 3, and 4 exactly once in each integer. What is the sum of these 24 integers?

(A) 24,000 <48,000
 (B) 26,664 <48,000
 (C) 40,440 <48,000
 (D) 60,000 ~~different column totals~~
 ✓ (E) 66,660

Figure 7: Knowing the test's rules and patterns, a trained test-taker uses answer choices to arrive at a solution in under 30 seconds.

Using a similar approach to the second question, you can tell that *nice* must be an adjective, and that the GRE will require its antonym to be a word with a negative connotation. You can also see that every word in the answer choice has the negative prefix *in-* or *im-* added to a root adjective. Now you just need to find the answer choice with the root that has the most positive connotation. Only the root in (D), *precise*, never has a negative connotation. That makes (D) the best answer on the GRE. Figure 6 shows how these questions might look to a trained test-taker.

Now let's take another look at the GMAT math question in Figure 3. One of the most important rules to know for the GMAT, PSAT, SAT, or GRE is that every math question can be answered in less than 30 seconds without a calculator, no matter how complicated it may seem. On top of that, each test can only use a limited inventory of basic math concepts to test you. Once you see these rules at work a few times, you'll realize that



Rhonda will see the movie tomorrow afternoon only if Paul goes to the concert in the afternoon. Paul will not go to the concert unless Ted agrees to go to the concert. However, Ted refuses to go to the concert. So Rhonda will not see the movie tomorrow afternoon.

The pattern of reasoning displayed above is most closely paralleled in which one of the following?

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Although the forecast does not call for rain, the market does not have fresh trout. So Kelly will not barbecue fish tonight.

(D) Lisa will attend the family reunion next week only if one of her brothers, Jared or Karl, also attends. Karl will not attend the reunion, but Jared will. So Lisa will attend the reunion.

(E) George will not go to the museum tomorrow unless Mark agrees to go. Mark will go to the museum only if he can postpone most of his appointments. Mark has postponed some of his appointments, so he will go to the museum.

Figure 8: Long pattern-of-reasoning questions on the LSAT can be tedious, but training to focus on function words makes everything much clearer.

“math” questions on standardized tests are usually more like brain-teasers than like questions you see in math class.

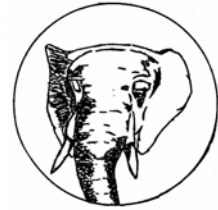
Since the GMAT doesn’t allow calculators, an untrained student would probably approach the question from Figure 3 by writing out each possible permutation of 1, 2, 3, and 4 in a long column, and then adding these numbers together. You can see that this solution would probably take longer than 30 seconds. The faster approach is to take advantage of the answer choices. You know that the average value of all the integers will be greater than 2,000, since only 6 of the 24 integers will be less than 2,000. And since 24 x 2,000 is already 48,000, you know that (A), (B), and (C) are all too small to be the result when all 24 integers are added together. That leaves (D) and (E). You might also realize that if you added all 24 integers, each place column would have to add up to the same total, since each column would include the same number of 1’s, 2’s, 3’s, and 4’s. If (D) were correct, the columns would have to add up to different amounts, but in (E), each place column adds up to 60. This means (E) must be correct, even if you never actually do any addition to solve the problem. Figure 7 shows how a trained test-taker might see the question.

The LSAT question in Figure 4 can also be answered more easily when you know the rules and patterns it follows. With training, you know that the LSAT uses function words (like *unless*) that show you how ideas are related. The prompt has the function words “will . . . only if . . . unless . . . will not,” and the answer choice with the most similar functions words is (B). Focusing on these words makes finding the correct answer much easier—often, it gives the whole thing away, as in Figure 8.

Of course, the solutions presented here are only a brief introduction to the use of rules and patterns on standardized tests. **With the proper training, you can use multiple approaches to find the answer to any standardized test question.**

Most Test-Prep Companies Don’t Care About The Rules and Patterns of Standardized Tests

You’ve already seen how knowing the rules and patterns of a test makes everything easier. **You might expect that most test-prep companies would teach you about rules and patterns, but they rarely do.**



AGGRANDIZE : AUGMENT ::
 (A) declension : assent
 (B) abatement : extenuation
 (C) adjunct : detruncate
 (D) increment : diminution
 (E) vincture : segregation

Figure 9: A “practice” GRE Analogy question written by a test-prep company. Note that the analogy breaks the GRE rule that answer choices must use the same parts of speech as the prompt: *aggrandize* and *augment* are verbs, but all the other words are nouns except for *detruncate*.¹²

Even the testmakers themselves often give you bad advice.

