Stop calculating. Start eliminating.

Quantitative Reasoning gives you **36 questions in 26 minutes**, 43 seconds each. The arithmetic is almost never the hard part. Reading the question precisely, and knowing how much precision the options actually need, is.

STRATEGY 1

Round early. Refine only if two survive.

Most options are spaced far enough apart that an estimate decides it. Round to something you can do in your head, eliminate and only go back for precision if two candidates are still standing.

WORKED EXAMPLE

What is 23% of 487? Round: 25% of 500 = **125**. If the options are 87, 112, 168 and 243, you are done in four seconds. The exact answer is about 112, and you never needed it.

STRATEGY 2

Read the axes before the question.

Spend five seconds on the chart itself: what is on each axis, what are the units, is there a second axis on the right. Then read the question. Reading them the other way around is how people answer confidently with a number that is ten times too large.

WORKED EXAMPLE

A dual-axis chart with revenue in thousands on the left and units sold on the right. The question asks about units. Half the room answers off the left axis and gets a plausible, wrong number that is sitting right there in the options.

STRATEGY 3

If it needs more than three steps, flag it.

Multi-step calculations in this section are designed to eat time. A currency conversion plus a percentage change plus a unit conversion is four steps and roughly two minutes, nearly three questions' worth of clock for one mark.

THE ARITHMETIC

36 items ÷ 26 minutes = **43 seconds** each. Your flag threshold is about **65 seconds**. Two four-step questions at two minutes each costs you five other questions.

Read the unit, and read the word 'per'.

Per hour, per item, per cent *of which total*. When an answer you are confident in is not among the options, this is almost always why, not the arithmetic. And practise with the on-screen calculator before test day: it is slower than the one in your pocket, and the keyboard shortcuts are worth learning in advance so the tool costs you nothing.

Three down, one to go.

Our free UCAT pack has all twelve time-wasting habits with a drill for each, and the Timing Blueprint gives you the target and flag threshold for every section. Both free on the site.

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