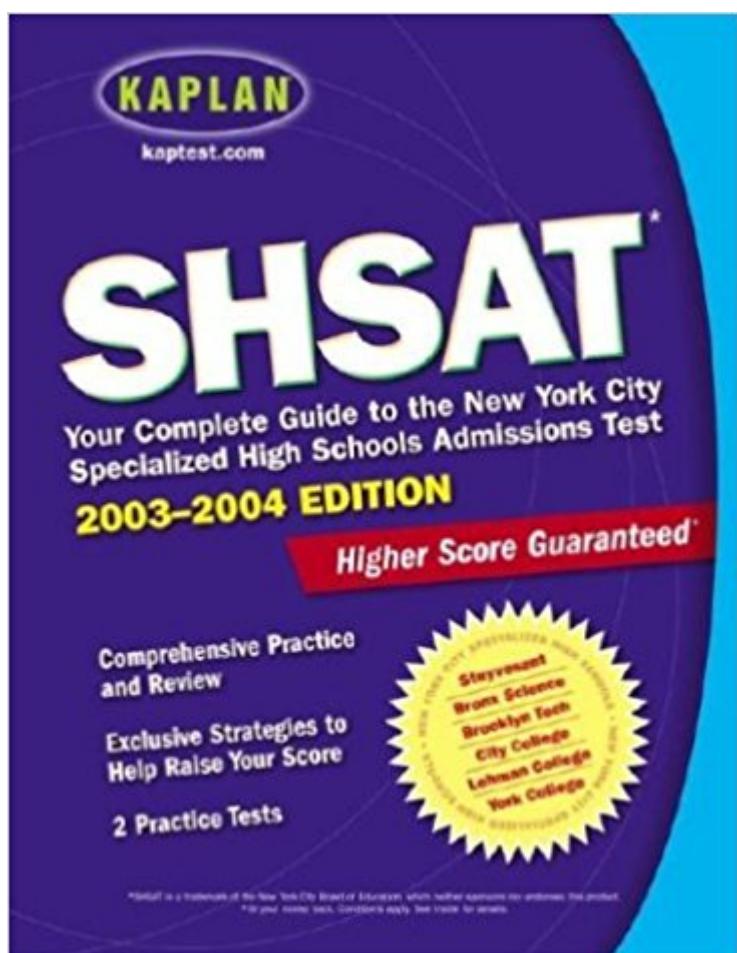


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# SHSAT 2003-2004: Your Complete Guide To The New York City Specialized High Schools Admissions Test



## **Synopsis**

Higher Score Guaranteed! Get the Score You Need. Get Into the School You Want. Kaplan's SHSAT provides a comprehensive review of the material on the New York City Specialized High Schools Admissions Test, two practice tests to sharpen your skills, plus Kaplan's highly effective test-taking strategies to help maximize your score. Steps to SHSAT Success &#x95; Review Follow the step-by-step review of all the content on the test. &#x95; Strategize Apply Kaplan's exclusive test-taking strategies. &#x95; Practice Practice with realistic questions and get detailed explanations for every answer. &#x95; Succeed Get the score that gets you in! Test Prep, Admissions and Guidance. For life. Kaplan has helped more than 3 million students achieve their educational and career goals. With 185 centers and more than 1,200 classroom locations throughout the United States and abroad, Kaplan provides a full range of services, including test preparation courses, admissions consulting, programs for international students, professional licensing preparation, and more.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Chapter 1: SHSAT Mastery You're reading this book because you're serious about attending high school at Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, Brooklyn Tech, City College, Lehman College, or York College. You probably already know that if you want to go to one of these specialized high schools, you have to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). If you want to get a high score on the test, there are some steps you can take to maximize your score. Essentially, you need

to: • Understand the structure of the test. • Hone your math and verbal skills. • Develop strategies and test-taking techniques. • Practice what you've learned. The Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) is a standardized test. It's certainly not easy, but it is a fairly predictable test. This means that you can prepare for the content and question types that you'll see on test day. Before delving into the specific content and strategies you will need to perform well on the SHSAT, you should know some basic information about the test. Here are answers to some common questions about the test.

**COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SHSAT**

**Why Should I Take the SHSAT Exam?** If you want to attend high school at Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, Brooklyn Tech, City College, Lehman College, or York College, you must take the SHSAT. It is the sole criterion for admission. This means that your grades, extracurricular activities, etcetera, play no role in the admissions process. Do not take the test if you are not serious about attending one of the schools! If you score high enough to be accepted at a school, you will be expected to attend.

**Who Administers the Test?** The Board of Education of the City of New York administers the test. The Board of Education is composed of teachers and administrators who decide what students at New York City high schools need to learn.

**Why Is the Test the Sole Criterion for Admission?** Having one test be the only factor that determines whether you are accepted at the school of your choice is rough. However, more than 20,000 students apply for admission, and the Board of Ed needs a way to pare down that number to roughly 2,400. A multiple-choice test given to all applicants is a very efficient way to make the cut because it subjects all applicants to the exact same standard and is very easy to grade. You might not be thrilled about this process, but it is not going to change before October. Therefore, regardless of your personal feelings about standardized tests in general or this test in particular, you need to take some time to prepare for the SHSAT.

**Is There Any Other Way to Get into the Specialized High Schools?** A limited number of students may be eligible to participate in a Discovery program which is designed to give disadvantaged students who have demonstrated high potential a chance to enroll in a specialized high school program. For more information about this program, see the Specialized High Schools Student Handbook.

