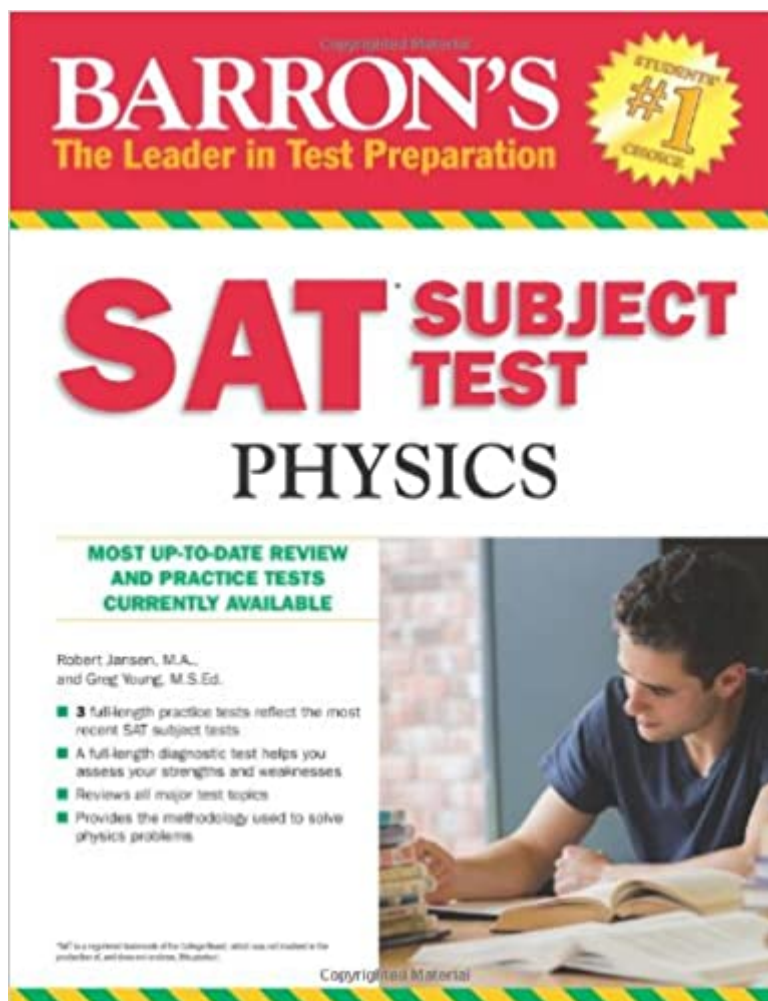


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Barron's SAT Subject Test Physics



Synopsis

One diagnostic test and three complete SAT Subject Tests in Physics reflect the most recent actual tests in length, subject matter, and degree of difficulty. All questions are answered and explained. Self-assessment guides after each test can help improve the test-taker's score. An extensive subject review covers all topics on the SAT Subject Test, including mechanics, electricity and magnetism, waves and optics, thermodynamics, and more. Unique new features include a "What's the Trick?" approach to solving problems quickly and effectively. Added tips, called out with "If You See" are included within the chapters to give test takers critical insight into difficult concepts. Each chapter is followed by several review questions with answers and explanations. The authors also provide general examination strategies and a detailed appendix with equations, physical constants, and a basic math review.

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Robert Jansen has taught Advanced Placement Physics since 1998. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychobiology from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a master's degree in education from Pepperdine University. His teaching methods derive from his belief that physics does not need to be mysterious or difficult. The result has been a large and competitive AP physics program in Aliso Viejo, California that brings in more than 220 students each year. Greg Young has been teaching high school physics and chemistry for more than twenty years. He holds a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from the University of California, San Diego, and a master's degree in science education from USC. He believes that science made interesting is science worth learning, and creates engaging, interactive lessons that help students form a relevant context for difficult scientific concepts.

This book provides a lot of information and makes it easy to understand. There are a few chapters that could use some more, such as the ones on waves and reflections. I had to watch videos on YouTube to gain a grasp of these. Anyhow, here's how it went. Before the test: I had been taking AP Physics C: Mechanics from September to December. I enrolled in this test for January. My teacher was mediocre at best, and I had no previous exposure on any of the other physics concepts like electricity and magnetism. And I was vaguely familiar with Newton's Laws and Kinematics from my class. Basically, I was self-studying for the test with some help from my physics teacher when I didn't understand something. I didn't realize that schools recommended a subject test relating to the field of your prospective major, so I didn't decide to take this until December. I took the diagnostic during Winter Break and scored 480. Yikes. I guessed on the vast majority of questions. This book became my bible for the next few weeks. I read it during my physics class (since we weren't learning anything anyway), during lunch, after school, etc. I was really learning a lot and this book made learning physics enjoyable. When I finished with the book, I took one of the practice tests. I scored 630. I needed to score in the 700s if I wanted to be competitive for the schools I was applying to, so I studied some more. I took the second test and scored 650. I only had a few days before the test, so I studied for hours straight (about 5pm until 2am). I took the last practice test in the book and finally scored a 730 with a few minutes left over. I no longer had to guess on the questions and felt confident. The next two days, I brushed up on the concepts I was still struggling with, like lenses and electromagnetism. Also, I had read that Barron's overprepared you for the test, so when Saturday came, I felt I was ready. During the test: The test questions were much different than those

