

HOLT McDOUGAL

Preparing for College and Career Success

An explanation of the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards

- The English/Language Arts Standards
- The Cross-Disciplinary Standards

A comprehensive study guide for

- SAT® English, Reading, and Writing Tests
- ACT® English, Reading, and Writing Tests
- SAT® Literature Subject Test

Includes:

- Answer Keys
- Reproducible Answer Sheets



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About This Book

The realities of a global economy have brought parents, educators, and political representatives together in an unprecedented recognition that all students, whether choosing a post-secondary path to higher education or entering the workforce, must be prepared for the future with a twenty-first-century education. Fundamental to this effort in Texas is the revision of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading and the adoption of the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. These standards will be measured in End-of-Course Assessments beginning in 2012.

School districts are charged with developing and implementing local curricula that reflect the state's rigorous expectations. Publishers are partners in the effort by providing resource materials that align with and extend the state's high curriculum standards. Rigor in the curriculum is scaffolded by relevant experiences and relationships that foster academic preparation. Quality instructional materials support educators' high expectations, providing opportunities for acceleration, extension, and remediation.

Preparation for post-secondary education often includes national college entrance tests, most commonly the SAT[®] and the ACT[®]. Designed to measure students' mastery of academic skills and their readiness for higher education, these assessments predict, at least in part, students' level of preparedness.

Preparing for College and Career Success is designed as a supplemental resource to accompany *Holt McDougal Literature*. Part I of the book presents background information about the newly implemented College and Career Readiness Standards and their alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. It also includes the text of the English/Language Arts Standards and of the Cross-Disciplinary Standards. Parts II-V provide general information about the college admissions process and available resources, as well as a comparative analysis of the two main college admissions tests, the SAT and ACT. The bulk of the book is devoted to providing specific information about and practice with specific item types found on the SAT and ACT, as outlined below.

- **Instruction and practice** for each of the SAT and ACT item types for English language arts skills; analyses of sample items, including a discussion of correct and incorrect answers; strategies for approaching the items; and plentiful practice items.
- **Writing assessment practice** including explanations of each test's aims and structure; reproduction of a scoring rubric; a sample writing prompt; strategies for responding to prompts; sample responses with analyses; and two practice writing prompts.
- **Answer key and answer sheets** that include skill or concept labels to help students focus on problem areas, as well as reproducible answer sheets similar to those on the actual SAT or ACT. [Note: If students plan on taking all of the SAT practice tests at once, instruct them to make multiple copies of the answer sheet on page 171.]

Keep in Mind . . .

This book is designed for English teachers to help students prepare for language arts sections of college admissions tests; the book does *not* provide instruction or practice with the mathematics section of the SAT or the mathematics and science sections of the ACT. Pages specifically geared to teachers are labeled Teacher's Guide. These pages are designed to give you the "big picture" before presenting information to your students. All other pages are designed for student use.

Part 1: Texas College and Career Readiness Standards

The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards were adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in January 2008. This step made official a process that began a year earlier when the standards and expectations for college and career readiness were developed. These standards address what students must know and be able to do in entry-level college and university courses and in a skilled workforce. Vertical teams have determined strong alignment between the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards and the content expectations of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The standards will be fully implemented into Texas curricula and will become a part of the End-of-Course expectations in English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards focus on “keystone” knowledge and skills. They depend on students achieving facility and fluency in foundation knowledge in English language arts, with “English as a way of knowing.” As stated in the Introductory Narrative to the Texas CCRS, “English is mastered in the context of challenging content that requires students to think deeply and to exercise discipline in order to demonstrate understanding, raise questions, and present ideas” (page 9). Because language arts is present throughout the core curriculum, the English/Language Arts Standards appear both as a cross-disciplinary foundation for all subjects and as a stand-alone subject. Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, and Research are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

The full text of the English/Language Arts Standards and of the Cross-Disciplinary Standards follows. (Source: *Texas College and Career Readiness Standards*, adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, January 24, 2008, pages 11–13 and 42–43.)

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

I. Writing

- A. Compose a variety of texts that demonstrate clear focus, the logical development of ideas in well-organized paragraphs, and the use of appropriate language that advances the author’s purpose.
 1. Determine effective approaches, forms, and rhetorical techniques that demonstrate understanding of the writer’s purpose and audience.
 2. Generate ideas and gather information relevant to the topic and purpose, keeping careful records of outside sources.
 3. Evaluate relevance, quality, sufficiency, and depth of preliminary ideas and information, organize material generated, and formulate a thesis.

4. Recognize the importance of revision as the key to effective writing. Each draft should refine key ideas and organize them more logically and fluidly, use language more precisely and effectively, and draw the reader to the author's purpose.
5. Edit writing for proper voice, tense, and syntax, assuring that it conforms to standard English, when appropriate.

II. Reading

- A. Locate explicit textual information, draw complex inferences, and analyze and evaluate the information within and across texts of varying lengths.
 1. Use effective reading strategies to determine a written work's purpose and intended audience.
 2. Use text features and graphics to form an overview of informational texts and to determine where to locate information.
 3. Identify explicit and implicit textual information including main ideas and author's purpose.
 4. Draw and support complex inferences from text to summarize, draw conclusions, and distinguish facts from simple assertions and opinions.
 5. Analyze the presentation of information and the strength and quality of evidence used by the author, and judge the coherence and logic of the presentation and the credibility of an argument.
 6. Analyze imagery in literary texts.
 7. Evaluate the use of both literal and figurative language to inform and shape the perceptions of readers.
 8. Compare and analyze how generic features are used across texts.
 9. Identify and analyze the audience, purpose, and message of an informational or persuasive text.
 10. Identify and analyze how an author's use of language appeals to the senses, creates imagery, and suggests mood.
 11. Identify, analyze, and evaluate similarities and differences in how multiple texts present information, argue a position, or relate a theme.
- B. Understand new vocabulary and concepts and use them accurately in reading, speaking, and writing.
 1. Identify new words and concepts acquired through study of their relationships to other words and concepts.
 2. Apply knowledge of roots and affixes to infer the meanings of new words.

3. Use reference guides to confirm the meanings of new words or concepts.
- C. Describe, analyze, and evaluate information within and across literary and other texts from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
 1. Read a wide variety of texts from American, European, and world literatures.
 2. Analyze themes, structures, and elements of myths, traditional narratives, and classical and contemporary literature.
 3. Analyze works of literature for what they suggest about the historical period and cultural contexts in which they were written.
 4. Analyze and compare the use of language in literary works from a variety of world cultures.
- D. Explain how literary and other texts evoke personal experience and reveal character in particular historical circumstances.
 1. Describe insights gained about oneself, others, or the world from reading specific texts.
 2. Analyze the influence of myths, folktales, fables, and classical literature from a variety of world cultures on later literature and film.

III. Speaking

- A. Understand the elements of communication both in informal group discussions and formal presentations (e.g., accuracy, relevance, rhetorical features, organization of information).
 1. Understand how style and content of spoken language varies in different contexts and influences the listener's understanding.
 2. Adjust presentation (delivery, vocabulary, length) to particular audiences and purposes.
- B. Develop effective speaking styles for both group and one-on-one situations.
 1. Participate actively and effectively in one-on-one oral communication situations.
 2. Participate actively and effectively in group discussions.
 3. Plan and deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear and distinct perspectives and demonstrate solid reasoning.

IV. Listening

- A. Apply listening skills as an individual and as a member of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).

1. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a public presentation.
 2. Interpret a speaker's message; identify the position taken and the evidence in support of that position.
 3. Use a variety of strategies to enhance listening comprehension (e.g., focus attention on message, monitor message for clarity and understanding, provide verbal and nonverbal feedback, note cues such as change of pace or particular words that indicate a new point is about to be made, select and organize key information).
- B. Listen effectively in informal and formal situations.
1. Listen critically and respond appropriately to presentations.
 2. Listen actively and effectively in one-on-one communication situations.
 3. Listen actively and effectively in group discussions.

V. Research

- A. Formulate topic and questions.
1. Formulate research questions.
 2. Explore a research topic.
 3. Refine research topic and devise a timeline for completing work.
- B. Selection information from a variety of sources.
1. Gather relevant sources.
 2. Evaluate the validity and reliability of sources.
 3. Synthesize and organize information effectively.
 4. Use source material ethically.
- C. Produce and design a document.
1. Design and present an effective product.
 2. Use source material ethically.

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS

I. Key Cognitive Skills

- A. Intellectual curiosity
1. Engage in scholarly inquiry and dialogue.
 2. Accept constructive criticism and revise personal views when valid evidence warrants.
- B. Reasoning
1. Consider arguments and conclusions of self and others.
 2. Construct well-reasoned arguments to explain phenomena, validate conjectures, or support positions.

3. Gather evidence to support arguments, findings, or lines of reasoning.
4. Support or modify claims based on the results of an inquiry.
- C. Problem solving
 1. Analyze a situation to identify a problem to be solved.
 2. Develop and apply multiple strategies to solve a problem.
 3. Collect evidence and data systematically and directly relate to solving a problem.
- D. Academic behaviors
 1. Self-monitor learning needs and seek assistance when needed.
 2. Use study habits necessary to manage academic pursuits and requirements.
 3. Strive for accuracy and precision.
 4. Persevere to complete and master tasks.
- E. Work habits
 1. Work independently.
 2. Work collaboratively.
- F. Academic integrity
 1. Attribute ideas and information to source materials and people.
 2. Evaluate sources for quality of content, validity, credibility, and relevance.
 3. Include the ideas of others and the complexities of the debate, issue, or problem.
 4. Understand and adhere to ethical codes of conduct.

II. Foundational Skills

- A. Reading across the curriculum
 1. Use effective prereading strategies.
 2. Use a variety of strategies to understand the meanings of new words.
 3. Identify the intended purpose and audience of the text.
 4. Identify the key information and supporting details.
 5. Analyze textual information critically.
 6. Annotate, summarize, paraphrase, and outline texts when appropriate.
 7. Adapt reading strategies according to structure of texts.
 8. Connect reading to historical and current events and personal interest.

- B. Writing across the curriculum
 - 1. Write clearly and coherently using standard writing conventions.
 - 2. Write in a variety of forms for various audiences and purposes.
 - 3. Compose and revise drafts.
- C. Research across the curriculum
 - 1. Understand which topics or questions are to be investigated.
 - 2. Explore a research topic.
 - 3. Refine research topic based on preliminary research and devise a timeline for completing work.
 - 4. Evaluate the validity and reliability of sources.
 - 5. Synthesize and organize information effectively.
 - 6. Design and present an effective product.
 - 7. Integrate source material.
 - 8. Present final product.
- D. Use of data
 - 1. Identify patterns or departures from patterns among data.
 - 2. Use statistical and probabilistic skills necessary for planning an investigation and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.
 - 3. Present analyzed data and communicate findings in a variety of formats.
- E. Technology
 - 1. Use technology to gather information.
 - 2. Use technology to organize, manage, and analyze information.
 - 3. Use technology to communicate and display findings in a clear and coherent manner.
 - 4. Use technology appropriately.

The College Admissions Process

GETTING STARTED

In the fall of your junior year, it's time to start thinking seriously about college—not just about your grades (you've been working to keep those up since your freshman year, right?), but about the colleges to which you might want to apply and the tests you'll need to take to do so. One test you might consider taking at this time (if you haven't already) is the PSAT/NMSQT. Taking the PSAT gives you an idea of what the SAT will be like, although the PSAT is not quite as long. It also gives colleges and universities a peek at you, and it may get you on mailing lists for college brochures and applications. If you take the PSAT/NMSQT in your junior year, you are entered in a scholarship competition sponsored by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Start Making Lists

To begin the process of applying to colleges, you need to think first about what you want in an institution of higher education.

- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a student?
- What are your career goals?
- Are you restricted to, or do you prefer, certain geographical locations?
- Would you be comfortable in a large school, or do you prefer a small, intimate campus?

By brainstorming about questions like these, you can come up with a list of goals and preferences that will help you decide where to apply.

Finding the Right Institution

Armed with your notes about what you are looking for in a higher-education institution, you can begin your search for your perfect match.

- Make use of Web sites like the College Board's College MatchMaker.
- Visit your school's guidance counseling office, speak to a college counselor, and pick up some brochures.
- Go to your local library and check out books about choosing the right college—there are many such publications; make sure the ones you choose bear a current copyright date.
- Get advice from college students and alumni.
- Attend college fairs.

As you generate a list of prospective institutions, keep your financial situation in mind. However, remember also that student loans and other forms of financial aid can help you cover your college costs; therefore, don't begin ruling out institutions until you've explored these options.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Filling Out Forms

Whether filling out college applications online or in print, fill out the form completely. Read all the instructions and make sure you understand what is

required in each section. If you are filling out a printed application by hand, think before you write, print neatly (in ink, unless pencil is required), and avoid cross-outs. Proofread your application thoroughly before sending it off, and correct any errors.

Writing an Essay

Some colleges require you to submit an essay. If your prospective institutions do, keep in mind the three keys to planning a successful essay: purpose, audience, and tone. In this case, the audience and purpose are clear: You will be writing to a group of education professionals in order to persuade them to admit you to their institution. Pay special attention, therefore, to your tone: Let the best version of you shine through in your choice of topic, details, and words, but stick to standard English.

Providing Transcripts and Other Documentation

In addition to filling out each college application entirely, you will typically be asked to provide to the college admissions office the following documents:

- high school transcript
- letters of recommendation

To ensure that you leave enough time to get the transcripts into the hands of every college admissions office on your list, compare your school's timeframe for sending college transcripts to the earliest deadline in your group of applications. Follow the same procedure in asking teachers for recommendations—be sure to give them plenty of advance notice as well as stamped, self-addressed envelopes for the colleges to which you are applying.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTS

Most colleges will require you to submit scores for a college admissions test before your application can be considered complete. The SAT and the ACT are the two main tests. However, some colleges may require you to provide scores for an SAT Subject Test (or two) in addition to the SAT, or they may recommend that you take the ACT Assessment Plus Writing (which is basically the ACT with an essay test added).

Role of Tests in Admissions Process

In some cases the role that your standardized college admissions test scores play in the admissions process is clear cut—a certain minimum score must be attained. Colleges are often vague about the weight they give to admissions tests scores because they want to consider each applicant on the basis of a wide variety of factors, including grade-point average, courses taken, teacher recommendation, the college-application essay, race and ethnicity, financial need, and even the student's state of origin.

Role of Preparation in Taking College Admissions Tests

There's no doubt about it: preparing for the SAT and the ACT will help you attain a higher score. Taking a complete practice test online or on paper will give you an idea of how much you need to improve. If your practice test scores are low, take advantage of any test preparation courses your school or community offers. Some companies offer online test preparation, and one company, Xap Corporation, offers a well-rated SAT preparation service free of charge.

Student Activity

College Admissions Preparation Checklist

As you start to think about applying to colleges, there are many questions you should consider. The checklist below will help you start the process. Bring this list with you when you go to meet with a college counselor or other advisor.

Career Goals	Academic Programs
After I graduate from college, I would like to work in the field of:	Therefore, the college I attend should have an academic program in:

For each category below, check all that apply:

Type of Institution

- ☐ I would prefer to go right into a four-year bachelor's degree program.
- ☐ I would prefer to attend community college for two years and take it from there.

Size

- ☐ I would prefer to attend a large university with enormous financial resources, a huge faculty, and diverse student body.
- ☐ I would prefer to attend a small college with a core group of dedicated professors who all know my name.

Other thoughts about the size of the institution: _____

Location

- ☐ I want/need to live within ____ hours drive from home.
- ☐ I have always been drawn to the _____ region and would prefer to go to college there.
- ☐ I would prefer to attend a school in an urban/suburban/rural setting (circle one).

Other thoughts about the location of the institution: _____

Cost

- ☐ I can't afford to spend more than \$____,000/year on college.
- ☐ I am/am not willing to take part in a work/study program during college.
- ☐ I am/am not willing to take out student loans to pay for college.

Activities

Check the activities that are important to you, and identify the specific type of activity you want to find in the colleges to which you apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual arts: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek life (fraternities and sororities) | <input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor activities: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Comparing the SAT and the ACT

How do you decide whether to take the SAT or the ACT? Consider these conditions:

- If your college or colleges of choice require one test or the other, your decision is made.
- If your college choices include different schools that require different tests, you may want to take both the SAT and the ACT.
- If your prospective college accepts either SAT or ACT, you have the opportunity to select the test that better demonstrates your strengths. Study the chart below.

Test Characteristic	SAT	ACT
Structure	10 timed sections (3 hours, 45 minutes total)	4 timed sections (2 hours, 55 minutes. The additional 30-minute writing section is optional)
Order of Items	Easy to difficult, except for reading comprehension and paragraph-improvement items	No order of difficulty
Types of Items	Test includes multiple-choice items, short-answer items (in math only), and an essay.	The four required sections are entirely multiple choice, with answer choices for each question.
Highest Math Level	Basic geometry and Algebra II	Trigonometry
Other Material	Reading, writing (no science)	Science, Reading, English, Writing (optional)
Heavily Tested	Vocabulary and math	Grammar, math, and science
Style of the Test	Tricky, with many “distracters,” or plausible-sounding answers	Straightforward, fewer distracters
Penalty for Guessing	$\frac{1}{4}$ point deducted for each incorrect answer	No penalty for guessing
Scores	200–800 per section, 2400 highest possible total	1–36 for each subject, averaged for composite, 36 highest possible score
Score Report	Includes scores on every SAT taken.	Students can choose which scores schools will see.
Timing for Registration	At least 6 weeks prior to test date	At least 4 weeks prior to test date
Opportunities to Take Test	7 times per year	6 times per year
Other Uses for Test Results	Scholarship	Scholarship; certain statewide testing programs

Student Activity

Choosing Between the SAT and the ACT

Need help choosing which college admissions test is right for you? Complete the form below, using the questions and information listed in the table on page 6 as a guide.

Which Test Is Right for You?	SAT	ACT
1. Are you good at responding to timed writing assignments? If yes, write “1” under SAT. If no, write “1” under ACT.		
2. Have you studied trigonometry yet? If yes, write “1” under ACT. If no, write “1” under SAT.		
3. Are you easily distracted by answer choices designed to trick you? If yes, write “1” under ACT. If no, write “1” under SAT.		
4. Do you have the stamina to work at your peak mental performance for nearly 4 hours? If yes, write “1” under SAT. If no, write “1” under ACT.		
5. In general, are you stronger in math and science than in language arts? If yes, write “1” under ACT. If no, write “1” under SAT.		
6. If you plan to take the admissions test more than once, are you comfortable with <i>all</i> of your scores being sent to the institutions you select? If yes, write “1” under SAT. If no, write “1” under ACT.		
TOTAL SCORE		

If you have a higher score in one column than the other, your choice may be made. In addition to considering your score on the quiz above, however, consider the following.

- Look at the sample items in the “Analyzing” sections of this book, and determine which test offers the type of item that will enable you to excel. Answer sample items for each test, and see how you do. Be sure to check your answers and read the accompanying explanations.
- Get a copy of the topics covered in the math sections of the SAT and the math and science sections of the ACT. (You can find this information at each test publisher’s Web site, or in practice books published by the test publishers and usually available in libraries.) Make sure you are familiar with the topics on the test you are planning to take before making your final decision.
- If you are required to submit a score for a timed writing test, then you must take either the SAT or the ACT Assessment Plus Writing. If you feel you would do better overall by getting the writing portion over with early, consider taking the SAT. If you think you will have enough brain power left after nearly three hours to write a timed essay, consider the ACT Assessment Plus Writing.

