

# SAT Essay Writing & Language

## SAT Essay

- Prompt, Format & Scoring Rubric
- Rhetorical Tools
- Practice

## SAT Writing & Language

- Part One: Introduction to Writing & Language Strategy
- Part Two: Words
- Part Three: Questions
- Part Four: Punctuation

# The Essay Prompt

The prompt (question) or a nearly identical one, is used every time the new SAT is given.

As you read the passage below, consider how [the author] uses evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.

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reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.  
stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

**\*\*\*See Handout for Scoring Rubric\*\*\***

# The Essay Prompt

**Write an essay in which you explain how [the author] builds an argument to persuade [his/her] audience that [author's claim]. In your essay, analyze how [the author] uses one or more of the features listed above (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of [his/her] argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage. Your essay should not explain whether you agree with [the author's] claims, but rather explain how the author builds an argument to persuade [his/her] audience**

# The Essay Prompt

**You can count on seeing the same prompt no matter when you take the new SAT with Essay, but the passage will be different every time.**

**All passages have these things in common:**

**Written for a broad audience**

**Argue a point**

**Express subtle views on complex subjects**

**Use logical reasoning and evidence to support claims**

**Examine ideas, debates, or trends in the arts and sciences, or civic, cultural, or political life**

**Always taken from published works**

**All the information you need to write your essay will be included in the passage or in notes about it.**

# What the SAT Essay Measures

The SAT Essay shows how well you understand the passage and use it as the basis for a well-written, thought-out discussion. The two people who score your essay will each award between 1 and 4 points in each of these three categories:

**Reading:** A successful essay shows that you understood the passage, including the interplay of central ideas and important details. It also shows an effective use of textual evidence.

**Analysis:** A successful essay shows your understanding of how the author builds an argument by:

Examining the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and other stylistic and persuasive techniques

Supporting and developing claims with well-chosen evidence from the passage

**Writing:** A successful essay is focused, organized, and precise, with an appropriate style and tone that varies sentence structure and follows the conventions of standard written English.

# The Rhetorical Triangle



## Rhetorical Triangle

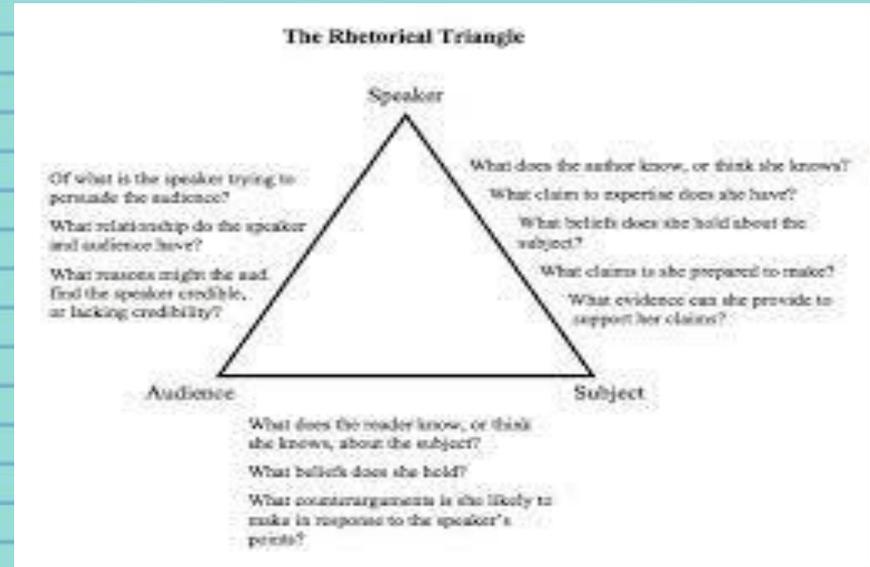
Ethos -

Logos -

Pathos -

## SOAPSTONE - author's point of view

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# Rhetorical Forms

Exemplification

Definition

Compare/Contrast

Classification

Process Analysis

Description

Narrative

Cause/Effect

## Other Rhetorical Tools

Style - diction, syntax, details, imagery, and tone

Figurative Language - simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, paradox, irony

ANALYZE WHY the author chose the strategies used for the audience, occasion, and/or purpose

WHY does the author choose THOSE strategies?

# SAT ESSAY TASK LIST

Step One: Read the prompt - find the article's argument

Step Two - Read the passage/identify how the author builds his argument  
- rhetorical tools/appeals

Step Three - Figure out what tools you plan to discuss in the essay -  
choose the tools that are recurrent - at the beginning, middle, and end of  
the essay

Rule of Thumb: If you can't find 3 examples - go to 3 tools

Your Job: Analyze/Explain how the tools function for the author's argument

# SAT ESSAY TASK LIST

Step Four: Create a thesis statement - author's argument + chosen tools

Four Items to include in thesis: Name of author/"Title of Piece"/Author's argument/tools that you choose to analyze

Step Five: Body Paragraphs - Answer WHY you believe the tool functions toward the argument/answer HOW the examples prove that the tool functions toward the argument

-Work chronologically through text when giving examples - give insights of tools functioning toward the argument in the beginning, middle, and end.