on Barron's. Not necessarily harder or easier, but different. I mean they tested completely different things and asked the questions in a completely different format. I guessed on most of them. After the test: I walked out of that test room feeling how I did when I first took the diagnostic. I wish I remembered some of the questions so I could give some examples, but unfortunately I don't. But trust me when I say to not rely on the practice tests from this book. They are useless. This doesn't cover a lot of the same material that was on the exam. This might be good if you have a solid background in various physics topics (AP Physics B), but don't rely on this as your only test prep material. I didn't end up sending my score. Good thing too because I got a 610. Not as bad as I expected after the real test but not as good as I had hoped after the Barron's'. If you want to learn physics just for fun, get this book. I also recommend Physics for Dummies II for some better explanations of lenses and waves and such. If you want to get a high score on the test, look elsewhere. I heard Princeton Review is good. Take practice tests from Collegeboard, if you can get a hold of some. Good luck.

Practically speaking, this one is not for the test. I found some topics unnecessarily in depth, some surprisingly shallow... I recommend Kaplan or Princeton Review for physics. (in other subjects, Barron's is usually great)

I bought this book to study with my son for his SAT test. It worked very, very well....although we don't have the score yet! We studied it together over 3 or 4 months - there's a lot to cover - and we found the book very clear and very concise. It was definitely a worthwhile purchase. The only (relatively) minor problems with it were that the practice test questions weren't perfect. The questions that the College Board put out seem to be more concise and better worded. Barron's questions were sometimes a bit confusing. Having said that we bought other third party prep books too and their questions were no better (or maybe worse) than Barron's. The second minor issue is that we found the chapter on Optics difficult to follow. Maybe that was us, but they just didn't seem to explain it as well as the other subjects. Overall though, a great purchase and a great help.

Personally, I think this book is a good way to self-teach the Physics concepts you'll be seeing on the SAT Physics II exam. However, I do NOT think it's adequate in preparing you for the actual exam itself (though, tbh I don't think any prep book will be capable of doing that, and I'll explain more later). I took AP Physics 1 at my school and did pretty well in that class, so I was luckily able to have a foundation already in place while going into this book to study for the SAT exam. AP Physics 1

however does not cover electromagnetism, thermodynamics, or any of the "miscellaneous" material found at the end of this Barrons book. I spent my entire summer studying off of this book to self-teach the aforementioned concepts and to review the ones I already covered during school. I think that this book is a nice introduction to the concepts needed, and it's a good way of helping you *understand* the material/test for equation memorization. With that being said, there are some things that were confusing and I needed to find clarification through external resources (ie. old Physics textbooks that I had at home or through online websites). Also, I noticed that there were occasionally typos in this book, which isn't good, because a typo in a formula is basically leading you down the wrong path!! Whenever I saw typos, I was lucky enough to have remembered the equations I learned during the school year and was able to pick them out/ignore them, but for those who either forgot most of what they learned or are learning purely from this book (which, personally, I don't recommend), it might prove to be a problem. Also, although this book is good for a introduction to basic Physics concepts, the practice questions they provide at the end of each chapter are virtually useless on the actual exam. Yes, they are good for testing to see if you remembered anything you read/learned within the chapter itself. Yes, it's a good way of reinforcing vocabulary definitions and new formulas. But, it is not representative of the types of questions you will see on the SAT Physics exam. The questions in the practice tests are a *little* better, in that they try and use more "tricks" and/or make you apply several concepts for a single problem. Despite that, I still don't think it's close to what you'll actually be facing on the exam. If you take the practice questions that collegeboard offers on their website, you'll see what I mean. But again!! Nevertheless, I think this book is good in general to help you prep/review the concepts that you need to know for the test. I honestly do not think there are any test/prep books out there that will truly give you a good idea of what to expect (question format/style wise) on the SAT subject test, but it was a good "here's some new concepts and see if you remember them" tool that I had over the summer. Personally, when I took the SAT physics test, the questions were so different and I was confused for a good chunk of the test (I was probably unsure about 10-20 questions haha.....) (and also time crunch is a real thing, so be careful with your time!). Luckily the curve to get an 800 is *huge* for this test, so just prepare as well as you can and good luck!

Great coverage of the SAT Physics test. It helped me get a 800 on the actual test, and I have only took the AP Physics 1 course so far, so this book sufficiently covered the electricity, magnetism, and optics parts not in the physics 1 course.

This book is effective in the exact way it commits to be: a solid exam preparation reviewing the high school content. The explanations are clear, and a good amount of exercises to get it going with. Still, the bit about optics could be more complete!

Good

Great for reviewing concepts and even picking some new things up, but the book would be better if there were twice as many questions at the end of the chapter as there are in this edition of the book.

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