Three Keys to Test Preparation

MENTAL PREPARATION

Using This Book. To prepare for the critical reading and writing/English parts of both tests, study the instructions in the book and work through the practice items. The goal of this book is not so much to replicate the experience of taking a timed test (since neither math nor science are covered here) but to give you confidence in approaching the various types of items and tasks that the two tests employ to assess language skill.

Taking Practice Tests. Get as much information about the test as you can before you take a practice test. Find out what is covered in the mathematics part of the SAT and the mathematics and science parts of the ACT by visiting the College Board (SAT) and ACT Web sites, talking to your teachers, or checking SAT or ACT prep books out of the library.

You can take SAT and ACT practice tests online, either directly through the College Board (SAT) and ACT Web sites or from another service, usually for a fee. You can also check SAT and ACT prep books out of the library. Test yourself within the timeframes indicated for each section.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Materials. The night before the test, pack your backpack with the following materials:

- required documents such as your admission ticket and valid photo I.D.
- several #2 pencils with erasers
- an acceptable calculator (check online for the types of calculators allowed by each testing service)

Rest. Weeks before your test date, plan a study schedule, including time to review math, grammar, and (in the case of the ACT) science concepts covered on the test, as well as time to take at least one practice test. If you stick to your schedule, you can avoid the temptation to study late into the night, as well as pre-test anxiety that can cause you to lose sleep. Plan to get your usual amount of sleep the night before the test. Have your clothes, watch, and backpack ready to go when you wake up.

Diet. Eat your normal breakfast on the day of the test. Even if you normally don't eat breakfast, you probably should eat something light. Students taking both tests are allowed a short break during which snacks and beverages can be consumed, so bring a snack and drink in sealed containers.

STRATEGY PREPARATION

In addition to studying the Strategies sections for each item type in this book, keep these general strategies in mind:

- Wear a watch, and keep track of time. Be aware of how much time you have to answer each question or group of questions.
- Be familiar with the directions for each test section and with the format of the answer sheets. You can see real examples of both of these on the test publishers' Web sites or in their practice books.

Part III

Preparing for the SAT

Critical Reading: An Overview

Components of Critical Reading

The SAT contains three separate critical-reading sections. Each critical-reading section consists of two components: sentence-completion items and passage-based reading items. In each section, the sentence-completion items always come first and are followed by one or more reading passages or passage pairs, each with a set of questions.

The item types in each section are distributed as follows (although not necessarily in the A-B-C order shown below):

- Section A (25 minutes): 8 sentence-completion items, 4 short-passage-based reading items, 12 long-passage-based reading items
- Section B (25 minutes): 5 sentence-completion items, 4 short-passage-based reading items, 15 long-passage-based reading items
- Section C (20 minutes): 6 sentence-completion items, 13 long-passage-based reading items

Purpose of the Critical-Reading Sections

Each of the two item types in critical reading is intended to measure your ability to understand the written word. Success on the sentence-completion items depends partly on your knowledge of vocabulary and partly on your ability to use logic to fill in gaps. The passage-based reading sections test not only your vocabulary knowledge but also your ability to glean information and draw inferences from single- and multi-paragraph texts in a variety of genres.

Preparing for the Critical-Reading Sections

To prepare for both types of questions, study the instruction and work through the practice sections on pages 17–19 and 26–40. More generally, read a wide variety of challenging texts with an active mind—that is, ask questions, look up unfamiliar words, and draw conclusions about what you read.

Budgeting Your Time

As a rule of thumb, plan to spend considerably less time on sentence-completion items than you do on passage-based reading items—30 seconds per question for sentence-completion items is a good rule of thumb. That gives you enough time to read the passages and answer the questions in the passage-based reading section.

Understanding Sentence-Completion Items

The sentence-completion portion of the critical-reading section consists of nineteen questions spread across three 20- to 25-minute sections (each of these sections also includes a hefty number of passage-based reading items). This portion of the test is generally considered easier than the passage-based portion because it deals with your comprehension of texts at more basic levels—the word and sentence levels.

ABOUT THE QUESTIONS

All of the SAT sentence-completion questions consist of a sentence with one or two blanks. Your task is to select the word or pair of words that logically completes the sentence. The questions are arranged from easiest to most difficult based on the difficulty of the missing words. The College Board, which publishes the SAT, identifies two basic distinctions between question types.

Vocabulary-in-Context Questions. Some of the more grammatically simple sentences include a word or phrase that restates the meaning of the missing word. Vocabulary-in-context questions may include one blank or two blanks, and the levels of targeted vocabulary may range from easy to more difficult.

The film was full of _____, details inconsistent with its time-period setting.

- (A) anachronisms (B) conventions (C) articulations
(D) harbingers (E) absurdities

The definition of the missing term is stated in the sentence, after the comma. To select the correct answer (A), you must know which choice matches that definition. If you're not sure, eliminate responses that are obviously incorrect, and guess.

Logic-Based Questions. Some of the more complex sentences require students to apply logic to a sophisticated understanding of the relationships between ideas in a sentence. These relationships include cause-and-effect, contrasts, and generalization-example.

Management tried to _____ union members with a small pay increase, but the members continued to demand the _____ of medical benefits.

- (A) assuage . . . elimination (B) terminate . . . reinstatement
(C) mollify . . . restoration (D) alienate . . . negotiation
(E) court . . . fallacy

To arrive at the correct answer for this question, you need to identify the intended effect of “a small pay increase”: to soothe or win over the union. You also need to notice the clue word *but*, which tells you that the union was not soothed, but instead demanded something positive in regard to medical benefits. Choice C is the only response that logically fulfills the requirements of both blanks.

Analyzing Sentence-Completion Items

QUESTION, ANSWERS, AND ANALYSES

The next two pages contain four typical sentence-completion questions, followed by an explanation of the correct answer and analyses of the incorrect answer choices.

1. In her dealings with the international trade representatives, Pitts proved herself an extremely _____ negotiator, fashioning treaties with skill and resourcefulness.
- (A) formidable (B) adroit
(C) abstemious (D) cautious
(E) affective

Answer: The correct answer is B. This is a vocabulary-in-context question, in which the definition of the missing term appears in a phrase near the blank.

Analysis: The phrase “with skill and resourcefulness” points directly to the meaning of the missing word. Of the choices, *adroit* alone matches this definition. Thus, **Option B** is correct.

- **Options A and D** are incorrect because although either word could be used to modify *negotiator*, neither one works once the phrase “with skill and resourcefulness” comes into play.
- **Options C and E** are incorrect because neither is likely to be used to modify *negotiator*.

2. Jeremy made a _____ effort to turn in his term paper in time, staying up all night to finish it and running ten blocks to school after missing the bus.
- (A) brazen (B) redundant
(C) requisite (D) perfunctory
(E) Herculean

Answer: The correct answer is E. This is a logic-based question, in which an example illustrates the missing term.

Analysis: The phrase, “staying up all night to finish it and running ten blocks to school after missing the bus” exemplifies the missing word. Of the choices, *Herculean*, **Option E**, describes the example, implying the strength and stamina involved in Jeremy’s effort.

- **Option A** is incorrect because although *brazen* means “bold,” it implies contempt, which is not hinted at in the sentence.
- **Options B, C, and D** are all incorrect because none of these terms describes the effort expressed in the example.

3. After a highly _____ exchange of verbal insults, Devall vowed to _____ his opponent on the chessboard.
- (A) acrimonious . . decimate
 - (B) inspirational . . placate
 - (C) divisive . . ameliorate
 - (D) magnanimous . . annihilate
 - (E) resonant . . refute

Answer: The correct answer is A. This is a logic-based question, involving the recognition of the cause-and-effect relationship in the sentence.

Analysis: The phrase “exchange of verbal insults” constitutes a cause whose effect you can guess: a negative reaction. Looking at the answer choices, only *decimate* and *annihilate* seem likely to describe a negative reaction. Looking at the modifiers linked to these answer choices, only *acrimonious* seems likely to modify “exchange of verbal insults.” Therefore, **Option A** is correct.

- **Option D** is incorrect because *magnanimous* is an unlikely modifier for “exchange of verbal insults.”
- **Options B and C** are incorrect because neither *placate* nor *ameliorate* seems a likely response to an exchange of verbal insults, an evaluation which can be confirmed by plugging *inspirational* and *divisive* into the first blank.
- **Option E** is incorrect because neither *resonant* nor *refute* makes much sense in their respective blanks.

4. The two nations settled into an uneasy state of _____, in which the two sides maintained a balance of power by alternating periods of mutual escalation with mutual _____.
- (A) symmetry . . mobilization
 - (B) equilibrium . . disarmament
 - (C) détente . . repudiation
 - (D) imbalance . . demilitarization
 - (E) reconciliation . . accretion

Answer: The correct answer is B. This is a logic-based question, involving the recognition of the definition-example structure of the sentence overall and of the cause-and-effect relationship in the second part of the sentence.

Analysis: The phrase, “in which the two sides maintained a balance of power” evidently provides an example of the missing term, which concerns balance. Looking at the answer choices, A, B, C, and E all seem plausible. Moving on to the second part of the sentence, you would expect the word *alternating* to introduce two dissimilar concepts, one of which is “mutual escalation.” **Option B** is correct

because *disarmament* alone among the remaining options makes sense in this context.

- **Options A, C, and E** are incorrect because in none of these pairs does the second word make sense as a concept that would alternate with “escalation.”
- **Option D** is incorrect because *imbalance*, the first word in the pair, does not exemplify the phrase “balance of power.”

Strategies for Answering Sentence-Completion Items

- Before looking at answer choices, read the entire question and try to think of a word (or words) that correctly completes the sentence. Then look for choices that best match your own response.
- Pay attention to clue words that indicate a cause-and-effect, contrast, or definition-example relationship between the ideas in the sentence. The chart below shows some common clue words and the logical relationships that the words indicate.

Clue Word	Relationship
<i>after, because, before, caused, led to, resulted in, since, effect</i>	cause-and-effect
<i>for example, for instance, such as, the following, like</i>	definition-example
<i>but, instead, rather than, although, however</i>	contrast

- Use the process of elimination. For one-blank sentences, eliminate as many of the choices that are obviously wrong as you can before selecting your choice. For two-blank sentences, eliminate choices that are incorrect based on your evaluation of just one word in the pair. Then, to eliminate the incorrect choices among the remaining responses, look at the other word in each pair.
- Once you have whittled down your choices, pay attention to the remaining words’ connotations. Two responses may have the same *denotation*, or dictionary definition, but different *connotations*—the feelings associated with words. Select the better response of the two.
- Reconfirm your choice by reading the sentence again with both words in place.
- If you are having difficulty with an item, mark it and continue with the remaining items. Return to your marked items after completing the questions that are easier for you.
- Although the items appear in order from least to most difficult in terms of the target vocabulary word, one-blank sentences are interspersed with two-blank sentences. You may want to adopt the strategy of completing all of the one-blank sentences first and then completing the two-blank sentences.

Critical Reading

Sentence Completion

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: For each question in this section, choose the best answer from the choices given and fill in the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.

1. Although *Northanger Abbey* was the first novel Jane Austen completed, it was published _____, six months after her death in 1817.
(A) expeditiously (B) penultimately
(C) illicitly (D) posthumously
(E) prematurely
2. Jacob managed to _____ his urge to laugh during the play's overly dramatic death scene, but he was unable to _____ a grin.
(A) oppose . . conjure
(B) provoke . . muster
(C) elicit . . smother
(D) rebuke . . confine
(E) subdue . . repress
3. As the tanker truck smoldered, it released _____ fumes, which burned our lungs and stung our eyes.
(A) obscure (B) nebulous
(C) caustic (D) benign
(E) surreal
4. The _____ scene depicted on the subdivision's billboard advertisement was somewhat at odds with the bustling and densely built neighborhood itself.
(A) urban (B) classical
(C) realistic (D) spiritual
(E) pastoral
5. NASA's experimental "scramjet" could serve as the _____ on which the next generation of high-speed passenger aircraft is modeled.
(A) fiasco (B) prototype
(C) replica (D) artifact
(E) proxy
6. The kindergarten teacher predicted that _____ would _____ if students were allowed to bring their pets to school.
(A) peace . . reign
(B) bedlam . . ensue
(C) chaos . . preclude
(D) hilarity . . engage
(E) confusion . . precipitate
7. From its _____ halls to its _____ gardens, France's Chateau de Versailles is an almost overwhelming feast for the eyes.
(A) ornate . . sumptuous
(B) decorous . . haughty
(C) plain . . baroque
(D) luxurious . . glamorous
(E) elaborate . . restrained
8. After spending eighteen years in prison, Maxwell Sims was finally _____ when DNA analysis pointed to another suspect.
(A) exonerated (B) implicated
(C) indicted (D) forgiven
(E) impugned

Sentence Completion: Practice, *continued*

9. Mayor Richards' advisors dreaded his _____ speeches, in which he _____ impulsively against the very groups whose support he most needed.
(A) prepared . . railed
(B) unscripted . . leaned
(C) quixotic . . reciprocated
(D) extemporaneous . . fulminated
(E) terse . . conspired
10. During yesterday's executive lunch at Chez Arnaud, even our brash CEO was intimidated by the waiter's _____ attitude.
(A) cowering (B) impetuous
(C) supercilious (D) informed
(E) repugnant
11. Both _____ and _____, the typical three-year-old demands much of her parents while resisting most of their attempts to discipline her.
(A) brusque . . tawdry
(B) politic . . plebeian
(C) pernicious . . auspicious
(D) bumptious . . recalcitrant
(E) vivacious . . supplicating
12. The _____ audience roused itself upon the appearance of the torch-juggler.
(A) attentive (B) impervious
(C) inured (D) somnolent
(E) wistful
13. Madame Swavorski _____ to be an expert on UFOs, although no one at the *Times* is sure how to evaluate her credentials.
(A) purports (B) pretends
(C) declines (D) aspires
(E) refused
14. In Brazil the demand for _____ land grows unabated, accelerating the rainforests' destruction.
(A) barren (B) forested
(C) arid (D) arable
(E) tidal
15. The witness's _____ responses did little to convince the jury of his credibility.
(A) incisive (B) reasoned
(C) unequivocal (D) exhaustive
(E) evasive
16. Her own running mate's _____ praise _____ the candidate's electability.
(A) sincere . . compromised
(B) tepid . . undermined
(C) ostentatious . . ensured
(D) equivocal . . validated
(E) elaborate . . confronted
17. The idealistic architect's desire to make a bold statement conflicted with what she considered the _____ vision of her client.
(A) outlandish (B) unrealistic
(C) original (D) banal
(E) singular
18. More than one observer noted the _____ between Henshaw's _____ behavior at his grandmother's funeral and his cheerful demeanor throughout the reading of her will.
(A) discrepancy . . lugubrious
(B) consistency . . maudlin
(C) dissonance . . upbeat
(D) disagreement . . optimistic
(E) compatibility . . muted

Sentence Completion: Practice, *continued*

19. The level of _____ among undergraduates seems to _____ inversely to the level of preparation of incoming freshmen.
(A) resignation . . vacillate
(B) comprehension . . oscillate
(C) attrition . . correlate
(D) confusion . . communicate
(E) graduation . . correspond
20. Buddhists believe that human suffering stems from the desire to make permanent that which is _____.
(A) enduring (B) righteous
(C) evanescent (D) immanent
(E) transparent
21. The candidate's _____ campaign slogans left many voters convinced that he did not have a sense of the gravity or complexity of the city's fiscal disarray.
(A) erudite (B) provocative
(C) esoteric (D) cogent
(E) glib
22. To some social critics, the use of _____ to resolve minor grievances, such as that of the customer who sued because she alleged that a restaurant's coffee was too hot, represents the _____ of civil society.
(A) litigation . . nadir
(B) mediation . . apex
(C) arbitration . . triumph
(D) violence . . depths
(E) legislation . . mediocrity
23. Marie Antoinette's enemies attempted to assassinate her character, circulating _____ pamphlets reporting a trumped-up story of a 1.6-million-franc necklace and midnight rendezvous.
(A) opulent (B) scurrilous
(C) validated (D) tenuous
(E) innocuous
24. Though the chemical company executives strenuously _____ that waste from the company's Highpoint plant had not polluted the river, scientists hired by a concerned group of citizens demonstrated the opposite.
(A) denied (B) recanted
(C) implied (D) averred
(E) abstained

Understanding Passage-Based Reading Questions

The passage-based reading portion of the Critical Reading section consists of forty-eight questions spread across three 25-minute sections (each of these sections also includes a number of sentence-completion items).

ABOUT THE PASSAGES

The passages, which range in length from 100 words to more than 800 words, reflect a fairly high level of vocabulary and complexity, like some of the texts you will encounter in college. This section of the test assesses how well you read the passages, not your prior knowledge of a particular subject.

The passages fall into four general categories:

- humanities
- social studies
- natural sciences
- literary fiction

This booklet provides practice questions based on all types of passages.

ABOUT THE QUESTIONS

You will respond to the question set that follows each passage (or in some cases, a pair of related passages). The questions fall into three general categories:

Vocabulary: These questions often deal with words that have multiple meanings—and the meaning in the text may be an unusual one. Some vocabulary questions simply focus on “difficult” words, but by examining the context surrounding the word—and that may mean the entire paragraph around the word—you can figure out the word’s meaning.

Literal Questions: The answers to these questions lie in the text. The correct answer, however, may represent a rewording of a statement or ideas in the text. You should be able to underline in the text the passage that answers the question, whether directly or in restated terms.

Inference Questions: These questions, which represent the majority of question types, require you to draw logical conclusions based on evidence in the text. For example, you may be required to

- make an observation about the writer’s assumptions or biases;
- draw a conclusion about the meaning of several ideas in the text;
- generalize about the author’s style, tone, or purpose.

Whatever the type of inference, you should be able to underline evidence in the passage that *supports* your response.

Unlike the rest of the multiple-choice questions on the SAT, the passage-based reading questions are not ordered from easiest to most difficult. If you come across a difficult question early on, don’t be discouraged; move on to an easier question. You can then return to the more difficult questions later.

Analyzing Passage-Based Reading Questions

The passages that follow are typical of the passages found in the Critical Reading portion of the SAT. Read the passages. Then study the analyses of the multiple-choice questions that follow them.

PASSAGE 1

Question 1 below is based on the following passage.

When Enrique Peñalosa became mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, 30 percent of the city's population was isolated in self-built shantytowns on its periphery. Peñalosa initiated a program of buying this
Line undeveloped peripheral land. In order to finance these land purchases
5 the mayor raised the gas tax and convinced the World Bank to abandon a project for an elevated highway. In its place he proposed the \$350-million, high-capacity TransMilenio bus system, which runs in its own dedicated lanes between specially built bus stations. There, passengers prepay and wait on raised, sheltered platforms for special buses that
10 have automatic, railway-carlike doors, allowing for quick exits and entries. Local owners of small-scale buses were encouraged to form larger cooperative companies and buy new high-capacity buses. To tie the city together, Peñalosa built 20 miles of dedicated lanes radiating out from a new central bus terminal to the surrounding shantytowns.
15 By 2020, according to plan, everyone will be within 550 yards of a bus station.