Figure 9 shows an analogy question that appears in one company’s GRE guide.¹² One of the most basic and obvious rules for GRE analogies is that every answer choice must use the same parts of speech as the words in the question, but the practice question in Figure 10 violates this rule. It’s extremely unlikely that a company can teach you about rules and patterns when it doesn’t follow them in designing its own practice materials.

Even the most reputable companies may largely ignore rules and patterns. Kaplan*, the biggest test-prep company on Earth, published its first guide for the new SAT a full three months before the College Board* released practice questions for the test (many other companies did the same).¹³ Clearly, Kaplan’s approach to the SAT was not grounded in a thorough analysis of the test’s questions, since the company released its study materials before those questions were available.

Even Testmakers Give Bad Advice

You might expect that testing companies would at least be a reliable source of test-taking advice. Unfortunately, that isn’t the case either. **While testing companies are the only sources you should ever use for practice test questions, you should almost never use them for actual test-prep training.**

The Graduate Management Admission Council*, for example, publishes *The Official Guide For GMAT Review**, an essential book for any GMAT-taker. This book is the best source of real GMAT questions, but its advice can leave much to be desired. Many of the book’s explanations for grammar questions say only that a correct usage is “idiomatic,” or that an incorrect usage is “unidiomatic,” without explaining why.¹⁴

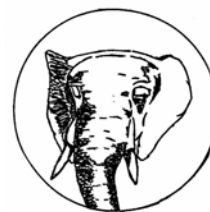
The studying advice in the College Board’s *Official SAT Study Guide For the New SAT** is often even less helpful. One glaring example is the essay-grading chart that says a high-scoring essay “exhibits skillful use of language, using a varied, accurate, and apt vocabulary,” and “is free of most errors in grammar.”¹⁵ The book’s

¹² Research and Education Association. *The Very Best Coaching and Study Course for the GRE General Test*. 2005. Page 397.

¹³ Information gathered from book data at www.Amazon.com.

¹⁴ *The Official Guide for GMAT Review*. Pages 696 – 762.

¹⁵ *The Official SAT Study Guide for The New SAT*. Page 105.



first sample perfect-scoring essay contains lots of incorrect punctuation, pronouns without antecedents, the improper word *alright*, a sentence that incorrectly begins with a conjunction, and a sentence that ends with a preposition.¹⁶ The College Board also shows you an essay that scored 3 out of 6 even though it meets all of the stated requirements for a top-scoring essay on the grading chart.¹⁷ The lesson is clear: If you follow the grading chart, there's no guarantee of a good score. Instead, you should look for, and follow, the hidden rules that determine SAT essay scores.¹⁸

How to Identify Rules and Patterns and Slash Your Prep Time Dramatically

As you just saw, most test-prep companies aren't much help when it comes to beating tests the easy way, and the testmakers don't just come out and tell you what rules to follow, either. So how can you train effectively?

Well, for reasons illustrated in Figure 9 above, you can't trust third-party test-prep companies to write good test questions. You should only ever practice with questions supplied by the testmakers themselves. Once you have a book of real test questions, you have to sift through them to discover the rules they follow. In general, you'll find rules and patterns more easily if you focus on what the test is *not* asking you.

Here's a minor example. Many real SAT math questions include diagrams not drawn to scale.¹⁹ If you look carefully at these questions, you might realize something pretty interesting—when you re-draw the diagrams to scale, as in Figure 10, they give away the answers.

Once you know this, you have a simple rule for the SAT: Every time you see a math question with a diagram not drawn to scale, re-draw it to scale and expect the answer to be revealed.

In the figure above, XC is perpendicular to l . Which of the following line segments (not shown) has the greatest length?

(A) \overline{XA}
 (B) \overline{XB}
 (C) \overline{XC}
 (D) \overline{XD}
 (E) \overline{XE}

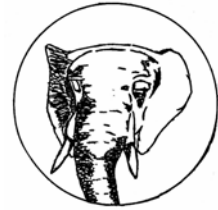
Figure 10: When the diagram for an SAT Math problem is drawn closer to scale, the answer is usually immediately obvious—here, \overline{XA} is clearly the longest line segment.¹⁹

¹⁶ *The Official SAT Study Guide for The New SAT*. Pages 120, 121.

¹⁷ *The Official SAT Study Guide for The New SAT*. Page 210.

¹⁸ **One hidden rule is that length is the major factor in an essay's score.** See Dr. Les Perelman's remarks in Michael Winerip's *New York Times* article "ON EDUCATION; SAT Essay Test Rewards Length and Ignores Errors of Fact," 4 May 2005.

