

SAT Card Shark: Strategies for Sentence Completion

To get your teen ready for the Reading portion of the SAT, it pays to acquire a bank of strategies for answering sentence completion items. How to make sure these test tricks touch home? Try this game for some card-slinging study fun!

What You Need:

- Your teen's favorite card game, such as solitaire or Uno
- Post-it notes, smaller than the playing cards
- Pen

What You Do:

1. Use the pen to write strategies for Sentence Completion Items on individual post-it notes. (See the list of strategies below.)
2. Attach the post-it notes to the front of various playing cards.
3. Your teen can play her card game as usual. As she encounters the strategies notes, she reads them and then peels them off the cards. At the end of the game, she can restick the post-it notes to the cards so the game is ready for her next study break.



Strategies:

- **Do the questions in the order they appear.** (In this portion of the test, the questions are arranged in order by difficulty, with the least difficult appearing first.)
- **Think of an answer that might fit in the sentence *before* you look at the answer choices.**
- **Look for transitional words.** (Transitional words are words such as “however,” “but,” “in contrast,” etc. They indicate that something important is about to come up in the sentence, such as a contrasting or supporting point.)
- **Don't randomly guess.** (You're better off leaving an answer blank than guessing randomly on the SAT. No points are deducted for blank answers.)
- **Look for appositions.** (An apposition is a word or phrase placed next to another word or phrase to define or clarify it. For example: “The cat, who had orange and black fur, blended in nicely with the sunflowers.” Appositions are usually set off by commas, and often give critical clues to the sentence completion. They may even provide a paraphrased version of the answer!)
- **Look for familiar word parts in unfamiliar words.** (Suffixes, prefixes, root words, and related words can really help to break apart an unknown vocabulary word into meaningful parts so that you can guess at its likely meaning.)
- **Mark any questions you skip over in the test booklet so you can go back to it later if you have time.**