QUESTION, ANSWER, AND ANALYSIS

Below is a typical critical-reading question, followed by analysis of the answer choices.

1. Which of the following best captures Enrique Peñalosa's attitude toward public transportation?
 - (A) Columbia's municipalities should attract World Bank funds to replace aging bus systems with modern rail systems.
 - (B) Municipalities should work with organizations such as the World Bank to expand and modernize the national highway system.
 - (C) City bus systems should discourage the expansion of shantytowns by limiting their residents' access to public transportation.
 - (D) City bus systems should serve all of a municipality's citizens, whether they dwell in the city center or in informal shantytowns.
 - (E) Bogotá should gradually buy out all private bus operations in order to consolidate its control over public transportation.

From "Urbanism" by David Shane Grahame from *Architecture*, Vol. 95, no. 7, July 2006.
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Answer: The correct answer is D. This is an inference-type question, requiring you to apply logical analysis to textual evidence in order to find the answer that best summarizes an attitude.

Analysis: The author portrays Peñalosa as an advocate of public transportation who used creative financing and design ideas to develop a state-of-the-art bus system. The system features dedicated lanes that connect the once isolated shantytowns to the city center; thus **Option D** best describes Peñalosa's attitude.

- **Option A** is incorrect because although Peñalosa did attract World Bank funds his aim was to invest in a bus, not a rail, system.
- **Option B** is incorrect because Peñalosa dissuaded the World Bank from funding more intercity highways.
- **Option C** is incorrect because Peñalosa's plan actually makes the shantytowns more connected to the city center.
- **Option E** is incorrect. Peñalosa's plan in fact encouraged small bus operators to band together to buy modern buses, not sell their operations to the city.

PASSAGE 2

Questions 1–4 below are based on the following passage.

The passage below is from an article in a history magazine about Benjamin Franklin.

The old man took up his pen sometime in March of 1790 and began to write. As he had done so many times before, he addressed a serious topic by turning it upside down: Rather than attack slavery,
Line Benjamin Franklin defended it, but by writing in the voice of an
5 Algerian who supported the enslavement of white Christians.

Franklin wrote the piece, under the name of Historicus, as a letter to the editor of the Philadelphia newspaper *Federal Gazette*. He was responding to a congressional debate that had been prompted by a petition from the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of
10 Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage. Franklin was the society's president. The petition had asked that Congress "countenance the Restoration of Liberty to those unhappy Men, who alone in this land of Freedom, are degraded into perpetual Bondage."

15 Several congressmen spoke out against the petition, most prominently Georgia's James Jackson, and Congress eventually ruled that the Constitution prevented it from interfering with slavery. So Franklin, 84 years old and ailing, prepared his final piece of public writing. "Reading last night in your excellent Paper the speech of Mr.
20 Jackson in Congress against their meddling with the Affair of Slavery,"

From "The Evolution of Benjamin Franklin" by Tom Huntington from *American Legacy: The Magazine of African-American History & Culture*, Fall 2006. Copyright © 2006 by American Heritage, Inc. Reproduced by permission of **Tom Huntington**.

it began, “it put me in mind of a similar One made about 100 Years since by Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a member of the Divan of Algiers, which may be seen in Martin’s Account of his Consulship, anno 1687.”

25 In fact, the speech couldn’t be seen anywhere, as Franklin made the whole thing up. But he helpfully provided a translation of Ibrahim’s remarks. “If we forbear to make Slaves of their People, who in this hot Climate are to cultivate our Lands? Who are to perform the common Labours of our City, and in our Families? Must we not then be our own Slaves?” Jackson had cited the Bible to buttress his support for slavery.

30 Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim relied on the Koran. It didn’t take a particularly astute reader to note the parallels.

Franklin died less than a month later, with the abolition of slavery still 75 years and a civil war away. His campaign, the last one in a career filled with great campaigns, remained unfinished. It was also

35 one that Franklin had embarked on late in life, the final step in the long transformation he made from slave owner to abolitionist.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND ANALYSES

Below are typical critical-reading questions, each followed by analyses of the answer choices.

1. The primary purpose of this passage is to
 - (A) relate an amusing anecdote in the life of Benjamin Franklin
 - (B) demonstrate Franklin’s late-in-life embrace of abolitionism
 - (C) satirize the fundamental hypocrisy of those who condoned slavery
 - (D) trace Franklin’s evolution from slave owner to abolitionist
 - (E) persuade readers to adopt Franklin’s views on slavery

Answer: The correct answer is B. This is an inference-type question, one that requires you to draw a conclusion, from evidence, about the author’s purpose.

Analysis: The passage primarily provides an anecdote that shows the aging Franklin’s support of the abolitionist cause. **Option B** is correct. The evidence that supports **Option B** is the presence of an anecdote that demonstrates a thesis, stated in the final paragraph, that the aging Franklin had become an abolitionist.

- **Option A** is incorrect because although the passage does provide an anecdote, it does more than merely entertain.
- **Option C** is incorrect because although the passage quotes a satirical text, it is not satirical in itself.
- **Option D** is incorrect because although the passage refers to Franklin’s evolution, it does not trace that evolution but focuses on the outcome.

- **Option E** is incorrect because although the passage quotes a text whose aim is to persuade readers of the evils of slavery, the main text does not have that aim.

2. In line 35, the word *embarked* most nearly means
- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| (A) boarded a ship | (B) equivocated |
| (C) renounced | (D) elaborated |
| (E) started | |

Answer: The correct answer is E. This is, of course, a vocabulary-type question, which may require you to distinguish among a word’s multiple meanings and to use context.

Analysis: To *embark* means to board a ship or craft or to make a start or engage in an enterprise. **Option E** is correct. The author explains that Franklin was an old man when he wrote his antislavery letter to the editor; the author later reiterates that Franklin started, or “embarked,” on his abolitionist campaign late in life.

- **Option A** is incorrect because although *embarked* can carry the meaning of boarding a ship, the context of the article clearly rules out that meaning.
- **Options B** and **C** are incorrect because the article never suggests that in Franklin’s later years he had any doubts about his commitment to abolitionism.
- **Option D** is incorrect because “elaborated” does not make sense with “on a campaign,” which is the object of *embarked* in the passage.

3. The purpose of the petition to Congress mentioned in lines 7–14 was to
- | |
|---|
| (A) ask Congress to support the abolition of slavery |
| (B) restrict Congress from interfering in state matters |
| (C) refute the letter to the editor written by Historicus |
| (D) garner support for the ideas of Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim |
| (E) attack Congressman James Jackson’s speech in support of slavery |

Answer: The correct answer is A. This is a literal-understanding-type question. The answer to the question is stated in the text.

Analysis: As stated in the passage, the purpose of the petition was to ask “that Congress ‘countenance the Restoration of Liberty to those unhappy Men, who alone in this land of Freedom, are degraded into perpetual Bondage.’”

- **Option B** is incorrect because Congress ruled that the Constitution, not the petition, prevented Congress from interfering with slavery.
- **Options C** and **E** are incorrect because the petition preceded both Historicus’s letter and the speech.
- **Option D** is incorrect because, as the article states, Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim did not exist.

4. It can be inferred that, by citing in his letter an Algerian supporter of “the enslavement of white Christians” (lines 19–31), Franklin hoped to
- (A) alert his readers to a potential threat to their own liberty
 - (B) encourage his readers to support the rights of slave states
 - (C) make his readers identify with people held in slavery
 - (D) engender disgust in his readers toward Algerian slave traders
 - (E) open a debate about holding white people in slavery

Answer: The correct answer is C. This is an inference-type question. It requires you to infer from evidence in the passage and logical reasoning the effect that Franklin hoped to have on his readers.

Analysis: The author explains that Franklin turned the topic of slavery “upside down,” suggesting that he wanted to make his readers see slavery from a different perspective—in this case from the point of view of slaves. **Option C** best matches this analysis.

- **Option A** is incorrect because nothing in the passage suggests that white Christians in the United States were actually threatened with enslavement.
- **Option D** is incorrect. The reference to the “Divan of Algiers” was merely a pretext for conjuring the image of white Christian slaves.
- **Options B and E** are incorrect; the author states that Franklin wanted to abolish slavery, not expand it.

Strategies for Answering Passage-Based Questions

- Keep on eye on the clock. Don’t spend more than a minute reading a short passage or three to five minutes reading a long passage or a pair of passages.
- If you are finding a long passage difficult, stop to skim the questions. Note which questions cite specific line numbers, and mark these lines in the passage.
- For each question, the correct answer—or at least the evidence that supports it—is in the passage. You must apply logic to draw an inference from evidence.
- In answering questions about purpose, tone, attitude, or style, pay attention not only to what the author says but also how he or she says it—the choice of words.
- Pay close attention to the wording of each question and answer. Remember that an answer choice can contain a true statement and still be incorrect.
- Do not skip to another passage with the idea of returning to finish an earlier passage. Answer as many questions in one set as you can before moving on.

Critical Reading

Passage-Based Reading: Short Passages

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: For each question in this section, select the best answer choice and fill in the corresponding oval in the answer sheet.

Questions 1 and 2 are based on the following passage.

The museums, except for the Met and the Chicago Art Institute, have closed down their many-stepped and becolumned classical entrances to avoid intimidating the public and suggesting that art towers above life. Inside, once you have worked your way through the coffee bars and the souvenir shops, you will no longer find the traditional progression from the Greeks to the present, with its story of European dominance in the arts and the progress of the creative imagination in a long series of masterworks. Instead, you may first enter a collection of tribal—not "primitive"—art, or even a mixture of everyday objects—quilts, snuff boxes, jewelry, masks, photos—that are meant to remind you that painting and sculpture are no longer the primary arts, only two among many activities, and that European art is only one strain among an infinity of actualities.

1. The writer includes the phrase "once you have worked your way through the coffee bars and souvenir shops" to suggest that
- (A) museums have found creative ways to finance their operations
 - (B) museums have not kept up with the public's demand to position European art first and foremost
 - (C) museum-goers are confounded by the awkward placement of concessions
 - (D) museums are now catering to the

public's commercial, rather than artistic, instincts

- (E) patrons should not miss any of the museum's amenities
2. The writer's tone is best characterized as
- (A) disdainfully sarcastic
 - (B) forthrightly condemning
 - (C) wholeheartedly appreciative
 - (D) fair and balanced
 - (E) slightly bemused

Questions 3 and 4 are based on the following passage.

European assumptions about welfare need to be reviewed; so do European opinions about the way our world works and is made both prosperous and secure.

The great if perennially crisis-wracked European project to create a union of free-trading democracies strikes out in directions unimaginable by those who first created it around Franco-German reconciliation. And Washington's leaders of the "free world" (as we used to call our alliance against Soviet tyranny and Communist advance) seem keen to close the chapter, which they above all others have written, that described, regulated, and sustained so much of the life of our planet for half a century. If the western front has fundamentally changed, or been broken by events and cultural disjuncture, what international configuration will emerge during the short interval of years before the rise of China and India itself reshapes the world's power politics?

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Short Passages: Practice, *continued*

3. The primary purpose of this passage is to
- (A) describe in detail Europe's probable role in the twenty-first century
 - (B) outline the need for Europe to define its role in the post-Communist era
 - (C) discuss Britain's dilemma over its relationship with the United States
 - (D) call for a thorough review of the feasibility of Europe's welfare policies
 - (E) urge European politicians to form new alliances with China and India
4. Judging from the last line of the passage, the writer apparently assumes that
- (A) Europe and its allies will become involved in a military conflict with China and India
 - (B) the U.S. and Europe will forge a stronger alliance to counter the power of China and India
 - (C) western nations will retain the same fundamental policies well into the twenty-first century
 - (D) though western nations may cease to be the dominant force in global politics, western values will remain unchanged
 - (E) China and India will soon take on more dominant roles in global politics

Questions 5 and 6 are based on the following passage.

One weakness of solar power is its intermittency. But photo-voltaic panels in geostationary¹ orbit could be positioned

Line to receive constant sunlight and thereby

5 furnish the earth with a reliable stream of electricity. They should be the focus of

- experiments on the scale of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor scheduled to be built in France. Unlike fusion, space-solar technologies—including wireless power transmission—are well understood. The aesthetics, like those of offshore wind turbines, are contentious. But for me, the image of a ring of sun-reflecting solar-power satellites in the night sky evokes Yeats's "golden apples of the sun"—humankind's coming of age on star power. On Earth, we need entirely new electrical grids that are "smart," store excess power, and minimize resistance to enable transmission of renewable but intermittent energy across continents.
- 10
- 15
- 20
5. The author's reference to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) implies the belief that
- (A) if society can afford to invest in experiments such as the ITER, it can afford to invest in photovoltaic cell research
 - (B) the ITER will be a complete waste of tax dollars
 - (C) offshore wind-turbine technology is nowhere near the point of implementation
 - (D) it makes more sense to experiment with photo-voltaic cells in space than to place them in thermonuclear reactors
 - (E) the earth's electrical grids are out of date and should be updated to receive transmissions from photovoltaic cells

1. geostationary: referring to a satellite that travels at the same speed as, and at a fixed distance from, the Earth.

From "It's Not Too Early" by Marty Heffert from *Technology Review*, 2006. Copyright 2006 by **Technology Review**. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

Short Passages: Practice, *continued*

6. Why does the writer cite an excerpt from a poem by Yeats?
- (A) to show that unlike fusion, photovoltaic cell technology is well understood
 - (B) to reinforce the fact that the cells would only be visible in the night sky
 - (C) to marvel at the way science fiction literature predicted today's technology
 - (D) to diffuse arguments against photovoltaic panels on aesthetic grounds
 - (E) to argue that "poetic" notions of beauty should not stand in the way of technological advancement

Questions 7 and 8 are based on the following passage.

In her lifetime, Sojourner Truth was among the most quoted activists. Her penetrating one-line comments captured the heart of moral, social, political, and religious issues. For example, when the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law tested antislavery activists' commitment to moral suasion and nonviolence, black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, along with many others, was angry and disillusioned. At a highly charged abolitionist rally, Douglass spoke out in his customary "flight of eloquence," articulating the mood of the militant wing. "The Negro," he said, must rise from degradation through their own efforts. Strike off the black man's shackles, said Douglass, "and he will rise by the power of his native intelligence and his own strong right arm." "Be careful, Frederick," cautioned the pacifist Sojourner. "Is God Almighty dead!?" Her words were "perfectly electrical, and thrilled through the whole house, changing as by a flash the whole feeling

- of the audience." Douglass quickly modified his meaning.
7. Sojourner Truth objects to Douglass's comments on the grounds that they
- (A) put slave owners in position to invoke the Fugitive Slave Law
 - (B) don't go far enough to urge the end of slavery by any means necessary
 - (C) compromise the Christian nature of the antislavery movement
 - (D) reaffirm the militant nature of the antislavery movement
 - (E) create divisions within the antislavery movement
8. When the writer says that the "1850 Fugitive Slave Law tested antislavery activists' commitment to moral suasion," she means that the law
- (A) emboldened the majority of abolitionists to turn to violence
 - (B) tempted some antislavery activists to renounce violence
 - (C) tested abolitionists' determination to prevail through persuasion
 - (D) gave new meaning to the term "civil disobedience"
 - (E) made some abolitionists doubt the justness of their cause

From "Introduction" by Margaret Washington from *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. Copyright 1993 by Margaret Washington. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of **Random House, Inc.**

Critical Reading

Passage-Based Reading: Paired Passages

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: For each question in this section, select the best answer choice and fill in the corresponding oval in the answer sheet.

Questions 1–3 below are based on the following passages.

Passage 1

The simplest kind of unhappiness is that caused by poverty. People living in poverty become happier if they become richer—but the effect of increased wealth
Line cuts off at a surprisingly low figure. The
5 British economist Richard Layard, in his stimulating book “Happiness: Lessons from a New Science,” puts that figure at fifteen thousand dollars, and leaves little
10 doubt that being richer does not make people happier. Americans are about twice as rich as they were in the nineteen-seventies but report not being any happier; the Japanese are six times as rich
15 as they were in 1950 and aren’t any happier, either. Looking at the data from all over the world, it is clear that, instead of getting happier as they become better off, people get stuck on a “hedonic treadmill”: their expectations rise at the
20 same pace as their incomes, and the happiness they seek remains constantly just out of reach.

Passage 2

From best-sellers on finding joy to a Harvard course on “a fulfilling and flourishing life,” happiness is a popular
Line American pursuit. Of course, there’s
5 happiness and then there’s happiness. Most of us hold in high esteem the hedonic variety of happiness: experiences

of pleasure and, often, amassing material goods and wealth. But there’s another kind called *eudaimonia*, that rests on the realization of personal goals and potential. The ideal runs in a ragged line from Aristotle to Maslow to Sartre, paralleling Buddhism somewhere along
10 the way.

- Both passages recognize a relationship between happiness and
 - reading the great philosophers
 - achieving personal goals
 - the pursuit of happiness
 - material wealth
 - physical activity
- The word *hedonic* in both Passage 1 and Passage 2 relates to
 - pleasure
 - sacrilege
 - sacrifice
 - growth
 - wealth
- What suggestion would the author of Passage 2 most likely make to the frustrated individuals described in Passage 1, for whom happiness “remains constantly just out of reach”?
 - Live somewhere other than the U.S. or Japan.
 - Shift your financial goals higher.
 - Develop your inner self.
 - Lower your expectations.
 - Exercise more.

From “Pursuing Happiness” by John Larchester from *The New Yorker*, February 27, 2006. Copyright © 2006 by **John Larchester**. Reproduced by permission of the author.

From “Mastering Your Own Mind” by Katherine Ellison from *Psychology Today*, September/October 2006. Copyright © 2006 by Sussex Publishers, Inc. Reproduced by permission of **Sussex Publishers, Inc.**

[Page 30] Adapted from “Finger printing” by Richard Platt from *Crime Scene: The Ultimate Guide to Forensic Science*. Copyright © 2003 by **Dorling Kindersley Ltd.** Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

Adapted from “Scholars Challenge the Infallibility of Fingerprints” by Peter Monaghan from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 17, 2006. Copyright © 2006 by **The Chronicle of Higher Education**. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

Paired-Passages: Practice, *continued*

Questions 4–10 below are based on the following passages.

Passage 1

Ancient Babylonians used fingerprints to “sign” contracts as long ago as 2000 B.C., but the forensic use of fingerprints only dates back to the late 19th century. Despite more modern methods, such as DNA profiling, fingerprint identification is still widespread, thanks to the unique pattern of raised ridges on our fingerprints. Fingerprint evidence relies on the classification of fingerprint patterns. Without an organized system, police could only prove that a suspect was at a crime by directly comparing crime-scene marks with the suspect’s prints. With classified files, however, police can compare the marks they find with the stored fingerprints of thousands, or even millions, of known criminals. If a print found at a crime scene shows a complete fingertip with an unusual pattern, it can be quickly matched. However, crime-scene finger marks are rarely perfect, and their quality often restricts a search. As fingerprint collections began to grow, the task of searching through them mushroomed. But from the 1960s onward, computers began to help. For thirty years automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS) were developed, until they were sufficiently fast and dependable to be widely adopted. The computerized systems in use today scan prints retrieved from the scene and plot the relative positions of individual ridge characteristics, such as bifurcations (where ridges divide into two). They also record the direction of the ridge at each of these points. The

computer then compares this data with similar information from prints in the database, and presents a ranked list of the most likely matches. Fingerprint examiners then compare the crime-scene print with this “shortlist” in the traditional way to confirm any match.

