

## **SAT and ACT Test-Taking Strategies**

Remember, YOU control the test. Don't let the test control you!

### **CHOP AWAY**

This is a multiple choice test. You won't always be able to immediately pick out the correct answer. However, you should be able to chop away at the wrong answers and whittle it down to the best choice.

### **ELIMINATE AND GUESS**

If you can eliminate two or more answers, take a chance and guess. Probability is in your favor at this point.

### **CLEAR YOUR MIND**

Don't fall apart on the test. If you think you've "bombed" a section, clear your mind, refocus, and move on to the next section with confidence. Remember, there is an experimental section on the SAT that does not count. You may have bombed this section! On the ACT, everything is averaged – so if you bombed one section, all you have to do is score well on another to mask this!

### **BREATHE DEEPLY**

If you feel yourself getting anxious, take five deep breaths. This will slow your heart rate and allow you to focus on the questions in front of you. It helps to close your eyes during the deep breathing to truly block out the test for a moment and relax.

### **LEAVING BLANKS**

Know when to leave blanks on these tests! SAT: In the 400-range: leave questions blank that you do not know the answer to. In the 500-range: leave six or fewer blanks. In the 600-range or higher: Absolutely no blanks! ACT: **There should be no blanks left on any section of the ACT!**

### **MOVE ON**

This is a standardized, timed test. Do not waste "get stuck" and waste time on one question that you may get wrong anyway when you could move on and get the next three questions correct.

### **SUCK ON CANDY**

Studies have shown that students who suck on candy during an exam score higher than those who do not. Bring some sucking candy to the test to help keep you awake and engaged.

### **NO MECHANICAL PENCILS**

Although you can find #2 mechanical pencils, don't bring them to the test. They break, and you have to sit there clicking away waiting for the next piece of graphite. You don't need the added stress of mechanical pencils, so leave them at home. Plus, scantrons may not pick up the indentations of a mechanical pencil – don't take that chance!

### **BRING EXTRAS**

You never know what to expect on the day of the test – so expect the worst! Bring extra batteries for your calculator, extra pencils, extra erasers, and extra sweatshirt in case the room is cold, etc. Be prepared!