

COLLEGE CONNECTION'S DECONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW DIGITAL SAT EXAM

In March 2023, CollegeBoard introduced everywhere except in the United States its latest iteration of the SAT: The DSAT (Digital SAT). During the 2023 tutoring season, CollegeConnection's Founder Sam McLaughlin was tutoring three international students for the DSAT, giving Sam a jump start concerning the intricacies of this new type of SAT exam, an exam which is qualitatively different from the old paper version of the SAT.

This new DSAT exam consists of a Reading & Writing and a Math section, each section of the test is comprised of two Modules: Module I and Module. Both Module I and II of the Reading & Writing Section of the digital exam has 27 questions that the

student must complete in 32 minutes.
Both Module I and II of the Math Section of the digital exam has 22 questions that the student must complete in 35 minutes.
There is no break between Modules I and II of the test; there is a ten minute break between the Reading and Writing and the Math portions of the test.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS TEST IS AN ANALYTIC TEST. AS SUCH, ALL STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE THE SAME MODULE I OF THE READING AND WRITING AND THE MATH PORTIONS OF THE TEST, BUT, DEPENDING UPON HOW WELL THE STUDENT PERFORMS ON MODULE I OF EACH PORTION OF THE TEST, THE STUDENT WILL EITHER RECEIVE AN EASIER OR A HARDER VERSION OF MODULE II OF THE READING AND WRITING AND THE MATH PORTIONS OF THE TEST. IN ORDER TO

RECEIVE A HARDER VERSION OF
MODULE II ON THE READING AND
WRITING PORTION OF THE TEST, THE
STUDENT MUST CORRECTLY ANSWER
BETWEEN 15-17 QUESTIONS IN MODULE
I OF THE READING AND WRITING
SECTION OF THE TEST. IN ORDER TO
RECEIVE A HARDER VERSION OF
MODULE II ON THE MATH PORTION OF
THE TEST, THE STUDENT MUST
CORRECTLY ANSWER BETWEEN 12-14
QUESTIONS IN MODULE I OF THE MATH
SECTION OF THE TEST.

PLEASE FURTHER NOTE: IN ORDER TO
RECEIVE A GOOD SCORE ON THE DSAT,
A STUDENT RECEIVE THE HARDER
VERSION OF THE READING AND
WRITING AND THE MATH PORTIONS OF
THE TEST; OTHERWISE, THE STUDENT'S
TOTAL DSAT SCORE WILL ONLY BE 1300
OR LOWER.

Both Modules of the Reading and Writing portion of the DSAT are comprised of 4-6 Vocabulary-in-Context questions, followed by 10-12 Reading Comprehension Questions, followed by 10-12 Grammar Questions, concluding with 2-4 Student Note Questions. In order to succeed on the Vocabulary-in-Context questions, the students must look for context clues within the sentence pointing to the correct vocabulary word answer. As for success on the Reading Comprehension questions, the students must adhere to the following metric: A) One answer is correct; the other answer choices are incorrect, meaning the students are never looking for the 'best' answer; they are looking for the correct answer choice. And, further, the correct answer is the answer that answers the question asked and has textual support within the passage. As for the Grammar

portion of this Section, MEMORIZE MY GRAMMAR DOCUMENT. Finally, for Student Note questions, read the question first then isolate from the notes those specific notes that relate to the question asked. When question says ‘unfamiliar with’ students must choose more specific response. Conversely, when question says ‘familiar with’ students must choose more unspecific answer choice. The Math questions, on both Modules go from easier to harder, covering the following Math topics: Heart of Algebra, Problem Solving and Data Analysis, Passport to Advanced Math, and Additional Topics in Math, including Geometry and Trigonometry problems.

COLLEGE CONNECTION’S TOP TWO
TIPS FOR STUDENTS’ ULTIMATE
SUCCESS ON THE DIGITAL SAT EXAMS

Tip 1: Exposure, Exposure, Exposure

In order for students to hone their skills on the new DSAT exam, they must practice taking this test as often as possible. The most obvious place to accomplish this practice is through the use of CollegeBoard's Bluebook tests. I typically also have my private tutoring students take DSAT practice tests found in Princeton Review's DSAT textbooks, taking Module I and harder version of Module II Reading and Writing and Math sections of the test. I also conduct three practice tests before my private students' scheduled DSAT exams by cobbling together 8-10 students to take the exam — preferably in-person, but sometimes virtually. These practice tests are held at my Columbus Circle office, and involve my having my private students

practice by taking actual, prior, recent DSAT tests.

Tip 2: Students Need to Learn How to Remain Calm on Their Actual Test

I have personally witnessed the deleterious effects of test anxiety on students' ultimate DSAT scores, often artificially lowering the students' test scores by up to 100 points per test section. Rather than allowing such test anxiety to lower the students' test scores, as the students go into their actual DSAT exams, they should focus on all the hard work they put forward honing their skills in taking the DSAT test. To further help in this effort of remaining calm, once the students encounter their first difficult question on either Module I or II of the Reading and Writing Section of the test the students should head straight to the

Grammar/Student Notes Questions, returning afterwards to where they had left off earlier attempting to answer a very difficult Reading Comprehension Question. This technique will help the students remain calm and confident throughout the test, secure in the knowledge that they have correctly answered the vast majority of the Reading and Writing questions. In this regard, students must learn to view the physical manifestations of test anxiety as a positive, not as a negative. Indeed, the students must look upon test anxiety as their respective bodies natural reaction to a stressful situation: taking an important exam. The real problem is when students 'freak out' in response to feeling anxious: NO NO NO. Instead of 'freaking out' students must realize they have the power to redirect the physical anxiety they are naturally feeling to allow themselves to

become more hyper vigilant and focused throughout the exam.

Should students be interested in learning more about my tutoring program, including my newly introduced a la carte menu of low cost tutoring options, please email Sam directly at: sjm10025@aol.com.