AFIS has revolutionized fingerprint searches: the FBI’s system can perform 40,000 searches a day. Until the introduction of AFIS, suspects were often released without being charged because manual searches took too long.

Passage 2

The link between fingerprints and identity was forged in 1888 by Sir Frances Galton, a British scientist and mathematician who invented the science of fingerprint identification. Galton calculated the likelihood of two identical fingerprints as one in 64 billion, and ushered in the modern era of a practice that dated back to 14th-century China by noting that prints could be matched through the intersections, splits, and other “minutiae” formed by the ridges on the fingertips.

Galton assumed that each person’s fingerprints were unique. But scholars such as Simon A. Cole, an assistant professor of criminology at California at Irvine, note that Galton’s assertion has never been scientifically validated. In numerous scholarly articles and a book, Mr. Cole has argued that the problems with assuming fingerprints are unique are compounded when forensic investigators and law-enforcement officers try to match prints that are often smudged or partial.

Mr. Cole is spearheading efforts to test and improve the accuracy of fingerprinting. For instance, he points out that examiners rarely deal with whole

Paired-Passages: Practice, *continued*

- 30 fingerprints. They use “latent” prints: invisible impressions that a chemical agent converts into images, albeit often fragmentary, blurred, overlapping, or distorted ones.
- 35 Examiners then seek to match the minutiae in those prints to minutiae in much clearer inked or scanned prints in police databases that may hold millions of records.
- 40 Mr. Cole contends that fingerprint experts are far too credulous about finding or excluding matches. He says that the points upon which examiners base identification are often poor because
- 45 minutiae are obscured. Prints created by the same finger may look different, and prints from different fingers may look the same, creating errors at top laboratories and in systems based on complex
- 50 computer-driven algorithms.
4. How would Mr. Cole, the professor profiled in Passage 2, most likely describe the tone of Passage 1?
- (A) uncertain (B) authoritative
(C) persuasive (D) credulous
(E) defiant
5. According to the second paragraph in Passage 1, the classification of fingerprints allowed police to compare crime-scene prints to
- (A) a suspect in custody only
(B) a computerized database of prints
(C) all the prints in a classified file
(D) prints found at another crime scene
(E) partial or smudged prints
6. With which assertion from Passage 1 would Mr. Cole in Passage 2 disagree?
- (A) The pattern of raised ridges on our fingerprints is unique.
(B) Fingerprint identification requires the classification of fingerprint patterns.
(C) The poor quality of crime-scene prints complicates the identification process.
(D) AFIS has changed the way fingerprint searches are carried out.
(E) The use of fingerprints in crime labs began in the 19th century.
7. Mr. Cole’s attitude is best described as
- (A) unbiased (B) critical
(C) derisive (D) circumspect
(E) conciliatory
8. The two passages are similar in that each
- (A) characterizes partial prints as a minor impediment to identification
(B) portrays fingerprint identification as a continually improving process
(C) begins by mentioning a historical use of fingerprints for identification
(D) summarizes the evolution of forensic fingerprint identification
(E) calls for the need to validate fingerprint identification scientifically
9. What assumption about fingerprints is mentioned in both passages?
- (A) Ancient Babylonians used fingerprints for identification.
(B) Computers have improved the process of fingerprint identification.
(C) Sir Francis Galton invented the science of fingerprint analysis.
(D) Fingerprint experts make mistakes.
(E) Each fingerprint is unique.
10. According to Mr. Cole in lines 20–25 of Passage 2, fingerprint identification
- (A) is compromised by poor specimens and untested assumptions
(B) is based on sound principles but compromised by poor practices
(C) can utilize any sample, but shouldn’t rely on fingerprint uniqueness
(D) is characterized by sound principles and excellent practices
(E) is compromised by crooked law enforcement officials

Critical Reading

Passage-Based Reading: Long Passages

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: For each question in this section, select the best answer choice and fill in the corresponding oval in the answer sheet.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

The following excerpt is from an article about the young adult (YA) literature genre.

In the United States novels for kids began to appear in the midnineteenth century. By then the Calvinist reign was over, but the novels still spoke to the Puritan conception of childhood as a state of barbarous nature and to the Puritan view about the purpose of juvenile literature. That is, most were instructive stories about boys and girls living adventurous, undisciplined childhoods and growing up into pious, industrious adults. Boys grew up to make good, as in the Horatio Alger stories. Girls grew up to do good by learning their place and their duties within the household. By the end of the century, some had become angelic creatures, like Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, spreading sweetness and light all around them. (Mark Twain, it should be noted, wrote for adults.)

Around 1920, as concepts of childhood changed, juvenile novels entered a phase that one historian characterizes as that of "idealized realism." In the new books boys and girls often grew up in straitened circumstances or under frontier conditions, but still childhood, all the way up to the age of eighteen, was portrayed as a happy, protected stage of life—a realm of innocence that would be lost.

The childhood-as-golden-age novel lasted through the early 1960s, though by then the families tended to be middle

35 class and the stories not of hard work and making-do but of school, sports, and first romances. Two decades after "the teenager" became a distinct species and well after Hollywood had discovered juvenile delinquency, Jimmy Dean, and rock and roll, most novels for teens still clove to the idealist mode of kids growing up in safe, nurturing families to become fine, upstanding members of their close-knit communities. "In the early sixties I could write the jacket copy without reading the book," Susan Hirschman, a recently retired editor, told me. "Josh overcomes adversity with the help of his family, develops good values, and grows to maturity." With few exceptions the voices in the novels were those of adults talking about adolescents.

This all changed in 1967 and 1968 with the publication of S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*, Robert Lipsyte's *The Contender*, and Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*. *The Outsiders*, written by Hinton when she was sixteen, is about class tensions and gang warfare in an apparently typical American town; *The Contender*, about a Harlem kid who pulls himself out of the dangerous landscape of gangs, crime, and drugs; and *The Pigman*, about a boy and a girl, both with dysfunctional parents, who take up with a local eccentric and become responsible for his death. These books defied all the conventions governing language, social terrain, family life, and adolescent

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Long-Passages: Practice, *continued*

behavior. Others soon followed.

YA specialists attribute the
breakthrough to the social and cultural
rebellions going on at the time. They're
75 not wrong. But authors of children's
readers and picture books had broken
stodgy Dick-and-Jane conventions much
earlier, Dr. Seuss with *The Cat in the Hat*
in 1957 and Maurice Sendak with *Where*
80 *the Wild Things Are* in 1962. Then in
1964 Louise Fitzhugh transformed the
literature for somewhat older children
with *Harriet the Spy*, a novel about a
stubborn eleven-year-old with a voice of
85 her own and a satirical view of her
parents. In fact, the kids' literature
conventions were broken successively as
the baby boomers grew up—though, with
the exception of Hinton, it was not they
90 but writers of the previous generation
who transformed the literature. As the
historian Leonard Marcus wrote,
"Children's books mirror the society from
which they arise; children always get the
95 books their parents deserve."

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to
 - (A) narrate an episode
 - (B) celebrate an achievement
 - (C) express an opinion
 - (D) propose changes
 - (E) explain a development
2. The statement that by the mid-19th century the "Calvinist reign was over, but the novels still spoke to the Puritan conception of childhood" (lines 3–8) suggests that
 - (A) Puritanical thinking had been rejected
 - (B) Calvinist influence was still evident
 - (C) Calvinists and Puritans were at odds
 - (D) Calvinism was expected to re-emerge
 - (E) novelists had a cordial relationship with Puritan leaders

3. The word that most nearly expresses the meaning of *conventions* in line 69 is
 - (A) grammar and usage rules
 - (B) established techniques or principles
 - (C) meetings of delegates
 - (D) agreements between opponents
 - (E) rules of etiquette or conduct
4. S. E. Hinton was the exception to the assertion that "children always get the books their parents deserve" because she
 - (A) wrote fantasy novels having little to do with contemporary social concerns
 - (B) wrote novels intended for adult audiences
 - (C) was a member of the generation for whom she wrote
 - (D) wrote about boys and girls with dysfunctional parents
 - (E) was deeply influenced by the Calvinist tradition
5. The passage suggests that the entire body of children's literature from the mid-19th century to the 1960s
 - (A) portrayed children as barbarians who must be civilized
 - (B) characterized childhood as a Golden Age
 - (C) focused almost exclusively on the concerns of middle-class teenagers
 - (D) reflected views about children that lacked relevance to their real lives
 - (E) attempted mainly to entertain, rather than instruct, children

Long-Passages: Practice, *continued*

6. The writer refers to Dr. Seuss (line 78) to make the point that
 - (A) changes in children’s literature predated the social upheaval of the 1960s
 - (B) Dr. Seuss was a visionary writer and illustrator
 - (C) writers who broke with tradition fared poorly on the bestseller list
 - (D) Dr. Seuss was a pioneer of social realism for young adults
 - (E) YA specialists acknowledge Seuss’s transformative role in YA literature
7. According to the writer, the juvenile novels of the early and middle 20th century share all of the following characteristics except
 - (A) an instructive purpose
 - (B) an idealized view of childhood
 - (C) a middle-class protagonist
 - (D) the struggle to overcome adversity
 - (E) predictable plots
8. The author’s attitude toward the children’s literature of the middle 20th century (lines 21–53) is best described as
 - (A) deprecating
 - (B) incredulous
 - (C) objective
 - (D) uncritical
 - (E) approving
9. The author probably refers to Mark Twain (lines 19–20) in order to
 - (A) embroider a hypothesis
 - (B) directly support the main idea
 - (C) preempt audience objections
 - (D) elaborate on a supporting point
 - (E) provide an entertaining digression
10. As used in line 26, the word “straitened” most nearly means
 - (A) flattened
 - (B) hampered
 - (C) stranded
 - (D) narrowed
 - (E) deprived

Critical Reading

Passage-Based Reading: Long Passages

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: For each question in this section, select the best answer choice and fill in the corresponding oval in the answer sheet.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

The following excerpt comes from an article about La Ciénega de Santa Clara in northwestern Mexico. The Ciénega, a 40-thousand acre wetland, is all that is left of the once lush delta of the Colorado River, the waterway that provides irrigation for much of the Southwestern United States.

The ciénega springs from the long regional squabble over Colorado River water, a dispute that has ranged from high-minded to ridiculous to the very nearly violent. Beginning in 1922, the seven states and two countries with a stake in the river basin divvied up the Colorado on paper. California ended up with the largest share, 4.4 million acre-feet per year. The watershed's other states—Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, and Arizona—got variously smaller shares of water. In 1944, the United States also signed a treaty with Mexico agreeing to deliver 1.5 acre-feet of Colorado River water south of the border each year.

The river didn't cooperate with this neat accounting. Early negotiators overestimated the river's actual average flow, which meant the system was overdrawn even in normal years. With the spectacular population growth across the West a serious supply problem began to take shape. Phoenix and its surrounding county grew by more than 40 percent between 1990 and 2000, while Las Vegas

and its county grew a staggering 85 percent. There's less water than planners expected, and more people who want it.

In the 1960s, yet another problem emerged. As the river makes its way south from Colorado and Wyoming, it repeatedly detours through pumps and ditches into agricultural fields, carrying fertilizers and salt from soils back to the main stem of the Colorado. By the time the river reaches the Mexican border, its water is usually too salty for irrigation purposes. So in 1973, the United States and Mexico amended their original treaty, with the United States agreeing to control the salinity of the water delivered to Mexico.

Convolutioned problems led to convolutioned solutions. While the founders of Ejido Johnson¹ were settling their patch of desert in the 1970s, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation was building a \$250-million desalination plant just north of the Mexican border, in Yuma. The project was intended to clean up some especially salty irrigation runoff from Mexico. The Yuma project also included a sixty-mile-long canal intended to shunt concentrated brine (a byproduct of the desalting process) into an obscure corner of Mexico's Sonoran Desert.

During the twenty-year construction of the Yuma plant, which was finally completed in 1992, the Bureau of Reclamation began diverting

1. Ejido Johnson: a Mexican village settled by small farmers in the 1970s, after the delta had dried up but before the ciénega had begun to flourish.

From "The Accidental Wetland" by Michelle Nijhuis from *Orion*, March 2005. Copyright © 2005 by Michelle Nijhuis. Reproduced by permission of the author.

Long-Passages: Practice, *continued*

120,000 acre-feet of untreated, salty irrigation runoff down the sixty-mile canal and into the low-lying desert, rather than permitting it to raise the salinity of the main stem. The Bureau expected high tides to flush the water out to sea, but that never happened. Instead, the diverted water formed a huge, brackish lake with only a sporadic connection to the sea, and completely separate from the main stem of the Colorado.

It wasn't the freshest water on earth, but before long, cattails sprouted, birds gathered, local families and fishermen began to spend occasional weekends on the burgeoning puddle, and curious biologists visited from both sides of the border. Ed Glenn, an environmental scientist from the University of Arizona, traveled to the marsh in 1991 with renowned desert botanist Richard Felger.

"We drove down the canal, and we found the *ciénega*," Glenn remembers. "It was the biggest wetland in the Sonoran Desert."

Glenn and Felger discovered what many locals already knew. The Bureau, whose dams had originally destroyed the delta wetlands, had been inadvertently watering the seed of its recovery.

The accidental forty-thousand acre restoration project could not be kept quiet for long. The place soon earned a fancy name from its admirers—La *Ciénega* de Santa Clara—and created a burst of excitement in its small slice of the world. The delta had been dismissed as a wasteland for years, and the *ciénega* was its first tangible sign of life in a long, long time.

"It was the beginning of a greater awareness of what was really in the delta," says Glenn. In the 1980s and early

'90s a series of floods had sent extra pulses of water down the river into Mexico, and Glenn and others found that the dense cottonwood and willow forests along the main stem of the Colorado had bounced back with stunning speed. The delta wasn't dead; it was just waiting to be turned back into wetlands.

1. According to the writer, what was the intended purpose of the 60-mile-long canal constructed as part of the Yuma project?
 - (A) to renew the dried-up delta of the Colorado River
 - (B) to remove salts deposited in the river upstream of the plant
 - (C) to divert desalting byproducts away from the main stem of the Colorado
 - (D) to keep the plant from being inundated with brine while it was under construction
 - (E) to meet the U.S.'s obligation to provide 1.5 million acre-feet of water to Mexico
2. The creation of the *ciénega* is attributed mainly to
 - (A) millions of years of the Colorado River flowing southwest toward the sea
 - (B) deliberate planning by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
 - (C) years of neglect by the governments of the U.S. and Mexico
 - (D) an unintended outcome of efforts to meet demands on the Colorado River's water
 - (E) the depositing of brine in a remote corner of the Sonoran Desert in Mexico

Long-Passages: Practice, *continued*

3. In line 57, “obscure” most nearly means
- (A) mysterious
 - (B) poorly understood
 - (C) remote
 - (D) dark
 - (E) arid
4. Based on the information in the passage, the most likely threat to the existence of the *ciénega* would be
- (A) the use of the 60-mile-long canal to send brine into the Sonoran Desert
 - (B) overfishing by residents of Ejido Johnson and other nearby settlements
 - (C) degradation of the *ciénega*’s delicate ecosystem by excessive tourism
 - (D) a protracted dispute over water rights involving multiple states and Mexico
 - (E) the closing of the Yuma desalinating plant
5. The passage’s primary purpose is to
- (A) entertain
 - (B) raise awareness
 - (C) call for action
 - (D) express a viewpoint
 - (E) debunk a myth
6. The idea expressed in lines 89–92 (“The Bureau . . . seed of its recovery”) is best characterized as
- (A) an outrage
 - (B) a logical fallacy
 - (C) a paradox
 - (D) an analogy
 - (E) an irony
7. The author develops her ideas primarily through a series of
- (A) causes and effects
 - (B) personal anecdotes
 - (C) logical arguments
 - (D) impressionistic snapshots
 - (E) implicit comparisons
8. The plan described in lines 5–17 (“Beginning in 1922 . . . border each year”) is best characterized as
- (A) slightly optimistic
 - (B) surprisingly prescient
 - (C) more-or-less effective
 - (D) fundamentally flawed
 - (E) deliberately distorted
9. In 59–73, the author’s descriptions of government’s efforts to deal with Colorado River water issues is
- (A) angry
 - (B) unbiased
 - (C) sympathetic
 - (D) disparaging
 - (E) heroic
10. Which piece of information would weaken the argument that the *ciénega* needs to be protected?
- (A) The *ciénega* flooded the land of many farmers of Ejido Johnson.
 - (B) An endangered species of bird has found a home in the *ciénega*.
 - (C) Ecotourism brings economic benefits to Ejido Johnson.
 - (D) The Bureau of Reclamation has found alternative sources of water to meet its obligations to Mexico.
 - (E) The Yuma desalinating plant is prohibitively expensive to operate.

Critical Reading

Passage-Based Reading: Long Passages

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: For each question in this section, select the best answer choice and fill in the corresponding oval in the answer sheet.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

The following passage is from a nineteenth-century novel set in England. It begins with the novel's narrator making a friendly visit to the farm of Mr. Heathcliff.

The snow began to drive thickly. I seized the handle to essay another trial; when a young man without coat, and shouldering a pitchfork, appeared in the yard behind. He hailed me to follow him, and, after marching through a wash-house, and a paved area containing a coal-shed, pump, and pigeon-cot, we at length arrived in the huge, warm, cheerful apartment where I was formerly received. It glowed delightfully in the radiance of an immense fire, compounded of coal, peat, and wood; and near the table, laid for a plentiful evening meal, I was pleased to observe the “missis,” an individual whose existence I had never previously suspected. I bowed and waited, thinking she would bid me take a seat. She looked at me, leaning back in her chair, and remained motionless and mute.

“Rough weather!” I remarked. “I’m afraid, Mrs. Heathcliff, the door must bear the consequence of your servants’ leisure attendance: I had hard work to make them hear me.”

She never opened her mouth. I stared—she stared also: at any rate, she kept her eyes on me in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable.

“Sit down,” said the young man, gruffly. “He’ll be in soon.”

I obeyed; and hemmed, and called the

villain Juno, who deigned, at this second interview, to move the extreme tip of her tail, in token of owning my acquaintance.

“A beautiful animal!” I commenced again. “Do you intend parting with the little ones, madam?”

“They are not mine,” said the amiable hostess, more repellingly than Heathcliff himself could have replied.

“Ah, your favorites are among these?” I continued, turning to an obscure cushion full of something like cats.

“A strange choice of favorites!” she observed scornfully.

Unluckily, it was a heap of dead rabbits. I hemmed once more, and drew closer to the hearth, repeating my comment on the wildness of the evening.

“You should not have come out,” she said, rising and reaching from the chimney-piece two of the painted canisters. . . .

I made a motion to aid her; she turned upon me as a miser might turn if any one attempted to assist him in counting his gold.

“I don’t want your help,” she snapped; “I can get them for myself.”

“I beg your pardon!” I hastened to reply.

“Were you asked to tea?” she demanded, tying an apron over her neat black frock, and standing with a spoonful of the leaf poised over the pot.

“I shall be glad to have a cup,” I answered.

“Were you asked?” she repeated.

“No,” I said, half smiling. “You are the proper person to ask me.”

She flung the tea back, spoon and all,

Long-Passages: Practice, *continued*

75 and resumed her chair in a pet; her forehead corrugated, and her red under-lip pushed out, like a child's ready to cry.

