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Lots of Hongkongers are sitting the SAT, a standardised test used for university admissions in the United States, on Saturday. It's only natural to be a little bit nervous, even if you're well prepared. *Young Post* asked Cana Elite Education Centre tutor Tim Lee and Emerson Suen, a tutor from NTK Academic Group, for some last-minute tips on how to prepare for two of the sections - writing and critical reading.

In the reading and writing sections, Suen says you should be aware of the "vocabulary in context" questions. You will be asked to identify the meaning of a word or to choose the most precise word based on the information provided in a passage. As the word could be used literally or figuratively, you cannot necessarily rely on a strict definition. Read the surrounding text and make sure your answer fits that particular context.

The "command of evidence" questions in the reading section are often a problem for students, says Suen. You will be asked to justify a previous answer by identifying a direct quote from the text to support it in the very next question - essentially tying two answers together. While you may be able to do these in order, try doing the second question first to ensure they're correct. By checking the evidence first, you can ensure you get the right answer to both questions.

Suen adds that most questions in the reading part can be categorised as either general or specific. For example, anytime you see words like "most", "primary",

"central", or "main", you're looking at a general or "big picture" question. These questions usually have two answers that seem correct, but one of them will be far too specific and therefore not accurate.

Most of the remaining questions ask you to look at specific details supported by the text. You need to remember, regardless of whether or not something is probably or presumably true, every answer must be supported by the text. We all know that the sky is blue, says Suen, but that doesn't make it correct - unless the passage says so. Your job is to find what's stated in the article and circle the right answer.

If you spend three minutes reading, you'll have a minute for each question

Both tutors agree that grammar is one of the few things it's possible to memorise, so spend time learning things like verb forms (tense, subject-verb agreement, participles), but make sure you learn the rules rather than what "sounds right".

Lee says SAT essays are written responses to a passage prompt about personal interests, special topics, or politics.

To prepare an essay outline, Lee encourages you to pick out three of the most important features or literary devices (for example, metaphors, similes, or personification) in the passage. Your

essay should contain an introduction, three body paragraphs addressing the three key features, and a conclusion. In the introduction, paraphrase the author's central claim then list the features you will analyse. Within each paragraph, you should identify the feature, give examples of it, explain how it's tied to the author's central claim, how it affects the audience, and whether or not it effectively builds the author's argument.

Everyone should have plenty of time to complete each section, says Suen. Make sure you're well aware of the format for each section so you can manage your time properly. For instance, the Reading section consists of five passages and 52 questions, and you have 65 minutes to complete it. That means you have 13 minutes for each passage. If you spend three minutes reading it, you'll have roughly a minute for each question.

The writing section consists of 4 passages, each with 11 questions, to be completed in 35 minutes, giving you just under nine minutes to complete each passage. Use all of that time! After completing each passage, use any extra time to go back and check your answers. Time management isn't just about finishing; it's also about using the time you're given wisely.

To see how students feel about the new version of the SAT, turn to page 5

If you're preparing to take the SAT on Saturday, **Ben Pang** spoke to some tutors from Cana Elite Education and NTK Academic Group for last-minute tips and advice

SAT up and take notice

