SAT MATH FREE PDF

15 test-day slips nobody warns you about

You solved it right and still lost the mark. These are the answer-box rules, Desmos settings and rounding habits that cost real students real marks on the Digital SAT. We tested every Desmos one on the official College Board version of Desmos. Each slip ends with exactly what to do instead.

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This week
Read all 15 once. It takes about 10 minutes.

Next practice test
Type every grid-in the way this PDF says, so it becomes a habit.

Night before
Read slips 1, 4, 6 and 15 again. Nothing else.

THE ANSWER BOX AND THE COLLEGE BOARD DESMOS

01 Typing 2/3 as 0.67

On a grid-in, a decimal that doesn't end has to fill the box. A positive answer gets 5 characters. If the answer is 2/3, College Board accepts `2/3` `.6666` `.6667` `0.666` `0.667`, and marks ~~`0.67`~~ ~~`.66`~~ ~~`.67`~~ wrong, even though you solved it right.

Do this: type the fraction when it fits. If you type a decimal, use every space: cut it or round it at the last one.

02 Trusting a rounded Desmos point

Click the intersection of $y = 4x$ and $y = -2x + 2$ on the College Board Desmos and the label reads **(0.33333, 1.33333)**. Use those to find $9x + 3y$ and you get **6.99996**. A student who types 6.999 or 6.99 loses the mark. The exact answer is **7**.

Do this: when a result ends in .9999 or .0001, the real answer is the clean number. Prove it with fractions: $9 \cdot \frac{1}{3} + 3 \cdot \frac{4}{3} = 7$.

03 Reading the entry rules in the hall

College Board prints the grid-in directions and the table of accepted answers on the first Math page. On test day you see them with the module clock already running. That is the worst time to learn them for the first time.

Do this: learn slips 1 and 5 to 8 this week. On test day, skip straight to question 1.

04 Your SAT Desmos starts in radians

We tested the official College Board version of Desmos (the one built into Bluebook). It starts in **radians**. Type $\sin(30)$ and it gives **−0.988**, not 0.5. Type $\sin^{-1}(0.5)$ and it gives 0.5236, not 30.

Do this: before any trig question with degrees, open the wrench (settings) and tap **Degrees**. Check: sin(30) must give 0.5.

THE ANSWER BOX

05 Two answers? Enter only one

If $x = 2$ or $x = -3$ both work, the box takes **one** answer. Typing ~~2,-3~~ or ~~2 or -3~~ is marked wrong.

> **Do this:** pick either correct value and type just that one. Read the question first: "x > 0" may already pick it for you.

06 Negative answers get one extra space

A negative answer gets 6 characters, so the minus sign doesn't eat a digit. For $-1/3$: `-1/3` `-.3333` `-0.333` are accepted, ~~-.33~~ ~~-0.33~~ are not.

> **Do this:** type the minus first, then fill the remaining spaces exactly like slip 1.

07 No %, $ or commas in the box

The answer is 25%? Type `25`, not ~~25%~~. The answer is $1,200? Type `1200`, not ~~$1,200~~ or ~~1,200~~.

> **Do this:** numbers only. The units are already in the question.

08 3 1/2 is read as 31/2

Mixed numbers don't exist in the box. Type ~~3 1/2~~ and it's read as **31/2 = 15.5**.

> **Do this:** type `7/2` or `3.5`.

DESMOS AND TEST HABITS

09 e is a number in Desmos

In Desmos, e is 2.718..., not a letter. If a question has a constant called e and you type it as a variable, Desmos quietly uses 2.718 and your graph or answer is wrong.

> **Do this:** rename it before you type: use k or c instead of e.

10 stdev vs stdevp

Desmos has two standard deviations. For the list [1, 2, 3, 4], **stdev** gives **1.291** and **stdevp** gives **1.118**. The SAT almost always asks you to compare spread, not to report the number.

> **Do this:** to compare two lists, use the same one for both. Better still, look at how far the values sit from the middle: that is what the SAT is testing.

11 Fraction too long for the box

$125/36$ is 6 characters, one too many. The box won't take it.

> **Do this:** switch to the decimal and fill the box: `3.472` (cut) or `3.473` (rounded) both work.

12 Leaving a question blank

There is no penalty for a wrong answer on the SAT. A blank is a guaranteed zero. Students who run out of time often leave the last 2 or 3 empty.

> **Do this:** with 1 minute left, put an answer in every box. Use Mark for Review on anything you guessed, then come back if time allows.

READING THE QUESTION AND WHAT TO REMEMBER

13 Minutes in the table, hours in the question

The table gives minutes, the question asks for hours. The answer to the minutes version is always one of the choices.

Do this: before you choose, read the last line of the question again and circle the unit it asks for.

14 What the reference sheet already gives you

The reference sheet already has: area of a circle, rectangle and triangle, circumference, the Pythagorean theorem, the 30-60-90 and 45-45-90 triangles, the volumes of a box, cylinder, sphere, cone and pyramid, 360° in a circle, 2π radians in a circle, and 180° in a triangle.

Do this: stop memorising those. Spend that memory on what isn't there: circle equations, vertex form, the sum and product of roots, and slip 15.

15 Decimals you must recognise on sight

Desmos answers in decimals. The choices are written as fractions and roots. Learn this card and you'll match them in one look.

$1/3$	.3333	$1/6$	.1667	$\sqrt{2}$	1.4142
$2/3$	.6667	$5/6$	.8333	$\sqrt{3}$	1.7321
$1/7$	.1429	$1/9$	.1111	$2\sqrt{3}$	3.4641
$1/8$	.125	$3/8$	.375	$\sqrt{5}$	2.2361
$5/8$	.625	$7/8$	.875	$\sqrt{3}/2$	.8660
$1/12$	.0833	$5/12$	.4167	π	3.1416

Do this: stuck matching a decimal to a choice? Type each choice into Desmos and compare the decimals.

Desmos can lose you a mark. It can also save you 2 minutes.

Slips 2, 4 and 9 are Desmos used badly. Our **SAT Desmos Bible** is Desmos used well: 212 hard Math questions, each with a practice twin, solved with 12 Desmos moves, plus when to put Desmos down and use your pencil.

satresources.stuckinsat.com/desmos-bible

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Desmos results tested on desmos.com/testing/collegeboard/graphing in November 2026. Answer-entry rules from College Board's SAT Math directions; check them once in Bluebook practice. Free for your own practice; don't resell or repost.
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