80 Meanwhile, the young man had slung on to his person a decidedly shabby upper garment, and, erecting himself before the blaze, looked down on me from the corner of his eyes, for all the world as if there were some mortal feud unavenged between us. I began to doubt whether he were a servant or not: his dress and speech were both rude, entirely devoid of the superiority observable in Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff; his thick brown curls were rough and uncultivated, his whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks, and his hands were embrowned like those of a common laborer: still his bearing was free, almost haughty, and he showed none of a domestic's assiduity in attending on the lady of the house. In the absence of clear proofs of his condition, I deemed it best to abstain from noticing his curious conduct; and, five minutes afterwards, the entrance of Heathcliff relieved me, in some measure, from my uncomfortable state.

100 "You see, sir, I am come, according to promise!" I exclaimed, assuming the cheerful; "and I fear I shall be weather-bound for half an hour, if you can afford me shelter during that space."

110 "Half an hour?" he said, shaking the white flakes from his clothes; "I wonder you should select the thick of a snow-storm to ramble about in. Do you know that you run a risk of being lost in the marshes? People familiar with these moors often miss their road on such evenings; and I can tell you there is no chance of a change at present."

115 "Perhaps I can get a guide among your lads, and he might stay at the Grange till morning—could you spare me one?"

"No, I could not."

120 "Oh, indeed! Well, then, I must trust to my own sagacity."

"Umph!"

125 "Are you going to mak' the tea?" demanded he of the shabby coat, shifting his ferocious gaze from me to the young lady.

"Is HE to have any?" she asked, appealing to Heathcliff.

130 "Get it ready, will you?" was the answer, uttered so savagely that I started. The tone in which the words were said revealed a genuine bad nature. I no longer felt inclined to call Heathcliff a capital fellow. . . .

1. The passage is primarily concerned with
 - (A) the establishment of the weather as a key element of the novel's setting
 - (B) the conflict between the woman and the young man
 - (C) the revelation of Heathcliff as a grumpy but lovable character
 - (D) the narrator's observations as an unwelcome guest
 - (E) showing that the young woman is an animal lover
2. The overall tone of the passage is best described as
 - (A) darkly humorous
 - (B) deeply romantic
 - (C) sweetly nostalgic
 - (D) starkly tragic
 - (E) profoundly disturbing
3. When the narrator refers to the young lady as his "amiable hostess" (lines 41–42), he is employing
 - (A) exaggeration
 - (B) derision
 - (C) paradox
 - (D) analogy
 - (E) irony

Long-Passages: Practice, *continued*

4. It can be inferred from lines 84–101 (“I began to doubt . . . from my uncomfortable state”), that the narrator is accustomed to a society in which
- (A) social rank is obvious, and it dictates social interactions
 - (B) servants intermingle freely with their masters
 - (C) servants are as well-groomed and well-spoken as their masters
 - (D) people freely gratify their curiosity about the background and behavior of others
 - (E) farmers are treated with the same condescension as servants
5. The narrator asks his hostess, “Ah, are your favorites among these?” because
- (A) he has been discussing the joys of pets with her
 - (B) he has mistaken a pile of dead rabbits for a pile of kittens
 - (C) she told him that Juno has just given birth to a litter
 - (D) she has asked him to help her find her favorite kitten
 - (E) she has asked him to help her select the best rabbit for a stew
6. By comparing the young lady’s manner to that of a miser with his gold (lines 57–60), the writer indicates that her attitude is
- (A) greedy
 - (B) dishonest
 - (C) obsessive
 - (D) suspicious
 - (E) indulgent
7. In lines 34 and 50, the word “hemmed” most nearly means
- (A) sewed a finishing seam at the bottom of a garment
 - (B) made a sound indicating uncertainty
 - (C) continually changed his mind
 - (D) acted like a clown
 - (E) confined
8. It is evident from the passage that the narrator
- (A) is slightly acquainted with Heathcliff
 - (B) has never before met Heathcliff
 - (C) has known Heathcliff for many years
 - (D) assumes that the young lady is Mr. Heathcliff’s daughter
 - (E) was invited to Heathcliff’s farm for an overnight visit
9. The passage reveals a contrast between
- (A) the coldness of the young woman and Heathcliff’s friendliness
 - (B) the cheerfulness of the room and the behavior of its inhabitants
 - (C) the coldness of the young lady and the weather outside
 - (D) the narrator’s previous encounter with the young lady and the current visit
 - (E) the young lady’s haughty manner and Heathcliff’s humility
10. In line 127, when the young lady asks “Is HE to have any?,” to whom does “HE” refer?
- (A) to Heathcliff
 - (B) to the narrator
 - (C) to the young man
 - (D) either to Heathcliff or to the narrator
 - (E) either to the narrator or to the young man

The Writing Section: An Overview

Components of the Writing Section

The SAT contains three sections. These sections include an essay-writing section and two multiple-choice sections that deal with correcting sentence errors or improving sentences and paragraphs.

The item types in each section are distributed as follows. (The essay is always the first section you will encounter on the SAT. The order of the subsequent two sections varies.):

- Section A (25 minutes): Essay
- Section B (25 minutes): 11 sentence-improvement items; 18 sentence-error-identification items; 6 paragraph-improvement items
- Section C (10 minutes): 14 sentence-improvement items

Purpose of the Writing Sections

Each of the writing sections is intended to measure a different aspect of your writing ability.

- The essay section assesses your ability to express your own ideas in writing. Essay scorers will be looking at “the big picture”—your ability to adopt a point of view and develop a response over several paragraphs. Because the essay response is viewed as a rough draft, the scorers will forgive a certain number of grammatical errors and awkward constructions in all of the responses.
- The multiple-choice sections provide a close-up view of your writing ability. The sentence-error-identification items measure your ability to identify and correct errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics. The sentence-improvement items assess your ability to identify problems with clarity, precision, emphasis—in short, problems with sentence style—and to select the best revision from a list of choices.
- Similarly, the paragraph-improvement items measure your ability to select from a list of choices the best revision of specific problem areas in a paragraph.

Preparing for the Writing Sections

Study the instruction, and work through the practice sections on pages 45–85. In addition, to prepare for the multiple-choice sections, complete the exercises in your grammar book to identify areas in grammar, usage, and mechanics that need improvement.

Budgeting Your Time

Specific tips on budgeting your time for the essay appear in the Strategies section on pages 55–56 of this book. For the multiple-choice section, plan on spending about 40 seconds on each question.

Understanding the SAT Essay

When you sit down and open your SAT test booklet, your first task will be to write an essay. In the space of twenty-five minutes, you will read an essay question—or **prompt**—that asks you to take a position on an issue, and you will then develop an argument to support your position.

The Purpose of the SAT Essay

The purpose of the essay is to show how well you express your ideas in writing. Because the SAT does not test particular content knowledge, the prompt you respond to will be fairly generic. Questions such as *Is lying ever justified? Does hardship make us stronger? Can one person make a difference?* are typical. There is no “correct” position to take and no right answer to the question. You must support your position, but you can draw that support from any number of sources. Support in the form of anecdotes or observations from your own experience are every bit as valid as evidence from history, literature, popular culture, or current events—as long as your discussion of that support shows insight and analysis.

Responding to the Prompt

There are several important points to keep in mind as you respond to the prompt.

- The essay will be scored according to the scoring guide that appears on pages 43 and 44. Study the scoring guide to understand what the readers are looking for in a high-scoring essay and what will cause them to give a lower score.
- Each essay is scored by two readers (or three, if the first two readers’ scores vary by more than one point). The readers are not familiar with your handwriting. Therefore, write as neatly as possible. You will not receive credit for an illegible essay, no matter how well you express your ideas.
- The essays are scored **holistically**, that is, based on the *overall* quality. Therefore, the scoring guide does not refer to the separate parts of an essay. Still, the readers will appreciate a clear pattern of organization, which typically includes an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs (aim for at least two), and a conclusion.
- Although the scoring guide does not make any reference to the length of a high-scoring essay, there is nevertheless a clear correlation between length and score. Naturally, an essay with two or more well-developed supporting paragraphs will be more convincing than an essay with one thinly developed example.
- The essay, which accounts for about a third of your total writing score, is not meant to be a polished piece of writing. Readers understand that you are writing under severe time constraints. They are instructed to view your response as a rough draft.

The SAT Scoring Guide

The following scoring guide shows the general characteristics of an essay at each of the 6 possible score points.

Score of 6

An essay in this category demonstrates **clear and consistent mastery**, although it may have a few minor errors. A typical essay

- effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using clearly appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- is well organized and clearly focused, demonstrating clear coherence and smooth progression of ideas
- exhibits skillful use of language, using a varied, accurate, and apt vocabulary
- demonstrates meaningful variety in sentence structure
- is free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 5

An essay in this category demonstrates **reasonably consistent mastery**, although it will have occasional errors or lapses in quality. A typical essay

- effectively develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates strong critical thinking, generally using appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- is well organized and focused, demonstrating coherence and progression of ideas
- exhibits facility in the use of language, using appropriate vocabulary
- demonstrates variety in sentence structure
- is generally free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 4

An essay in this category demonstrates **adequate mastery**, although it will have lapses in quality. A typical essay

- develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates competent critical thinking, using adequate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- is generally organized and focused, demonstrating some coherence and progression of ideas
- exhibits adequate but inconsistent facility in the use of language, using generally appropriate vocabulary
- demonstrates some variety in sentence structure
- has some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 3

An essay in this category demonstrates **developing mastery**, and is marked by **one or more** of the following weaknesses:

- develops a point of view on the issue, demonstrating some critical thinking, but may do so inconsistently or use inadequate examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position
- is limited in its organization or focus, but may demonstrate some lapses in coherence or progression of ideas
- displays developing facility in the use of language, but sometimes uses weak vocabulary or inappropriate word choice
- lacks variety or demonstrates problems in sentence structure
- contains an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

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Score of 2

An essay in this category demonstrates **little mastery**, and is flawed by **one or more** of the following weaknesses:

- develops a point of view on the issue that is vague or seriously limited, demonstrating weak critical thinking, providing inappropriate or insufficient examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position
- is poorly organized and/or focused, or demonstrates serious problems with coherence or progression of ideas
- displays very little facility in the use of language, using very limited vocabulary or incorrect word choice
- demonstrates frequent problems in sentence structure
- contains errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics so serious that meaning is somewhat obscured

Score of 1

An essay in this category demonstrates **very little or no mastery**, and is severely flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:

- develops no viable point of view on the issue, or provides little or no evidence to support its position
- is disorganized or unfocused, resulting in a disjointed or incoherent essay
- displays fundamental errors in vocabulary
- demonstrates severe flaws in sentence structure
- contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that persistently interfere with meaning

Essays not written on the essay assignment will receive a score of zero.

The SAT Writing Section

Analyzing the SAT Essay

THE SAT WRITING PROMPT

The prompt below is similar to the type found in the SAT essay section. Read the prompt and the explanation that follows it.

Read the report excerpt below and think about the issue it raises. Then read the assignment that follows the excerpt.

“Among a broad range of findings about rapidly evolving methods for online communication, the . . . Digital Future Project found that 43 percent of Internet users who are members of online communities say that they ‘feel as strongly’ about their virtual community as they do about their real-world communities.”

—From “Online World As Important to Internet Users as Real World?” from USC Center for the Digital Future (www.digitalcenter.org). Copyright © 2006 The University of Southern California. Reprinted by permission of **USC Annenberg School for Communications**.

Assignment: Do improvements in technology strengthen social bonds? Write an essay expressing your point of view about this issue. Support your viewpoint with reasoned analysis of examples drawn from personal experience, observation, and reading.

Analyzing the Prompt

Quotation. Notice that the prompt above includes a quotation. All SAT writing prompts include a quotation in advance of the writing assignment. This quotation helps to illustrate the issue—or one side of it—that you will write about. The quotation is designed to trigger your own thinking about the issue. You may agree or disagree with the viewpoint cited in the quotation. You may refer specifically to the quotation above the assignment in your response, but you may certainly choose not to.

Assignment. What you *are* required to do is address the question, which appears immediately following the heading “Assignment.” In this case, the question is “Do improvements in technology strengthen social bonds?” This is the question you must address in your response.

Analyzing the Sample Responses

On the following pages are six sample responses to the prompt above, each corresponding to a different score point. Read the responses and the analyses that follow them.

SCORE 6 RESPONSE

Technology has revolutionized the way we communicate. Online media have dashed the boundaries of time and space to allow more people to communicate with each other than ever before. If the ability to connect one computer to countless others is a measure of human connection, all humankind should soon be bound by bonds of brotherhood. However, a social bond requires more than the compatibility of computers; it requires a commitment to understand others, and to make oneself understood—mainly through human language.

By this measure, technology has a long way to go. In fact, if a greater appreciation for one's fellow humans is a goal of new online technologies, some popular online media work against that goal. A recent study of university students showed that levels of narcissism among college-age students is at an all-time high, and the study's authors point to social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook as evidence, and maybe causes, of this trend. While supposedly serving to connect individuals with common interests, these sites actually encourage flagrant self-promotion. If you're quiet you can almost feel cyberspace vibrating with a million cries of "Look at me!" With so many people clamoring for attention, you have to wonder if anyone is actually bothering to really listen to anyone else.

Even email, one of the Internet's established forms of communication, leaves much to be desired as a unifying tool. While supporters of "online communities" compare email relationships to the great epistolary friendships in history, most email has little in common with the thoughtfully composed, handwritten letter. In email, which encourages speed, well-crafted insightful prose give way to emoticons and shorthand

cliches like IMHO and LOL. Imagine Thomas Jefferson, making an ironic comment in a letter to his great friend John Adams, choosing to substitute a winking smiley face for the careful selection of words. Of course, not all email needs to strive for immortality. But neither can the claim be made that the popularity of email in itself makes for better communication.

What makes for better communication, and a stronger connection between individuals, is good writing. In this regard, cyberspace is really no different from any other space: Because the printed word is still the dominant form of online communication, good writers have an advantage, but good writers also need to be good readers—that is, they need the desire not only to be understood but to understand others. As multimedia spaces like YouTube and MySpace become dominant, this same principle applies for visual and oral/aural communication. Online communicators need to take care with the messages they produce, and try to understand the messages they receive, to make meaningful connections online.

Analysis

This essay shows “clear and consistent mastery” as it develops its thesis: “However, a social bond requires more than the compatibility of computers; it requires a commitment to understand others, and to make oneself understood—mainly through human language.” The first body paragraph makes an explicit tie to the thesis (“In fact, if a greater appreciation for one’s fellow humans is a goal of new online technologies, some popular online media work against that goal”). It includes an example of a recent study and includes a memorable discussion of the example. The second body paragraph, in which the writer compares e-mail with the great letters from history, shows skillful use of rhetorical strategies and also makes a strong connection to the thesis. The essay’s conclusion progresses logically from the thesis and body paragraphs to leave the reader with a new insight.

The essay shows an impressive command of language, including good grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Although it does contain some errors in spelling (“bounderies,” “narcisism”), these do not impede comprehension. For all of these reasons, this essay receives a score of 6.

SCORE 5 RESPONSE

Technology has brought us powerful tool for communication. Online technologies have spawned newsgroups and chat rooms, tools that allow people, especially highly verbal people, to explore fully their ideas and share them with others. This form of communication is most effective when there is a face-to-face element to the relationships between communicators. They often find their social bonds are stronger because of the depth of knowledge each has about the others' points of view. When an Internet community becomes a community in itself, though, communicators can forget about the values—like respect, honesty, and compromise—that make for satisfying relationships.

One type of online communication is a newsgroup, in which a group of people with a common interest exchange email postings. I belong to one for teens interested in philosophy. One thing I've noticed is that the discussions that generate the most interest are also the most polarized. One side is often dominated by a single group member with a knack for "pushing the buttons" of the other members. These exchanges are fun to read for a while—controversy sells!—but they often lead to nasty personal attacks. It seems that online, most people would rather pick a side than seek common ground. A lot of people get offended and end up dropping out. Also, online communication doesn't let you see people's body language.

Another type of online communication that we use at school works a lot like a chat room—except classmates are sitting together in the computer lab when they are making the posts. We use it for class discussion. It helps to reduce the difference between shyer students and those who are more outspoken. Although, sometimes a

little shiness is not a bad thing. We get to read the viewpoints of everyone in the class (participating is mandatory) and there is great effort to respect each others' points of view—a student is unlikely to flame someone who is sitting across the room. Also, people can't hide behind their online identities.

Which brings me back to my main point. Within a group that meets in person, an online element strengthens the connection between members. Online communication without a corresponding face-to-face element is too often “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Analysis

This essay uses examples from the writer's personal experience to develop the thesis: “When an Internet community becomes a community in itself, though, communicators can forget about the values—like respect, honesty, compromise—that make for satisfying relationships.” The second paragraph includes a detailed analysis of what happens in online newsgroups and why it happens. The third paragraph delivers a contrasting example, showing a smooth progression of ideas that illustrate the thesis. Though each body paragraph supports the thesis, neither makes that connection explicit, an oversight that distinguishes this essay from the higher scoring one.

The essay includes some additional observations that are intriguing but underdeveloped (for example, “Also, online communication doesn't let you see people's body language”; “Although, sometimes a little shiness is not a bad thing.”) The vocabulary is appropriate, the spelling is generally correct, the grammar—in spite of a few unintentional fragments—is competent, and sentence structures are varied. Because this essay shows “reasonably consistent mastery,” it receives a score of 5.

SCORE 4 RESPONSE

When historians look back at our time, it is clear that they will judge the Age of the Internet as a truly revolutionary period. Communication technology is clearly strengthened our social bonds. It is able to bring people all over the world together like never before.

One way the Internet brings people together is through email. It used to be that if you wanted to communicate with someone far away, you had to write a letter, and find a stamp, and it took days for the letter to get there. Or you had to pick up the phone, and make an expensive long distance call, and if the person wasn't there, well, you were out of luck. Now you just sit down at your computer, type out your email, and hit "Send."

In MySpace you can basically have your own Website and you can easily connect it to all your friends, and it is also a great way to find new friends, and even friends who do not live in your town. And MySpace is just one kind of Website. In fact, the whole World Wide Web contains meeriad information.

Some people may say that the Internet is making us more isolated, because people spend more time online than in person. But that kind of thinking assumes that there is something better about being in the same room with a person. Sometimes it's just as good to talk to someone online. In fact, sometimes it's even preferable. Without the Internet, I would be much more isolated than I actually am.

Analysis

This essay receives a 4 for showing “adequate mastery” of writing. It employs a tried-and-true organizational structure, including an introduction, two body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The thesis basically repeats one side of the issue presented in the prompt and promises little nuance to follow. The body paragraphs each cite predictable examples that support the thesis, although the first paragraph is better developed than the second, which lacks any concrete discussion of the online networking site MySpace. Though its connection to the thesis is fairly obvious, the second paragraph fails to explain the connection explicitly and contains a distracting digression. In the conclusion, the writer gets some credit for making an effort to address the opposite viewpoint.

Although relatively free of spelling errors (with the glaring exception of “meeriad”), the writer takes few risks with vocabulary. There is a fair variety of sentence structure, marred somewhat by a few stringy sentences.

SCORE 3 RESPONSE

Does technology bring us closer together? That is the question, and the answer is, no.