¹⁹ See, for example, the diagram in question 3 on page 396 of the 2004 College Board publication *The Official SAT Study Guide for the New SAT*, which has been re-drawn to scale in Figure 9.



You can use this approach to find multiple rules about any question type on any standardized test. The more rules you discover, and the more effective they are, the easier it is to raise your score. Unfortunately, the process of discovering and testing rules and patterns can be difficult for most students, because it requires thinking about testing in a new way. Worse, there are few sources you can use for help.

When you look for help with test prep, find someone who uses only real test questions and offers a simple refund policy. Don't get help from someone who'll waste your time with memorization, or who only knows one test or one type of question.

What To Look For In A Test-Prep Trainer

You've already seen why large companies can't usually be trusted for training help. These companies tend to prefer the traditional "studying" approach, with its emphasis on memorization and subject matter.

Fortunately, there are a few smaller companies and private tutors who understand that training with rules and patterns is the fastest, easiest way to maximize your score. Here are five things to look for:

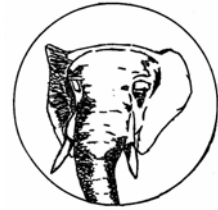
1. Tutors and classes must insist on practicing with questions supplied by the test-maker. If you want to know the test's rules, you have to work with them.

2. Avoid cramming vocabulary! Your time is better spent learning and practicing the rules of the test. Remember the questions in Figures 1 and 2 above—vocabulary wouldn't have helped much with them.

3. Beware of specialists. An instructor who sees the "big picture" makes it easier for you to learn. Your instructor should be able to answer and explain every real test question.

4. Ask to see an instructor's written materials. Look through them to see if the approach is based more on training or on memorization.

5. Insist on a simple refund policy. Most traditional test-prep sources lure you into a big purchase with a "guarantee" that your score will increase, but if you look closer you'll see that very little is actually guaranteed. If a company stands behind its approach, the guarantee should be simple: After a suitable evaluation period, you should be entitled to a refund with no questions asked. As with any other major purchase, always read the fine print.



Grammatix, Inc., can help you raise your score significantly in a short time by teaching you the approach described in this white paper.

“I am an educational psychologist and have referred a great deal of people to your website—when my daughter began studying for the PSAT I was so frustrated with what was out there, when I saw your program . . . I was very impressed, I love the straightforward approach and solid (well thought out) advice.”

—**Lisa Burgoon**, satisfied parent

“I have never taken the LSAT or any prep course. So far I have been able to get most of the study questions right. I am practicing your halo theory and, as simple as it sounds, it does work. Also, underlining the reasons something is wrong helps too. The study is working out great and so far no problems . . .”

—**Tom Wilkins**, satisfied student

For quotes from many, many more satisfied students and parents, please visit our web sites.

One Very Good Option

You’ve now seen how much easier it is to train for a standardized test than to study for one. You’ve also seen that most test-prep companies only practice the studying approach, and you’ve been given the tools to evaluate any test-prep instructor.

We’d like you to know about our small company, Grammatix, Inc. We offer training grounded in a thorough understanding of the rules and patterns for each test. Our methods have helped students at all score levels improve their performance, and we’re confident we can help you, too.

Our approach has two parts:

1. Industry-leading prep guides that lay out the rules and patterns of each test in a way you can understand.

You get to see every technique used against real test questions of every difficulty level. These guides cover absolutely everything you’ll need.

2. Unlimited expert help from one of the nation’s leading test-prep coaches.

Mike Barrett has made top scores on the PSAT, SAT, GRE, LSAT, and GMAT, and his students have, too. The writer of the Grammatix strategy guides, Mike has helped tens of thousands of happy students get ready for test day. As a student, you’ll have access to his direct email address, and you can send him as many test-related questions as you like, for as long as you need. He’ll always get back to you ASAP with an expert answer for your specific situation.

Of course, it goes without saying that our test-prep help is available at a price far below what you would pay for a class or a personal tutor, and it comes with a no-questions-asked, 100% money-back guarantee in the unlikely event you’re not satisfied.

Any Questions?

If you have further questions about anything in this white paper, please feel free to contact Grammatix, Inc. at 1-800-511-9330. You can also visit our main web site at www.Grammatix.com, or visit our test-specific web sites: www.AceTheSAT.com, www.AceTheGRE.com, www.AceTheLSAT.com, and www.AceTheGMAT.com. Each site has a free newsletter. Good luck in your quest for higher scores!