SAT/ACT Grammar Cheat Sheet

Grammar

1. Period = Semicolon = Comma + and/but

2. 2 commas = 2 dashes = non-essential clause. When crossed out, the sentence still makes sense.

3. It's = it is; Its = possessive form of *it*; its' = does not exist

4. Colon = list or explanation. Need a complete sentence before but not after.

5. *BEING*, usually = WRONG

6. Could/would/should/might HAVE, not OF

7. No comma before or after a preposition (*of, by, to, at, for, from, with, in, on*) , or the word *that*

8. Comma before *it, he, she, they* usually = WRONG

9. Singular **verbs** end in –*s*, plural **verbs** do not end in –*s* (e.g. *she reads, they read*)

10. Keep pronouns consistent: one = one, you = you

11. *Who* is for people, *which* is for things, *where* is for places (e.g. *the time/book where* = WRONG)

12. Use *who* before a verb (*who went*, NOT *whom went*); use *whom* after a preposition (e.g. *by whom*, NOT *by who*).

13. All items in a list must match (noun, noun, noun or verb, verb, verb)

14. Always underline NOT, LEAST, and EXCEPT

Rhetoric

1. Shorter is better

2. Context is key: if you're not sure of the answer, read a sentence before and a sentence after.

3. OMIT/DELETE: check that option first because it's usually right.

4. Transitions within/between sentences: **physically cross out** the original transition and determine the relationship (e.g. continue, contradict, emphasize) between the two sentences or halves of a sentence BEFORE you look at the answer choices.

5. Transitions between paragraphs: read at least a few sentences of the paragraph that the transition is intended to begin. The end of the previous paragraph might not be important.

6. Insert/Delete: reread the paragraph and state the topic **in your own words** before checking the answer choices. If the sentence is directly relevant to that topic, it belongs. If not, it doesn't.

7. Purpose of a passage: determine whether the topic is **specific** or **general**, then "yes" or "no."