One way it isolates us is by the simple fact that some people have access to computers and the Internet and other people do not. More and more people, for example, need to use computers to do homework assignments. Students who have computers at home can do their homework easily. It is harder for students who have to use the computers at school or in the library and then miss the bus home. You can get lots of information from the Internet, but you don't always know if it's correct. Computers also don't give you face-time with real people. Real people have expressions that you can't see online. Some computers have Webcams so you can see.

Although the Internet is a great and powerful tool it fails in its potential to bring us together and until all people can have easy access to computers, it will drive a wedge between people who do and don't have them.

Analysis

This essay, which receives a 3 for its “developing mastery” of writing, addresses the thesis by restating it and choosing a side. The viewpoint is clear, and the body paragraph contains evidence to support the thesis. The conclusion returns to the thesis and partially summarizes the writer’s main subpoints.

The body paragraph starts with a strong example and some development, but it suffers from poor organization. An unrelated idea about the reliability of the Internet and the introduction of a poorly developed second example detract from the overall effectiveness.

The combined lapses in grammar, spelling, and poor sentence structure also differentiate this essay from higher scoring essays.

SCORE 2 RESPONSE

Digital communication makes it easier than every to communicate with many people. As the quotation says, many people feels that online communities are just as authentic as real communities. I agree with this.

A real communities is people who share the same interest. In the past, for obvious reasons, it was nesessary for these people to share the same place and time. Today, with online communication, people can create online communities. For example, people who share a passion for skateboarding can find other people who like skateboarding. And you can buy skateboarding gear online.

In the past, you could only have a skateboarding community with people who you skateboarded with. Your skateboarding community can include members as diverse as Finland to Australia. Today, with the Internet.

Analysis

This essay shows a rudimentary grasp of organization (it contains introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs) and a clear viewpoint. However, the single supporting example is vague and inadequately developed. Much of the language is repetitive, and serious flaws in grammar and spelling obstruct clarity. Because this essay shows “little mastery” of writing, it receives a score of 2.

SCORE 1 RESPONSE

Does technology create stronger social bonds or drive us apart?

The answer is, both. Take the Internet. It has the power to let all kinds of people, irregardless of where they live or how they look, even if they have disabilities, speak to each other on an equal footing.

When the Internet was first invented, it was used mainly by scientists. Today, anybody who has access to a computer and a modem can go online. Not everybody has access to a computer.

Analysis

This essay response demonstrates “very little mastery” of writing. The introduction reveals a viewpoint, but the writer only begins to provide evidence to support it. Even though the essay is free of spelling and grammar errors, the content is too limited to merit a score higher than 1.

Strategies for Responding to the SAT Prompt

While most SAT writing prompts are fairly generic—that is, they don’t require you to have any particular historical, scientific, or technical knowledge—they are also intended to be highly relevant to your life. Delve into your feelings about the issue. An essay response that shows a little passion will be more interesting to read and more fun to write. The following writing-process strategies can help you develop a thoughtful and engaging response.

PREWRITING

Plan to spend about 3 to 5 minutes planning your response.

Analyze the Prompt. The SAT prompt will always begin with a quotation followed by the assignment, which contains the question that you are to answer. In the sample prompt on page 45, the question is “Do improvements in technology strengthen social bonds?” After reading this question, you might feel that you need a little more context. The quotation provides that context. The quotation about online communities suggests that you might think in terms of technologies such as the Internet.

Take a Position. Avoid simply restating the prompt in positive or negative terms. A position statement such as “Technology does not strengthen social bonds” shows a lack of critical thinking on the issue. Instead, think about whether your question to the answer is yes, no, or yes with qualifications; then think about why. In formulating your position statement, include the reasons you agree or disagree with the main idea in the prompt.

Example A

[A] social bond requires more than the compatibility of computers; it requires a commitment to understand others, and to make oneself understood—mainly through human language.

Example B

When an Internet community becomes a community in itself, communicators can forget about the values—like respect, honesty, and compromise—that make for satisfying relationships.

Examples A and B, from the higher scoring responses on pages 46 and 48, suggest that a thoughtful analysis of the issue will take place in the subsequent paragraphs.

Gather Support. Think about the reasons that led you to your position statement. These will make good topics for your supporting paragraphs. For example, the writer of the Score 6 essay on page 46 had two points in mind as she developed her position statement:

- Young people are less connected than ever. A recent study made a connection between self-absorption among college students and online networks like MySpace.

- Technology has not improved written communication. Advocates of online communities make a false comparison between contemporary e-mail correspondence and the old-fashioned art of letter writing.

These points can serve as an outline for the body of your response. However, you may want to consider additional alternatives. The prompt does not dictate the method by which you develop your response. For example, you may choose to support your position through one well-developed narrative example from history (thoroughly covered over multiple body paragraphs), two or more paragraphs that provide contrasting examples, or a series of paragraphs showing increasingly persuasive examples.

WRITING YOUR RESPONSE

Plan on spending about 20 minutes writing your essay.

Introduction. Notice that the writers of the higher scoring essays on pages 46 and 48 do not simply begin with their position statements. Their introductory paragraphs reveal the thinking that leads them to their positions. Delaying your thesis until the end of the paragraph is often an effective way to begin. However, beginning with your thesis and explaining any necessary background can be equally effective.

Body Paragraphs. Use the outline from your prewriting to develop your body paragraphs. As you write, keep these points in mind:

- Use concrete language and examples. Although your position statement conveys an abstract idea in response to a generic prompt, the body of your essay is where you get specific.
- Connect your ideas back to your position statement. Drive your concrete examples home by explaining directly how they support your position.
- Use varied sentence structures. Simple sentences convey simple ideas. To show the thoughtful analysis you bring to bear upon the topic, combine some of your ideas in complex sentences with subordinating conjunctions, such as *although*, *because*, *since*, *while*, *when*, and so on.
- Use of the first person (“I”) in your essay response is perfectly acceptable. For example, you may support your position with an anecdote from your own life, which you would narrate from your own point of view.

Conclusion. Return to your thesis by summarizing how your supporting paragraphs illustrate your overall position.

PROOFREADING

The essay scorers understand that your response is a first draft. However, if you have any time left, use it to reread your essay. Neatly correct any illegible writing. Look for vague words (*great*, *cute*, *really*, *bad*) and replace them with more-precise words.

The SAT Writing Section

The Essay

PRACTICE

Practice Prompt #1**Time—25 minutes**

The following prompt is designed to allow you to showcase your writing ability.

Be sure that your response includes

- a clear thesis, or point of view
- a logical progression of ideas
- precise word choices
- standard English grammar

Write your essay response on notebook paper (in the actual SAT, you will be given two pages of lined answer sheets to write on). Write or print as neatly as possible.

Keep the following in mind:

- On the SAT you must use a pencil, not a pen. Unless your teacher instructs otherwise, use a pencil for this practice session.
- Respond only to the topic in the prompt. An essay that does not respond to the topic will be scored “0.”

Read the quotation below and think about the issue it raises. Then read the assignment that follows the quotation.

“As for charity, it is a matter in which the immediate effect on the persons directly concerned, and the ultimate consequence to the general good, are apt to be at complete war with one another.”

—John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), British philosopher and economist

Assignment: Does charity ultimately help or harm a society? Write an essay expressing your point of view about this issue. Support your viewpoint with reasoned analysis of examples drawn from personal experience, observation, and reading.

High-, medium-, and low-range sample responses to this practice prompt appear on pages 58 and 59.

PRACTICE PROMPT #1

Score 6 Response

When my parents told me as a kid to finish my peas because there were starving children in the world, I never understood the logic. How would eating peas directly help a hungry child? Then my parents created a jar that I would fill with loose change, and when it was full, we donated the money to a charity that provided hot meals for children. We felt good about our actions, but John Stuart Mill suggests that our charity was misplaced and would do more harm than good. He implies that charity keeps the receiver at a disadvantage. In my experience, however, charity helps society both immediately and long-term.

The positive effects of charity can be seen on the global, national, and local levels. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is one charitable organization with long-term goals and a global impact. Bill Gates made billions of dollars in the computer industry, but he and his wife decided to help the world by funding programs that combat diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis in Africa. The foundation also provides people with health care that they otherwise could not afford. Certainly giving African children a chance to live a full, healthy life is something that benefits the world in the long term.

Another positive charity is Habitat for Humanity, which rebuilds houses for folks who cannot afford them. It has helped thousands of people in the wake of natural disasters. The group rebuilt many houses in the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. Would those people have been better off if they had been forced to live in government trailers or tents until they could rebuild their houses? Society clearly benefits when citizens live in safe, well built houses.

My father and I deliver meals to elderly people. They are always grateful for the meals. If they were left on their own, they could die of hunger, dehydration, or even loneliness. Instead, they feel part of a community. Mill has a point that if we coddle people who are able to help themselves, we only make them dependent, but that is not what organizations like the Gates Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, and local charities do. They provide services to people in need and serve as role models. When people no longer need charity, they can in turn give back to the community. The cycle can go on forever, and society always benefits.

PRACTICE PROMPT #1

Score 4 Response

Although John Stuart Mills disagrees, charity ultimately helps any society of people. It helps people who fall through the cracks of our society because they don't have good jobs, education, enough money, or perhaps are lacking citizenship or health care. Most people today can take care of themselves and their families, but those who can't need our charity and are better off for it.

There is a program at a local church where pre-school kids from poor families get to have hot meals at lunch everyday except Sunday. These meals make a big difference to the kids who would otherwise get nothing to eat. With a full stomach, these kids can grow faster and learn and be ready when they start school for real. Everybody benefits when kids don't have to go hungry.

Society also benefits when older people get the meals they need, too. Programs like Meals on Wheels and others help make sure they get fed every day or so. The great part is that these old folks don't feel like they've been forgotten. And they stay healthy. They feel like they belong to the community and they are.

Without charities, many people young and old would feel hungry, sad, and left out. A society is better when it includes and respects its kids, which are its future, and its elderly, which make up its past.

Score 2 Response

In the 1800s charity considered as something that could cause people to feel war-like but charity is something definately good.

Today the world feels like its falling apart. People need all the help they can get. If a organization that does charity is willing to help out, then so be it. Somebody needs to care, otherwise society will never turn around.

Charity is not always good, though, because some people just pretend to need it when they really don't. People take things like help from the goverment and then they just buy junk instead of good nutritious food like their supposed to.

Others really need help, though, like folks who losed their homes in natural disasters. They not only get stuck, they get stuck with nothing because they have no homes to go back to. The govermmnt is suppose to give help, but for how long? Who will help?

The Essay: Practice, *continued***Practice Prompt #2****Time—25 minutes**

The following prompt is designed to allow you to showcase your writing ability. Be sure that your response includes

- a clear thesis, or point of view
- a logical progression of ideas
- precise word choices
- standard English grammar

Write your essay response on notebook paper (in the actual SAT, you will be given a two pages of lined answer sheets to write on). Write or print as neatly as possible.

Keep the following in mind:

- On the SAT you must use a pencil, not a pen. Unless your teacher instructs otherwise, use a pencil for this practice session.
- Respond only to the topic in the prompt. An essay that does not respond to the topic will be scored “0.”

Read the quotation below and think about the issue it raises. Then read the assignment that follows the quotation.

“Happiness is a matter of one’s most ordinary everyday mode of consciousness being busy and lively and unconcerned with self.”

—From Chapter 22 from *The Nice and the Good* by Iris Murdoch.
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Assignment: Can happiness result from self-examination? Write an essay expressing your point of view about this issue. Support your viewpoint with reasoned analysis of examples drawn from personal experience, observation, and reading.

High-, medium-, and low-range sample responses to this practice prompt appear on pages 61 and 62.

PRACTICE PROMPT #2

Score 6 Response

For as long as people have been conscious beings, they have thought about what makes them happy. Mostly they think about happiness because they lack it. Writer Iris Murdoch suggests that thinking itself is really what makes us unhappy. She says that the absence of thought, along with a busy life, constitutes happiness. It is ironic for a writer who sits and reflects to suggest that an unexamined life brings happiness. The great writers Emerson, Wordsworth, and Woolf would disagree with her opinion.

Although writers have a reputation for being self-absorbed, their hours of self-examination often yield great truths, beautiful works of art, and even happiness. William Wordsworth's poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is a perfect illustration of how self-reflection leads to happiness. The poem's speaker walks by a field of daffodils. He soaks up the view and enjoys it deeply. Not until later, however, when he is feeling pensive, does he discover the flowers' true beauty. Recalling the daffodils, the speaker's heart suddenly feels alive. By reflecting on his past experiences, the speaker realizes great happiness.

Similarly, in his essay "Self-Reliance," Ralph Waldo Emerson implies the happiness that self-reflection can bring. He suggests that constantly examining one's own thoughts and motives brings a person mental clarity and a clear conscience. People who engage in self-reflection live outside the world of conformists and become self-reliant. As a result, they are true to themselves and to God and achieve great happiness. Theirs is not a sentimental happiness, but a pure and rigorous one.

Virginia Woolf wrote volumes of personal diaries in which she reported the ups-and-downs she experienced as a writer. In many entries she lamented how she could do nothing but sit and think about her life. Her thinking kept her from writing her modernistic novels. Then suddenly, from her pensive state, images and ideas would arise that she would incorporate in her novels. Woolf would describe this process with a breathless happiness. When she was able to turn her self-reflection into art, she was never happier.

The philosopher Plato said that "an unexamined life is not worth living." Although Iris Murdoch would disagree, many other great writers and artists would. Writers such as Wordsworth, Emerson, and Woolf understood that self-reflection is not selfish, but a way to process one's ideas and experiences and to create both meaningful art and great happiness.

PRACTICE PROMPT #2

Score 4 Response

People today are too worried about their personal happiness. They are constantly trying to find what would make them happier—a change in their appearance, more money, better grades? For all their searching, people don't seem happier. In fact, they seem miserable. Iris Murdoch would tell them that the problem is that they think too much and if they just paid more attention to their work, they would be happier.

Murdoch says that people are only happy if they lead busy lives and did not think. This is an idea my grandmother would have agreed with. When I was little, my Nana was always bustling around her house, which she kept spotless. She had immigrated from Poland as a girl during World War II, so she had great admiration for America. She never questioned anything—not the newspaper, not the President when he spoke on TV, not my teachers. She believed that authorities knew what they were talking about, and she was only a lucky immigrant who was not about to question them. Nana never had a bad night's sleep. She lived an honest and happy if unquestioned life.

For the rest of us, life is not so simple. We are constantly going, but so few seem happy. I think it's because we don't get enough time to think. My mother goes to yoga, and seems so happy afterwards. The yoga gives her a chance to reflect and relax. Maybe a balance of work and reflection is the answer.

Score 2 Response

“Can happiness result from self-examination?” Everybody and nobody seem to know. Writers say they have the answers but they can be such hypocrites so many of them are unhappy. After all that's one of the things about being a famous author isn't it? The more miserable the more people read you.

There are tons of experts on happiness out there today. They are in books, television, magazines, and radio and newspapers telling us that we need to calm down and look to ourselves and not to the world to find happiness. We spend too much time chasing what could be right inside us.

Think about it, everybody wants to be happy and each person got to find happiness in their own way otherwise we will never be happy in the end. The person who really figures out how we can be happy will become truly famous and thanked.

Understanding Multiple-Choice Writing Items

LOCATION OF ITEMS

The multiple-choice portion of the SAT writing section consists of two sections:

- a 25-minute section including 11 sentence-improvement items, 18 sentence-error identification items, and 6 paragraph-improvement items
- a 10-minute section including 14 sentence-improvement items

SKILLS COVERED

In general, the items in **Identifying Sentence Errors** focus on errors in grammar, usage, and diction (or word choice)—errors that can be corrected by changing a word or phrase—while many **Improving Sentences** items focus on structural errors that can be corrected only by rearranging the sentence. However, there is also a considerable overlap in the skills covered in both sections.

The **Improving Paragraphs** items cover a range of skills similar to many of those assessed in the sentence-improvement items, but the paragraph-improvement items also require students to select revisions that make sense in the context of an essay.

The table below shows many of the key writing skills covered in the three types of multiple-choice items. The list of writing skills is not exhaustive, however. To prepare thoroughly for the multiple-choice writing test, you will need to read models of good writing and study the grammar and sentence chapters of your writing textbook.

SKILL	PROBLEM SENTENCE	CORRECTION/REVISION
Using Verbs		
<i>subject-verb agreement</i>	The songs on this album is performed by various artists.	The songs on this album are performed by various artists.
<i>sequence of tense</i>	I had never been to Paris, but someday I hope to go.	I have never been to Paris, but someday I hope to go.
Using Pronouns		
<i>case</i>	The only competitors left were Jaime and me.	The only competitors left were Jaime and I .
<i>pronoun-antecedent agreement</i>	Each of the girls brought their dues to the scout meeting.	Each of the girls brought her dues to the scout meeting.
<i>clear reference</i>	In the club's charter, it states that the president must be elected by a plurality.	The club's charter states that the president must be elected by a plurality.

SKILL	PROBLEM SENTENCE	CORRECTION/REVISION
Using Modifiers		
<i>adjective/adverb distinction</i>	She told us very clear that no wireless devices were allowed in the classroom.	She told us very clearly that no wireless devices were allowed in the classroom.
<i>clear comparison</i>	The medical advances of the twentieth century were greater than any previous era.	The medical advances of the twentieth century were greater than those of any previous era.
<i>correct placement</i>	To avoid incarceration, the judge told the defendant he would need to perform community service.	The judge told the defendant that he would need to perform community service to avoid incarceration.
Writing Clear Sentences		
<i>Avoid sentence fragments.</i>	When he felt homesick, watching films from his native land.	When he felt homesick, he took comfort in watching films from his native land.
<i>Revise comma splices and run-on sentences.</i>	Your mother won't be home for dinner, she has to finish writing a grant proposal.	Your mother won't be home for dinner; she has to finish writing a grant proposal.
<i>Use parallel structure.</i>	On the Web site he listed fishing, scuba-diving, and to play guitar as his favorite pastimes.	On the Web site he listed fishing, scuba-diving, and playing guitar as his favorite pastimes.
<i>Repair faulty coordination.</i>	The judge threw out the evidence about prior convictions and she did not think it was relevant.	The judge threw out the evidence about prior convictions because she did not think it was relevant.
<i>Avoid unnecessary subject shifts.</i>	All students should access the school's Web site so that you can register for fall classes.	All students should access the school's Web site so that they can register for fall classes.
<i>Use precise language.</i>	The store's posted policy was to persecute shoplifters "to the fullest extent of the law."	The store's posted policy was to prosecute shoplifters "to the fullest extent of the law."
Improving Sentence Style		
<i>Idiom</i>	I've thought on what you said, and I've decided you were right.	I've thought about what you said, and I've decided you were right.
<i>Concision</i>	A haze of uncertainty surrounds the neighborhood, as many neighbors' questions about the proposed coal plant remain unanswered, unheard, and unaddressed.	Many of the neighbors' questions about the proposed coal plant remain unanswered.
<i>Active voice</i>	It was requested by several board members that the minutes from the previous meeting be read.	Several board members requested that the minutes of the previous meeting be read.

Analyzing Sentence-Error Identification Items

The questions in the **Identifying Sentence Errors** portion of the writing section deal with errors in grammar, usage, or diction (word choice). Each sentence includes four underlined sections, each labeled with a letter A–D, one of which may constitute an error. Each sentence also contains Option E, “No error.” Your job is to evaluate each underlined section until you have identified the error or concluded that there is no error.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND ANALYSES

The following pages contain four typical sentence-error identification questions, followed by an explanation of the correct answer and an analysis of the incorrect answer choices.

