

# THE 5-POINT SAT DIAGNOSTIC CHECKLIST

NORTHBRIDGE ACADEMIC SERVICES | Find your teen's exact score leaks in 20 minutes

How to use this: Have your teen take one full timed practice test. Then go through every missed question and check it against the 5 points below. The pattern you find tells you exactly where the points are hiding.

## 1. The Careless Error Count

Go through every wrong answer and ask: "Did my teen actually know how to do this?" If yes — it's a careless error (misread the question, bubbled wrong, arithmetic slip). Count them.

If careless errors are 30%+ of all misses: this is the #1 leak. Fix: underline key words in every question, flag-and-return on uncertain ones, slow down on the first module (the digital SAT is adaptive — Module 1 sets the ceiling).

Typical point recovery: 50–80 points.

## 2. The Pacing Map

For each section, note WHERE the misses cluster. Mostly in the last third? That's a pacing problem — your teen spends too long on early questions and rushes (or guesses) through easy ones at the end.

Fix: the question budget. Decide in advance how long each question type gets. When the budget's spent, flag and move on. Practice this — don't just understand it.

Typical point recovery: 40–60 points.

## 3. The Topic Bleed

List the 3 question types your teen misses most often. For most 1100–1300 students it's the same culprits: linear equations in context, systems of equations, inference questions, transition words.

Fix: two weeks of targeted drills on ONLY those 3 types. Not general prep — sniper prep.

Typical point recovery: 40–60 points per section.

## 4. The Module 1 Check (Digital SAT Only)

The digital SAT is adaptive: Module 1 performance determines Module 2 difficulty — and only the harder Module 2 unlocks the top scores. If your teen rushes Module 1, they've capped their score before the test really starts.

Fix: treat Module 1 like the most important 32 minutes of the test. Because it is.

## 5. The Retake Math

Count how many official sittings your teen has used. Most score gains happen between attempt 1 and 2. After 3 sittings, returns collapse.

Rule: every official sitting should follow a full prep cycle. Never take it "to see how it goes."

## Your Teen's Score, Decoded

| Biggest leak     | Fix this first                            | Expected gain     |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Careless errors  | Underlining + flag-and-return habit       | 50–80 pts         |
| Pacing           | Question budget system                    | 40–60 pts         |
| Topic gaps       | 2-week sniper drills on top 3 types       | 40–60 pts/section |
| Module 1 rushing | Slow down, treat it as the ceiling-setter | Unlocks 1400+     |
| Random retakes   | Prep cycle before every sitting           | Stops point leaks |

### Want a tutor to run this diagnostic for you?

Book a free 20-minute assessment — we'll identify your teen's exact leaks and build the plan.

Website: <https://northbridgeacademic.com> WhatsApp: +1 (728) 210-5899

Northbridge Academic Services — Admissions · SAT/ACT · Tutoring