# Rhetorical Analysis Format

Introduction - introduce author, use "title of article," brief summary and thesis statement

Thesis Statement - Author's argument and the tools that function to illustrate that argument

Body Paragraphs - 2 to 3 based on chosen tools

Assertion, Textual Evidence, and Analysis

## Four Step Format

**Step One: Transitional Topic Sentence – only includes your tool and a transitional word or phrase**

**Step Two: Make/Explain Your Point – explain why the author is using the tool to illustrate his argument - ANSWER THE WHY**

**Step Three: Prove Your Point - Evidence of Tools – beginning, middle, and end - pull out 2 to 3 examples that support your point**

**Step Four: Concluding Sentence: explains how your examples function toward your reason/article's argument – effect on audience/effect on argument**

# Power Verbs – instead of “show”

- Implies
- Suggests
- Compares
- Addresses
- Analyzes
- Asserts
- \* Establishes
- \* Expounds
- \* Argues
- \* Questions
- \* Justifies
- \* Explains
- \* Defines
- \* Emphasizes
- \* Illuminates
- \* Demonstrates

# SAT Writing & Language Workshop

**35 minutes**

**44 ?s - 4 excerpts of 11 ?s each**

**Grammar**

**Content - reading charts & graphs**

**Paragraph Development**

**Word Choice - transitions, verbs, pronouns, precision and concision**

**Organization**

**Punctuation**

## To Be Successful...

- Remember that to answer the ?s, you must NOTICE those ?s and then answer those questions - READ CAREFULLY
- Always choose the answer MOST consistent with the task in the ?/passage
- Keep this Rule in Mind - Passages should be judged on what they say NOT on what they could say - when dealing with style, tone, and focus work with words/phrases already used in the passage

## PART ONE - Introduction to Writing & Language Strategy

- Most aren't actually questions - your job is to determine whether the underlined portion is correct or if it should be replaced with one of the given choices.
- Answer choices ask the questions -
  - Find what's changing in the answer choices (figures out what is being tested)
- Learn from the answer choices
  - Indicate what a particular question is testing

**Step 1: Check what's changing in the answer choices - words or punctuation or both?**

**Step 2: Figure out what the question is testing and let the differences in the answer choices reveal potential errors**

**Step 3: Use POE - Process of Elimination**

**Step 4: If you can't eliminate three answer choices, pick the shortest answer that is most consistent with the rest of the sentence**

## PART TWO - Words

- **The Words Change, But the Song Remains the Same**
  - **Consistency** - correct answers are consistent with the rest of the sentence and the passage
  - **Precision** - correct answers make the meaning of the sentence as precise as possible
  - **Concision** - barring other errors, correct answers are as concise as possible

## PART TWO - Words

- Transitions - look at the ideas that the transition word connects - transition should be consistent with the relationship between those ideas - do they agree or contrast - eliminate transitions that indicate the wrong directions
- Verbs - If verbs are changing, make sure those verbs are...
  - Consistent with their subject
  - Consistent with other verbs in the sentence/surrounding sentences
  - Parallel agreement with other verbs
- Pronouns - identify noun - be consistent whether it's singular or plural with the noun they refer to
  - Choice between a pronoun and an actual noun - choose the noun

## PART TWO - Words

- Vocabulary - Job is to find the word that gives the most precise meaning in context - consistent with ideas in context
- Concision - being concise is key when you want to communicate meaning - if everything else is consistent/precise - the shortest one is usually the answer
- Modifiers - describing phrase - need to be closest to what it's describing
- Parallelism and Comparisons - all -ing verbs/all -ed verbs
  - Comparison errors - more/less than/as
- Confused Words/Idioms - affect/effect
  - Idioms involve prepositions - of, with, in, for,

**Consistent** - verbs, nouns, and pronouns should agree within sentences and passage

**Precise** - writing should communicate specific ideas/events

**Concise** - when everything else is correct, the shortest answer choice is correct

## PART THREE - Questions

- Purpose Questions
  - Ask about a main idea/detail - identifying purpose - choose the answer that is most consistent with that purpose
    - What best establishes the main idea of the paragraph
- Adding and Deleting
  - Two ?s to consider
    - Is the information to be added or deleted consistent with the rest of the paragraph?
    - If it's consistent - does it make it more precise
      - Both No - not added
      - Both Yes - Added

## PART THREE - Questions

- **Order - Consistency**
  - Placing a sentence within a paragraph, look for words or phrases that can connect the sentence to the others
  - General to specific details
- **Combining Sentences**
  - Goal of combining sentences - make things shorter
  - If sentence is consistent/precise and correctly punctuated, the shortest is the best option
- **Graphs/Grammar - can you read a graph?**
  - Read labels - titles, axes, key or legend
  - Choose answer most consistent with data
  - Straightforward/Fundamental

## PART FOUR - Punctuation

# STOP, GO, AND VERTICAL LINE TEST

When you are linking ideas, you must use one of the following:

### STOP

- Period (.)
- Semicolon (;)
- Comma (,) + **FANBOYS**
- Question Mark (?)
- Exclamation Mark (!)

### HALF-STOP

- Colon (:)
- Long dash (—)

### GO

- Comma (,)
- No punctuation

**FANBOYS** stands for  
**F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r,  
**Y**et, and **S**o.

STOP punctuation can link *only* complete ideas.

HALF-STOP punctuation must be *preceded* by a complete idea.

GO punctuation can link anything *except* two complete ideas.

## PART FOUR - PUNCTUATION

- What's changing in the answer choices
- Does punctuation need to be here?
- Vertical Line Test - draw a line where you see STOP or HALF-STOP punctuation - then read up to the vertical line - then read after the vertical line
  - 2 complete ideas - only STOP

STOP PUNCTUATION - end-of-sentence punctuation

HALF-STOP - middle-of-sentence punctuation

- Apostrophes - possessive nouns or contractions
  - Needs to have a noun/noun phrase after an apostrophe for there to be possession shown

## PART FOUR - PUNCTUATION

- **FOUR** reasons to use a comma
  - In **STOP** Punctuation, with one of the **FANBOYS**
  - In **GO** Punctuation, to separate incomplete ideas from together ideas
  - In a list of three or more things
  - In a sentence containing unnecessary information - in middle of a sentence, need two commas

**IF YOU CANNOT CITE REASONS TO USE THESE PUNCTUATION MARKS - DO NOT USE THEM!**