1. (A) Traveling on foot, Rory Stewart’s (B) riveting account, *The Places in Between*, (C) traces his journey across the mountains of Afghanistan (D) in 2002. (E) No error

Answer: The correct answer is A. The error in this sentence has to do with the incorrect placement of a modifier.

Analysis: *Traveling on foot* (**Option A**) is a dangling modifier. As written, it modifies *account*. In order to make sense, the sentence would have to be revised in some way, such as, “Rory Stewart’s riveting account, *The Places in Between*, traces his journey on foot across the mountains of Afghanistan in 2002.”

- **Option B** consists of a noun phrase followed by an appositive, which is correctly placed between commas.
- The verb *traces* in **Option C** agrees in number with the singular noun *account*.
- In **Option D**, the prepositional phrase *in 2002* is correctly placed to modify the phrase *across the mountains of Afghanistan*.

2. The snowmobile ban (A) became a bitter source of contention between locals who depended on (B) them for winter travel and (C) tourists who wanted to experience the beauty of the national forest (D) in pristine silence. (E) No error

Answer: The correct answer is B. The error in this sentence has to do with unclear pronoun reference.

Analysis: The pronoun *them* (**Option B**) has no clear antecedent and would need to be replaced by *snowmobiles*.

- The verb *became* in **Option A** matches the noun *ban* in number and establishes the past-tense time frame of the sentence.
- In **Option C**, the phrase *tourists who wanted* is parallel in construction with the phrase *locals who depended*.
- In **Option D**, the prepositional phrase *in pristine silence* is placed correctly to modify the verb phrase *wanted to experience*.

3. (A) Established in India in 500 B.C., the first hospitals in recorded history (B) shared many of the principles that (C) govern modern hospitals, including a focus on the hygiene, nutrition, and (D) comforting their patients. (E) No error

Answer: The correct answer is D. The error in this sentence has to do with parallel structure.

Analysis: The phrase *comforting their patients* (**Option D**) is not parallel with the two previous items in the series, which are nouns following the article *the*. The correct form would be *comfort of their patients*.

- **Option A** consists of a participial phrase correctly modifying the noun *hospitals* and followed by a comma.
- The verb *shared* in **Option B** reflects the past-tense time frame of the main clause.
- In **Option C**, the verb *govern* agrees in number with the relative pronoun *that* (which refers to the preceding plural noun *principles*) and correctly shifts the tense to the present.

4. (A) Having endured rain for the first four days of Spring Break, the students were less interested (B) in spending their first day of sun touring the aerospace museum (C) than they were (D) in going to the beach. (E) No error

Answer: The correct answer is E.

Analysis: Although the complex structure of the sentence makes it a virtual minefield for potential errors, it is ultimately grammatically sound.

- **Option A** consists of a participial phrase correctly placed to modify *the students*.
- The use of the preposition *in* (**Option B**) to follow the verb *interested* is idiomatically correct.

- **Option C** correctly completes the comparison that began with *less* in the previous line.
- In **Option D**, the phrase *in going to the beach* is parallel in construction with the related phrase *in spending their first day*, which completes the sentence’s central comparison.

Strategies for Responding to Sentence-Error Identification Items

- Work through the sentence-error items quickly. They are generally considered easier than the Improving Sentences and Improving Paragraphs items.
- Remember, each sentence contains either one error or no error. No sentence contains multiple errors. Also, the error—if there is one—will occur only in an underlined portion of the sentence.
- Reading the sentence aloud may help you hear that “sour note,” which identifies an error.
- When you think you have identified an error, correct the error in your head. In most cases, correcting the error does not require you to revise the entire sentence in your head but only the isolated area where the error occurs. Therefore, correcting the error should not take too much valuable time, and it will confirm that you have made the right choice.
- If the error does not jump out at you, go through each underlined item and apply the *correct/incorrect* test to it. If there are no incorrect responses, select option E—“No error.”
- Don’t spend more than 30 or 40 seconds on a question. Mark questions that you skip (and be sure to skip the corresponding oval of your answer sheet). Return to these questions if you have time.
- Although this section of the test covers a wide range of grammar issues, certain issues seem to recur. Be sure that you are familiar, for example, with the idiomatic use of prepositions with certain verbs: You are famous *for* something, not *about* it; you are flattered *by* a compliment, not *from* it; and so on.

The SAT Writing Section

Identifying Sentence Errors

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: For each item in this section, select the letter option preceding the underlined section that contains a sentence error. If the sentence contains no error, select option E.

1. The annual music festival, (A) which (B) lasts four days, (C) have become a reliable source (D) of revenues for local businesses. (E) No error
2. (A) Like vegetarians, vegans (B) abstain from eating meat; (C) however, they also do not eat both egg (D) or dairy products. (E) No error
3. The president-elect (A) assured his predecessor's political appointees that the (B) conduct for (C) their performance reviews (D) would be free of political bias. (E) No error
4. Although mountain streams often (A) look pristine, many (B) are contaminated with parasites like giardia, (C) which causes intestinal disease; backpackers must therefore boil the water or use a specially designed filter before drinking (D) it. (E) No error
5. On streets (A) where a dedicated bicycle lane (B) is provided, (C) less bicycle accidents (D) occur. (E) No error
6. Brain researchers (A) estimate that while the unconscious mind can apprehend 11 millions bits of information per second, (B) but the conscious mind (C) can process only a minute fraction (D) of that information. (E) No error
7. Nineteenth-century biologists like Thomas Henry Huxley (A) was the first (B) to suggest (C) an evolutionary link between dinosaurs (D) and birds. (E) No error
8. In (A) their creation myths the Zuni Pueblo of Mexico (B) explained the existence of the dinosaur fossils (C) that they found in (D) there environment. (E) No error
9. The tour operators advised (A) their clients to leave the museum and (B) return to their hotel (C) by the same buses in which they arrived (D) in. (E) No error
10. Although (A) intending to encourage park visitors to carry (B) their trash as (C) they left the park, the removal of the trashcans (D) resulted in more litter. (E) No error

Identifying Sentence Errors: Practice, *continued*

11. (A) With the reservoir's level at a record low, the city's mandatory water-usage restrictions (B) have gone into effect (C) and will remain in force until (D) they return to normal. (E) No error
12. Not only did the proposed development (A) exceed the maximum square footage (B) allowed by city code, but it (C) neither followed the city's recommendations for (D) environmentally sound design. (E) No error
13. (A) Contrary to popular belief, Pocahontas was not romantically involved (B) with Captain John Smith, (C) and she was married to (D) the English colonist John Rolfe. (E) No error
14. Infectious agents (A) move from one individual to another through physical contact (B) between individuals, (C) through an intermediary such as a mosquito, or (D) by eating contaminated food or water. (E) No error
15. Either CPR or first aid certification (A) are a prerequisite (B) for (C) accompanying the young scouts (D) on the camping expedition. (E) No error
16. The word *blizzard* appears (A) to have come into (B) use first in nineteenth-century United States, (C) when it referred to a violent blow, but its origins (D) are unknown. (E) No error
17. The student body president, (A) in a presentation to the local school committee, spoke (B) eloquent about the need for (C) better student representation (D) at school board meetings. (E) No error
18. The chairperson (A) asked Ms. Rosario to set up an arts committee (B) probably because of (C) her interest (D) in promoting local artists. (E) No error
19. In the travel guide, (A) they provide information about the museums and monuments (B) of the medieval city (C) but not about (D) its restaurants or accommodations. (E) No error
20. To avoid a (A) potentially lethal pandemic, the state board of health (B) recommends (C) that all senior citizens and school-age children (D) are vaccinated against the particularly virulent strain of influenza. (E) No error

Analyzing Sentence-Improvement Items

Like the questions in the **Identifying Sentence Errors** portion, the questions in the **Improving Sentences** portion of the writing section cover grammar and usage problems. However, the sentence-improvement items tend to focus more on problems with sentence structure—problems that involve entire phrases or clauses—and not as much on diction, or word choice.

Because improving a sentence may require revising or moving an entire phrase or clause—and sometimes revising the entire sentence—the format of these questions differs from the format of the sentence-error identification items. Each sentence in this section contains an underlined portion that may or may not require revision. Of the five answer choices provided, the first choice is always identical to the underlined portion, so selecting choice A is the equivalent of concluding that the sentence contains no error. The other four choices are proposed revisions, one of which may be the correct response.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND ANALYSES

The next pages contain three typical sentence-error identification questions, each followed by an explanation of the correct answer and an analysis of the incorrect answer choices.

1. When it was discovered by the dean that most students were unaware of the university's tutoring service, she had informational flyers posted all over campus.
 - (A) When it was discovered by the dean that most students were unaware of the university's tutoring service
 - (B) When the dean discovered that most students were unaware of the university's tutoring service
 - (C) Discovering as the dean did that most students were unaware of the university's tutoring service
 - (D) When most students were discovered by the dean to be unaware of the university's tutoring service
 - (E) Unaware of the university's tutoring service, most students were discovered by the dean

Answer: The correct answer is B. The original sentence suffers from unnecessary use of the passive voice.

Analysis: The passive construction *When it was discovered by the dean . . .* obstructs clarity by delaying identification of the agent (*Who discovered?*) and using more words than necessary. **Option B** is the only revision that improves the sentence.

- **Option C** is somewhat imprecise, because the phrase *as the dean did* suggests that there was something about the way the dean made her discovery that was significant, or that other people may have made the discovery as well.

- **Option D** represents yet another passive construction with no real improvement over the original sentence.
- **Option E** renders the sentence entirely nonsensical.

2. Even if you have never read *Romeo and Juliet*, most people are familiar with its plot.
- (A) most people are familiar with its plot
 - (B) people are mostly familiar with its plot
 - (C) more people are familiar with its plot
 - (D) but its plot is probably familiar to you
 - (E) you are probably familiar with its plot

Answer: The correct answer is E. The original sentence contains an unnecessary subject shift.

Analysis: As written, the shift from *you* in the introductory clause to *most people* in the main clause is unnecessary and confusing. **Option E** is correct because it maintains *you* as the subject.

- **Options B** and **C** still contain the unnecessary subject shift, and other changes alter the intended meaning of the sentence.
- In **Option D**, the subject shift (from *you* to *plot*) is acceptable; the conjunction *but*, however, is redundant because the sentence begins with *Even if*.

3. The jury found the testimony of the prosecution's witness credible, and they found in favor of the defendant.
- (A) The jury found the testimony of the prosecution's witness credible, and they
 - (B) The jury found the testimony of the prosecution's witness credible but they still
 - (C) Although they found the testimony of the prosecution's witness credible, the jury
 - (D) Finding the testimony of the prosecution's witness credible, the jury
 - (E) The testimony of the prosecution's witness was credible, and the jury

Answer: The correct answer is C. Faulty coordination obstructs clarity in the original sentence.

Analysis: Because the two independent clauses in the original sentence seem to be at odds with one another, connecting them with *and* leaves the reader confused about the writer’s intended meaning. **Option C** creates a satisfying resolution to this confusion by subordinating the first clause to the second.

- Because no comma precedes *but*, **Option B** creates a run-sentence.
- **Option D** changes the first clause to a participial phrase, which does nothing to resolve the contradiction between the two parts of the sentence.
- **Option E** has both faulty coordination and an unnecessary subject shift.

Strategies for Responding to Sentence-Improvement Items

- Review the chart on pages 63 and 64. It shows many of the common grammar and usage problems you will encounter in this section of the test. Sentence-improvement items focus particularly on the larger, structural problems in sentence writing—coordination and subordination, misplaced modifiers, passive voice, parallel structure, and wordiness. However, you should also be on the lookout for smaller-scale problems, including problems with case, agreement (subject-verb, pronoun-antecedent), tense, and so on.
- Read the entire sentence. It may be correct as is. Even if you think it is correct, quickly skim over choices B–E. (Skip reading choice A, because it is the same as the underlined text.) If one of the choices sounds better than the original, compare the two more closely to select the correct response.
- If you think the sentence is correct as is, remember to select choice A.
- Remember that only the underlined section of the sentence contains a potential problem. Before settling on an answer choice, read the *entire sentence* with your choice in place. Something that looks like a good choice at first glance may not work in the context of the full sentence.
- Aim to spend about 40 seconds on each question. Mark questions that you skip (and be sure to skip the corresponding oval of your answer sheet). Return to these questions if you have time.

The SAT Writing Section
Improving Sentences**PRACTICE**

DIRECTIONS: For each item in this section, select the option that represents the best revision of the underlined portion of the numbered sentence. If you think the underlined portion of the sentence does not require revision, select A, which duplicates the underlined text.

1. Manchu, once the official language of the Qing dynasty, which ruled China for nearly three hundred years, it is spoken today by fewer than fifty people.
 - (A) it is spoken today by fewer than fifty people
 - (B) is spoken today by fewer than fifty people
 - (C) and it is spoken today by fewer than fifty people
 - (D) today fewer than fifty people are speaking it
 - (E) less than fifty people today speak it
2. Hoping to reduce both the number of customer complaints and the threat of additional regulations, passengers who experience flight delays have been receiving apologetic letters from the airline.
 - (A) passengers who experience flight delays have been receiving apologetic letters from the airline
 - (B) passengers experiencing flight delays have been receiving apologetic letters from the airline
 - (C) apologetic letters have been sent by the airline to passengers experiencing flight delays
 - (D) sent by the airlines, passengers have been receiving apologetic letters when they experience flight delays
 - (E) the airline has been sending apologetic letters to passengers who experience flight delays
3. Using wit, subterfuge, and courage, French resistance fighter, Lucie Aubrac, managed three times to rescue her husband from Nazi prisons.
 - (A) fighter, Lucie Aubrac, managed
 - (B) fighter, Lucie Aubrac, managing
 - (C) fighter Lucie Aubrac managed
 - (D) fighter Lucie Aubrac, managed
 - (E) fighter Lucie Aubrac managing
4. The ability of DNA testing to identify the gene that causes Huntington's disease leaves people who have a family history of the illness with the difficult choice of finding out whether they carry the gene or to hold onto hope that they do not.
 - (A) to hold onto hope that they do not
 - (B) holding onto hope, which they do not
 - (C) to hold onto hoping, which they do
 - (D) holding onto hope that they do not
 - (E) not carrying the gene, which they hope they do not
5. Astronauts in zero gravity undergo a metamorphosis, albeit temporary, from earthlings to "spacelings," as fluids surge to the neck and head, spinal disks expand, muscles atrophy, and bones losing density.
 - (A) and bones losing density
 - (B) and bones lose density
 - (C) and bones, losing density
 - (D) but bones losing density
 - (E) and dense bone loss

Improving Sentences: Practice, *continued*

6. Proponents of the new truck route claimed that it would boost the growth of the towns on its route, but environmental groups argued how noise and pollution would devastate the towns' tourism.
- (A) route, but environmental groups argued how
- (B) route but environmental groups argued that
- (C) route, but environmental groups argued that
- (D) route, environmental groups, arguing that
- (E) route, but environmental groups argue how
7. Though both senators were veterans who generally saw eye to eye in military matters, their views on the conduct of the current war differed sharply.
- (A) veterans who generally saw eye to eye in military matters, their
- (B) veterans, who generally saw eye to eye in military matters, their
- (C) veterans whose eye-to-eye seeing in military matters was generally the same, their
- (D) veterans that generally saw eye to eye in military matters, their
- (E) veterans who generally saw eye to eye in military matters their
8. Unlike other mollusks, the nudibranch has no protective shell, instead, it relies on the colorful pattern on its skin to warn predators that it may be poisonous.
- (A) shell, instead, it relies
- (B) shell; instead, relying
- (C) shell; however, instead, it relies
- (D) shell, and, instead, it relies
- (E) shell; instead, it relies
9. The ancient city Ashkelon, once an important Mediterranean seaport, is now buried under centuries of rubble; and some has been excavated, much has been swept away like a sandcastle in the tide.
- (A) and some has been excavated, much
- (B) and some having been excavated, much
- (C) and although some has been excavated, but much
- (D) and although some has been excavated, much
- (E) and although some has been excavated much
10. A presentation on the Thurmond ranch was listened to and the parks board voted unanimously to acquire the land.
- (A) A presentation on the Thurmond ranch was listened to and the
- (B) While listening to a presentation on the Thurmond ranch the
- (C) After listening to a presentation on the Thurmond ranch, the
- (D) Before listening to a presentation on the Thurmond ranch the
- (E) A presentation on the Thurmond ranch was listened to, but the
11. To the extent that she was bored by the film, the more uncomfortable she felt in the cramped theater seat.
- (A) To the extent that she was bored by the film
- (B) The more the film bored her
- (C) To the extent that the film was becoming more and more boring to her
- (D) Bored by the film
- (E) All the more bored by the film

Improving Sentences: Practice, *continued*

12. The upcoming class of seniors resented the new graduation requirements more than us.
(A) more than us
(B) more than us did
(C) more than they resent us
(D) more than we resented it
(E) more than we did
13. Although pet food, like human food, is regulated by the FDA, pet food is held to a different set of standards.
(A) Although pet food, like human food, is regulated by the FDA, pet food
(B) Although like human food is, it is regulated by the FDA; pet food
(C) Like human food, pet food is regulated by the FDA,
(D) Both human food and pet food are regulated by the FDA, and also
(E) Both regulated by the FDA and human food, pet food
14. Neither State nor Rainsford qualify for the final four in their division.
(A) Neither State nor Rainsford qualify
(B) Neither State or Rainsford are qualified
(C) Neither State or Rainsford qualifies
(D) Either State nor Rainsford is qualified
(E) Neither State nor Rainsford qualifies
15. Mark Twain used irony and derision to satirize American society and their foibles in his masterpiece *Huckleberry Finn*.
(A) American society and their foibles
(B) American society and it's foibles
(C) American society and its foibles
(D) Americans' society and its foibles
(E) Americans and their society foibles
16. Playing first the nine-foot grand piano and then the small upright digital piano, most listeners could not tell the difference between the two.
(A) Playing first
(B) Hearing first
(C) Having played first
(D) To have heard first
(E) First playing
17. Often called a "koala bear," the koala is actually not a bear at all but a marsupial.
(A) Often called a "koala bear," the koala is actually not a bear at all but a marsupial.
(B) Often called a "koala bear," however, the koala is actually not a bear at all but a marsupial.
(C) Often called a "koala bear" the koala is actually not a bear at all, but a marsupial is.
(D) Though often called a "koala bear"; however, the koala is actually not a bear at all but a marsupial.
(E) Often called a "koala bear," the koala is actually not a bear at all but it is a marsupial.
18. *Umami*, a Japanese word with no English equivalent, is sometimes called "the fifth taste" and describes a flavor which defies the four better known categories—salty, sweet, bitter, and sour.
(A) and describes a flavor which
(B) and describes a flavor, which
(C) and it describes a flavor that
(D) because it describes a flavor that
(E) unless it describes a flavor that

