

Spend last moments before the SAT wisely

Discussion about the importance of good SAT scores run rampant through the conversations of students, teachers and parents. Hundreds of high school seniors will be taking the SAT this Saturday. Most have already



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taken the exam, at least once, and are trying to raise their scores. This is one of the few last attempts for students who are applying to college this fall.

A few last-minute tips might be considered valuable. Despite recent publications that emphasize the importance of high scores, remaining calm is first and foremost. Although this is an momentous and serious exam, it is just a test that makes up only one component of what will get a student into college.

The significance of taking the SAT makes the experience of this test dramatic for many students. Pressure to receive high scores has physical and mental effects. When students are sleep-deprived, over-studied, and unable to eat due to nervousness, performing well on exams is difficult.

Getting enough sleep is necessary, even for students who claim they don't need sleep. A minimum of six hours is recommended, while eight hours is ideal. Being rested makes it easier for a student's brain to function well.

Taking adequate study breaks

makes the actual time spent preparing more productive. Depending upon how much prior preparation took place, there is no need to study the day before the test. It is not likely that anything new will be learned,

unless there has been little to zero preparation.

A side effect of stress can be the inability to eat. However, food allows the brain to work and provides energy that is extremely helpful when trying to figure out answers for the duration of three hours. Carbohydrates, proteins, and vegetables are good to eat the night before in addition to some substance in the morning for breakfast. A baked potato with chicken or spaghetti with meatballs, a salad and a dessert for dinner, followed by a breakfast of champions upon waking make a solid recipe for testing situations.

Feeling a little nervous or anxious about the test is good. Having a cocky attitude might not work to the advantage of the test-taker. However, being confident will. Students should put forth their best effort and allow adrenaline to work in a constructive and positive manner.

In the effort to remain calm, showering the morning of the test is a great idea. Clean hair, skin and clothes feel better than

when dirty. Using deodorant and brushing teeth add to the overall experience of exercising proper hygiene. Wearing a comfortable outfit, such as jeans and a favorite shirt contribute to the "look good, feel good" factor that helps students think better of themselves, which in turn, increases their self-confidence which is necessary for taking this test.

Now that our students are well fed, rested, cleaned and dressed, they are ready for success. Important documents such as identification, admission ticket, sharpened pencils, calculators and anything else that needs to be at the test should be with the student. Words of encouragement and good wishes are far more effective than threats as to what will happen if a certain score isn't reached when sharing last words before the final moment.

When show time arrives, students should do their best in continuing to remain calm. For the next several hours, focus on staying on task, using learned test taking techniques and strategies to conquer the questions. Do the best that can possibly be done.

Good luck to all the students taking the SAT this weekend! May the force be with you.

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