**How Is the Test Scored?** The test contains ninety-five questions. Ninety of them are worth one "raw" point and five are worth two "raw" points giving you a "raw score" on a 100-point scale. Your raw score is multiplied by a formula known only to the Board of Education to arrive at a scaled score out of 800.

**What Is a "Good Score"?** That's a good question. Alas, there's really no answer to it. Admission works like this: The Board of Education identifies the number of places available at each school. If there are 500 spaces available at Stuyvesant, the Board of Education accepts the top 500 scorers who identified Stuyvesant as their first choice. Therefore, there is no magic number for admission.

**What Should I Bring to the Test?** You need your admissions ticket, two or more No. 2 pencils, an eraser, and a watch that does not contain a calculator. **TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SHSAT'S STRUCTURE** While it's possible that next year's SHSAT will be a little different from last year's, you can be confident that the test will look pretty much the same. Therefore, you can take advantage of the test's predictability and use what you know about the structure to raise your score. **You Do Not Need to Answer the Questions in Order** Usually when taking a test, you automatically answer the questions in the order that they're written. However, there are a lot of questions on the SHSAT and you may be able to make it easier on yourself by doing the stuff you find easier first. For example, if you're good at Logical Reasoning questions, build your confidence and grab some quick points by doing them first. Or if you have a tough time with Coordinate Geometry, skip the Coordinate Geometry questions and go back to them when you have time. **You Can Go Back to the Verbal Section Once You've Finished the Math Section** Most standardized tests don't let you move between sections. On the SHSAT, however, you can go back to the Verbal Section after you've finished the Math Section. **There Is No Penalty for Wrong Answers** Don't leave anything blank on the SHSAT. A correct answer is a correct answer. It makes no difference to your score if you get the question correct by solving the question or by guessing. Of course, you should solve the questions you know, but there's no harm in guessing when you don't know how to answer a question or are running out of time. Remember, you have a 0% chance of getting a question correct if you leave it blank. Your chances of getting it correct if you guess are at least 20%. Go with the odds. **The SHSAT Answer Grid Has No Heart** Don't lose valuable points on the test by misgridding! The answer choices are labeled A-E and F-K to help you keep track of answers. Always circle questions you skip. Whenever you choose not to answer a question, circle it in your test book. This can help you in two ways. The first is that it will be easier to find the questions you skipped if they're circled. The second is that you are less likely to misgrid when you skip questions if you clearly mark the ones you skip. Anything that will help you approach the test efficiently is worth doing. Circling questions that you skip is relatively effortless and can save you time and get you points. Always circle the answer you choose. A great way to avoid careless gridding errors is to circle your answers in the test book. If you circle your answers, you can quickly check your circled answers against your gridded answers to make sure that you did not misgrid. Additionally, if you have time to recheck your answers, it's easier to do this if the answers are circled. Grid your answers in blocks of five. Don't grid in each answer after you answer each question. Instead, grid your answers after every five questions. As you're entering the answers in to the grid silently say "1, A," "2, G," etcetera. This will help you to avoid any omissions. Since questions alternate between A-E choices

and F-K choices, you should be able to catch if you have skipped a question or entered answers onto the wrong line. **APPROACHING SHSAT QUESTIONS STRATEGICALLY** As important as it is to know the setup of the SHSAT, it is equally important to have a system for attacking the questions. You wouldn't venture onto the subway for the first time without looking at a map, and you shouldn't approach the SHSAT without a plan. Remember, the more knowledge you have about the test and the questions, the better you'll be able to take control of the test. The following is the best way to approach SHSAT questions systematically. **Think about the Questions Before You Look at the Answers** It's hard to emphasize strenuously enough precisely how important this strategy is. Basically, **IT'S REALLY, REALLY IMPORTANT!** One of the most damaging mistakes that students make when taking the SHSAT is that they jump immediately from the question to the answers without stopping to think first. This is particularly true in the Reading section but is a problem with most question types. Here's what will happen if you read the questions and then go directly to the answer choices: You will be confronted with very tempting, but very wrong answer choices. If you take the time to think before looking at the choices, you will be much less likely to fall for the traps. **Use Backdoor Strategies and Guess** You'll learn more about backdoor strategies later, but the gist of them is that sometimes there are shortcuts to solving problems and guessing strategically. No one sees your work, so you do not have to solve problems the way you would in school. Any method that gets you the correct answer is the "right" way on the SHSAT. Additionally, since there is no penalty for wrong answers, don't leave any answers blank! **Pace Yourself** The SHSAT gives you a lot of questions in a relatively short period of time. To get through the test, you need to be in control of your pace. Remember, although you should enter an answer for every question, you don't have to answer every question to score well. There are a few strategies you can employ to take control of your pace. **&#x95;** Don't spend too much time on any one question. You can always circle a question and come back to it later. **&#x95;** Give yourself a rough time limit for each question -- move on if you run out of time. **&#x95;** Be flexible -- you can answer questions out of order. **&#x95;** Don't spend more than 3-4 minutes on any one Reading passage -- keep reading and move on. Remember, your points come from answering the questions. **&#x95;** Practice under timed conditions. **Locate Quick Points if You're Running Out of Time** Some questions can be answered more quickly than others. Some are simply amenable to shortcuts. For example, a Reading question that contains a line number or asks for the meaning of an italicized word may be easier to answer quickly than one that does not give you a clue. Other questions will be easier because of your particular strengths. If you're comfortable with geometry and are running out of time, look for the geometry questions. Copyright Â© 2003 by Kaplan, Inc.

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