Improving Sentences: Practice, *continued*

19. Ever since she saw the documentary about an inner-city teacher who staged *Hamlet* with his fifth-grade class every year, Rachel has been wanting to be an English teacher.
- (A) Rachel has been wanting
(B) Rachel had been wanting
(C) Rachel have wanted
(D) Rachel has wanted
(E) Rachel wanted
20. The word *sonata* originally referred to a musical work composed for instruments, in contrast with the *cantata* which is sung by voices.
- (A) *cantata* which is sung
(B) *cantata* which are sung
(C) *cantata*, that is sung
(D) *cantata* that is sung
(E) *cantata*, which was sung
21. Gabriel enjoyed racket sports, of which he found tennis the most challenging.
- (A) sports, of which he found tennis the most challenging
(B) sports; he found tennis the most challenging
(C) sports, the most challenging of which he found to be was tennis
(D) sports, challenging as they were, especially tennis
(E) sports, and it was tennis that found the most challenging of them
22. Early humans probably started salting their food when they switched from hunting and gathering to farming; it added flavor to wheat, potatoes, and greens.
- (A) it added
(B) salt added
(C) salt adding
(D) because it added
(E) by adding
23. At a time when the print media is struggling to redefine its role in a “wired” society, the proliferation of Internet blogs have blurred the lines between professional and amateur journalism.
- (A) have blurred
(B) have been blurred by
(C) has blurred
(D) has been blurred by
(E) had blurred
24. If the secretary would have kept a transcript of the meeting, there would have been no confusion about the terms to which the parties finally agreed.
- (A) would have kept a transcript of the meeting, there would have been no confusion
(B) would only have kept a transcript of the meeting, you would have no confusion
(C) would have kept a transcript of the meeting, we would not be confused
(D) has kept a transcript of the meeting, there would have been no confusion
(E) had kept a transcript of the meeting, there would have been no confusion

Improving Sentences: Practice, *continued*

25. Medical researchers believe this, that placebos help relieve pain by “tricking” the brain into releasing soothing endorphins.
(A) believe this, that placebos help relieve
(B) believe that placebos helped relieve
(C) believe this: Placebos helping relieve
(D) believe that placebos help relieve
(E) believe this; that placebos help relieve
26. Some of the school’s most popular educational programs, from Spanish to astronomy to chorus, financed by the PTA.
(A) financed by the PTA
(B) are financed by the PTA
(C) the PTA is financing
(D) which are financed by the PTA
(E) which the PTA finances
27. A recent study shows that men and women use gossip as a tool to both define and move up within the social “pecking order.”
(A) to both define and move up within
(B) to both define and to move up within
(C) to both, define and move up, within
(D) within to both define and move up
(E) to not only both define but also to move up
28. Raymond tried and convince his teacher that left-handedness was a sign of genius.
(A) tried and convince
(B) tried to convince
(C) tried and convinced
(D) try and convince
(E) try to convince
29. In a dry manner, she informed the teenagers that the library computers were for research and not so they could send instant messages to each other.
(A) In a dry manner, she informed the teenagers that the library computers were for research and not so they could send instant messages to each other.
(B) Drily she informed the teenagers that the library computers were for researching, and they were not for sending each other instant messages.
(C) She drily informed the teenagers that the library computers were not for sending each other instant messages but for research.
(D) She drily informed the teenagers that the library computers were for research, and that they were not for sending instant messages to one another.
(E) For research and not sending instant messages to one another, she drily informed the teenagers of the purpose of the library computers.
30. Early watches were large and heavy and an aristocrat might employ a servant to carry his watch for him.
(A) Early watches were large and heavy and an aristocrat might employ
(B) Early watches, large and heavy, an aristocrat might employ
(C) Early watches, which were large and heavy and required aristocrats to employ
(D) Aristocrats, with large, heavy, early watches, might employ
(E) Since early watches were large and heavy, an aristocrat might employ

Understanding Paragraph-Improvement Items

LOCATION OF ITEMS

The **Improving Paragraphs** portion of the SAT writing section appears at the end of the section that begins with a set of Improving Sentences and Identifying Sentence Error questions. Each Improving Paragraphs section consists of an essay containing errors in usage or problems with organization or development, followed by six questions. Although some questions focus on individual sentences, you will need to take the entire essay into account in order to answer most questions.

SKILLS COVERED

Grammar and Usage Errors. Many of the skills covered in the table on pages 63 and 64 apply to the Improving Paragraphs section. Pay particular attention to the information about sequence of tense and pronoun reference, as these types of errors, and the keys to repairing them, can involve not just the sentence containing the error but the sentences around it. Other questions might deal with problems in parallel structure, faulty coordination, or passive voice.

Combining Sentences. Some of the problems in the Improving Paragraphs section can be resolved by combining sentences.

The first example in the pair below shows two sentences, both starting with the same subject—students. The second example shows how the two sentences are combined by turning the first sentence into an adjective clause.

Two sentences, same subject: Some students have jobs after school. These students may benefit from more flexible class schedules.

Combined sentence: Some students who have after-school jobs may benefit from more flexible class schedules.

The next pair of examples shows how the use of a subordinating conjunction to combine the ideas in two sentences improves coherence.

Two sentences, no clear relationship: Some students drop out of school. They have to choose between school and work.

Combined sentence: Because they have to choose between school and work, some students drop out of school.

Logical Paragraph Development. Some questions assess your ability to identify and fill gaps in the logical progression of ideas—that is, to improve **coherence**. In some cases, as in the example above, improving coherence involves combining sentences using subordination. In others, it involves adding a transitional expression (such as *however*, *therefore*, *first*, or *finally*) between sentences. Still other questions may require you to choose from a list the sentence that best fits into the sequence of ideas in the paragraph (for an example, see item 3, page 81).

Other questions may ask you to identify problems with **unity**. In other words, you might be asked to select a sentence in the paragraph that does not contribute to the paragraph's main idea.

Analyzing Paragraph-Improvement Items

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND ANALYSES

The next pages include a paragraph containing several errors and four typical paragraph-improvement questions, each followed by an explanation of the correct answer and analyses of the incorrect answer choices.

(1) Part travelogue, part history, and part anthropological study, Rory Stewart’s *The Places in Between* gives readers a rare glimpse into the lives of Afghan villagers. (2) They refer to the string of villages
 Line connecting Herat in eastern Afghanistan to Kabul, the nation’s capital.
 5 (3) Stewart wanted to travel through these villages on foot. (4) He wanted to follow the route of Babur, the central Asian founder of the Mughal Empire. (5) Though the authorities in Herat suspect Stewart’s motives and want to deny him a travel visa—feuding warlords still control much of the nation, and impending snows will make travel on
 10 the mountainous route treacherous—he eventually persuades them to let him pass. (6) Stewart’s plan is to travel from one village to the next each day, relying for food and lodging on the Muslim custom of hospitality toward travelers. (7) A former British diplomat, Stewart speaks several of the dialects of Afghanistan. (8) However, as his
 15 narrative makes clear, a working knowledge of regional dialects was a minimum requirement for the dangerous journey he has undertaken. (9) He must also carefully observe the customs associated with the village hierarchy, customs that dictate who may speak first, the elaborate greetings that must be exchanged, who enters a room first, who eats
 20 first, and so on. (10) He finds that in a country shattered by decades of civil war and still gripped by lawlessness, these customs are all he and the villagers he encounters can cling to in weighing the potential threat each poses to the other. (11) As he notes in his book’s dedication, “They were not all saints, though some of them were. A number were
 25 greedy, idle, stupid, hypocritical, insensitive, mendacious, ignorant, and cruel.” (12) Still, passing through a suburban neighborhood on his return to Britain, he reflects on the unimaginability of knocking on a door there and demanding to stay the night.

1. In context, how should sentence 2 be revised?
 (A) Replace “They” with “The ‘Places’ in the title.”
 (B) Replace “They” with “Afghan villagers.”
 (C) Replace “connecting” with “that are connected by.”
 (D) Delete the comma after “Kabul.”
 (E) Add “which is” before “the nation’s.”

Answer: The correct answer is A. The antecedent for the pronoun “They” in the original sentence is ambiguous.

Analysis: At first glance, “They” in sentence 2 might appear to refer to the “readers” or “Afghan villagers” in sentence 1; **Option A** is correct because it clarifies that “The ‘Places’ in the title” is the subject of the sentence.

- **Option B** is incorrect because, upon close reading, “Afghan villagers” from sentence 1 doesn’t make sense as the subject of sentence 2.
- Both **Options C** and **E** are poor choices because they add unnecessary words to the sentence.
- **Option D** is incorrect because a comma is necessary to separate the nonessential appositive phrase from the word it modifies (“Kabul”).

2. In the context of the passage, which of the following is the best way to revise the underlined part of sentences 3 and 4, reproduced below?

Stewart wanted to travel through these villages on foot. He wanted to follow the route of Babur, the central Asian founder of the Mughal Empire.

- (A) (Make no revision.)
- (B) on foot, he wanted to follow
- (C) on foot, following
- (D) on foot. He is wanting to follow
- (E) on foot; he wanted to follow

Answer: The correct answer is C. Combining the two sentences by turning the second sentence into a participial phrase clarifies meaning and reduces clutter.

Analysis: Both sentences have Stewart as the subject and “wanted” as the main verb; therefore, introducing the second sentence with “he wanted” creates unnecessary repetition. Only **Option C** eliminates the clutter.

- For the reasons discussed above, **Option A** is not an option.
- **Options B** and **E** are incorrect because they both merely string the two sentences together without eliminating repetition. Option B, furthermore, results in a comma splice.
- **Option D** is incorrect because it does nothing to eliminate the repetition of the verb and also introduces a problem with sequence of verb tenses.

3. In context, which of the following is best inserted before sentence 11?
- (A) A poor guest, Stewart complains when his demands for hospitality are not met.
 - (B) Stewart dashes the myth of central Asian hospitality.
 - (C) Stewart gushes about the legendary Afghan hospitality.
 - (D) But it was not all hot tea and cozy beds.
 - (E) Stewart doesn't sentimentalize the hospitality of the Afghan people.

Answer: The correct answer is E. This question deals with logical paragraph development.

Analysis: Answering question 3 requires you to understand the gap in the logic of the ideas at the end of the paragraph and to determine what idea would best fill the gap. The preceding text deals with the critical importance of understanding local customs, and the subsequent sentence suggests that Afghans on the whole are no better and no worse than people anywhere. Only **Option E** makes sense in the context of what comes before and after it; in particular, Stewart's refusal to "sentimentalize" accurately characterizes his assessment of the Afghan people in sentence 11.

- **Option A** is incorrect because nothing in the essay suggests that Stewart was insensitive or ungrateful.
- **Options B** and **C** are both incorrect because each makes an extreme statement about hospitality that runs counter to Stewart's more nuanced analysis.
- **Option D** is incorrect because it does not follow logically from sentence 10.

Strategies for Responding to Paragraph-Improvement Items

- Read the entire essay before answering any questions.
- Make sure the response you choose works in the context of the essay as a whole.
- Review the chart on pages 63 and 64. Many paragraph-improvement items focus on the types of grammar issues that involve multiple sentences, such as problems with pronoun reference and sequence of tense.
- Review the concepts discussed on page 78, which address the types of sentence and paragraph problems particular to this portion of the SAT writing section.
- Aim to spend about a minute reading the paragraph and about 40 seconds on each question. Mark questions that you skip (and be sure to skip the corresponding oval of your answer sheet). Return to these questions if you have time.

The SAT Writing Section
Improving Paragraphs**PRACTICE**

DIRECTIONS: Read the following composition, which represents a student's first draft. Then answer the questions that follow. Some questions may ask you about specific sentences; others may ask about overall organization or paragraph development.

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

Line (1) Growing up, there weren't many kids
5 in my neighborhood, so I passed many a weekend lying on the couch in the den with the cat, watching old films on the movie channel. (2) My grandmother abetted my habit, since she spent each weekend of her childhood watching movies—though in her case at the local cinema. (3) She would pop into the den,
10 check it out, and remark, "Oh, that's Marion Davies—she was William Randolph Hearst's mistress," or "My goodness, George Raft—he always played a gangster." (4) She spoke about these actors with a mixture of familiarity,
15 affection, and disdain, the way other people talk about their neighbors. (5) I quickly mastered the game of "identify the actor." (6) I was aided by the volumes of movie books that my grandfather had given my grandmother for birthdays. (7) I had a friend who had an enormous baseball card collection. (8) I absorbed movie facts the way other kids
20 memorized baseball statistics. (9) At around the age of ten, I started to feel there might be something shameful about my familiarity with film lore. (10) One time, as my friend Debbie and I were watching the TV show "Highway to Heaven" with her family, a familiar (though aged) face appeared as a guest star. (11) Her parents flailed about for the actress's identity, I had to intervene. (12)
35 "That's Dorothy McGuire," I piped up. (13) Blank stares. (14) "You know,

nominated for best actress, for *Gentlemen's Agreement*?" (15) Debbie's parents gave each other significant looks. (16) "Too much television," her father intoned.

1. How should the underlined portion of sentence 1 (reproduced below) be revised?
Growing up, there weren't many kids in my neighborhood, so I passed many a weekend lying on the couch in the den with the cat, watching old films on the movie channel.
(A) (Make no change.)
(B) Growing up, I didn't live in a neighborhood where there were
(C) When I was growing up, there weren't
(D) When growing up, there weren't
(E) I was growing up but there weren't
2. In context, which of the following is the best way to revise sentence 2?
(A) (Make no change.)
(B) Add "Therefore" to the beginning of the sentence.
(C) Change "since she spent" to "since she too had spent."
(D) Replace "weekend of" with "weekend in."
(E) Insert "in" before "watching."

Improving Paragraphs: Practice, *continued*

3. In context, which of the following is the best way to revise sentence 3?
- (A) Add “However” at the beginning of the sentence.
 - (B) Replace “She” with “My grandmother.”
 - (C) Replace “pop into” with “pop in.”
 - (D) Replace “check it out” with “note what I was watching.”
 - (E) Add “would” before “remark.”
4. What is the best way to revise the underlined sections of sentences 5 and 6 (reproduced below)?
- I quickly mastered the game of “identify the actor.” I was aided by the volumes of movie books that my grandfather had given my grandmother for birthdays.*
- (A) I quickly mastered the game of “identify the actor,” aided by
 - (B) I was aided, in quickly mastering the game of “identify the actor,” by
 - (C) I quickly mastered the game of “identify the actor,” and I was aided by
 - (D) I quickly mastered the game of “identify the actor,” aiding
 - (E) As I quickly mastered the game of “identify the actor” I was aided by
5. Which sentence should be deleted from the essay because it destroys the essay’s unity?
- (A) sentence 3
 - (B) sentence 7
 - (C) sentence 8
 - (D) sentence 11
 - (E) sentence 16
6. Which of the following sentences should begin a new paragraph?
- (A) sentence 3
 - (B) sentence 5
 - (C) sentence 9
 - (D) sentence 11
 - (E) sentence 13
7. What is the best way to revise the underlined section of sentence 11 (reproduced below)?
- Her parents flailed about for the actress’s identity, I had to intervene.*
- (A) (Make no revision.)
 - (B) Flailing about for the actress’s identity, I
 - (C) Until her parents flailed about for the actress’s identity, I
 - (D) As her parents flailed about for the actress’s identity I
 - (E) Her parents flailed about for the actress’s identity; I
8. In context, which of the following is the best sentence to insert after sentence 16?
- (A) In that moment, I was proud that I had finally revealed my hidden talent.
 - (B) From that day forward, not wanting to be considered a pathetic couch potato, I hid my voluminous knowledge of Hollywood’s heyday.
 - (C) Then it was time for Debbie and me to get out our sleeping bags and turn out the light.
 - (D) “Highway to Heaven” was a popular television show starring Michael Landon.
 - (E) I’m always surprised at how difficult it seems for some people to identify the actor playing a character on TV, even when the actor is really famous.

Improving Paragraphs: Practice, *continued*

9. Which of the following would be an appropriate topic for the next paragraph?
- (A) a summary of the highlights of Dorothy McGuire's film career
 - (B) a humorous anecdote about the narrator coming to embrace her special knowledge after befriending a group of fellow film buffs
 - (C) an analysis of the way teenagers with arcane knowledge are marginalized and even bullied by their high school peers
 - (D) a lighthearted reminiscence about the time the narrator accidentally broke a window at her friend Debbie's house
 - (E) a comparison between the films of Hollywood's "golden age" and Hollywood's current output
10. In developing the essay, the writer used all of the following strategies EXCEPT
- (A) dialogue
 - (B) humor
 - (C) rhetorical questions
 - (D) figures of speech
 - (E) first-person point of view

Part IV

The SAT Literature Subject Test

Understanding the SAT Literature Subject Test

ABOUT THE SAT LITERATURE SUBJECT TEST

The SAT Literature Subject Test is a test of your ability to read and analyze several literary selections written in English. The literature test is one of a “family” of subject tests that the College Board administers. Though college admissions offices seldom require it specifically, some colleges may use the SAT Literature Subject Test in making decisions about admission or course placement. You may want to talk to your English teacher about whether taking the SAT Literature Subject Test is right for you.

CONTENT OF THE SAT LITERATURE SUBJECT TEST

Literary Selections. The SAT Literature Subject Test includes six to eight literary selections representing a variety of genres, time periods, and cultures. The distribution of selections among these categories is shown below.

Genres	Time Periods	Cultures (Nationalities)
Poetry: about 50%	Pre-1700: 33%	United States: up to 50%
Prose: about 50%	1700–1900: 33%	British: up to 50%
Drama: occasionally included	1900–present: 33%	Other English-speaking Nationalities: up to 20%

Distribution of Items. Each of the six to eight literary selections is followed by four to twelve multiple-choice questions, for a total of sixty questions. You will have sixty minutes to read the selections and answer the sixty questions.

Skills Covered. The questions on the SAT Literature Subject Test are typical literary analysis questions involving standard literary analysis skills and strategies. The skills covered fall into the following general categories:

- **Analyzing Meaning:** identifying theme; analyzing the author’s argument
- **Understanding Form:** identifying genre; analyzing text structure and organization
- **Understanding Tone:** identifying purpose; analyzing stylistic choices of diction (word choice) and syntax
- **Analyzing Narrative Voice:** identifying speaker or narrator; distinguishing between author and narrator/speaker; identifying perspective and attitude
- **Analyzing Author’s Use of Language:** interpreting figures of speech, imagery, and word choice
- **Analyzing Character:** understanding character, motivation, and author’s techniques of characterization
- **Meaning in Context:** interpreting specific words, phrases, or lines of a text

Analyzing the SAT Literature Subject Test

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND ANALYSES

The following pages contain a sample literary selection and several typical literary analysis questions. Each question is followed by an analysis of the correct response and the incorrect answer choices.

Fiddler Jones

The earth keeps some vibration going
There in your heart, and that is you.
And if the people find you can fiddle,
Line Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.
5 What do you see, a harvest of clover?
Or a meadow to walk through to the river?
The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands
For beeves¹ hereafter ready for market;
Or else you hear the rustle of skirts
10 Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.
To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust
Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;²
They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy
Stepping it off, to "Toor-a-Loor."
15 How could I till my forty acres
Not to speak of getting more,
With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos
Stirred in my brain by crows and robins
And the creak of a wind-mill—only these?
20 And I never started to plow in my life
That some one did not stop in the road
And take me away to a dance or picnic.
I ended up with forty acres;
I ended up with a broken fiddle—
25 And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,
And not a single regret.

(Edgar Lee Masters, *Spoon River Anthology*, 1916)

1. **beeves**: beef; cattle

2. **drouth**: drought

1. The title "Fiddler Jones" refers to
 - (A) the person addressed as "you" in the poem
 - (B) a character the speaker admires
 - (C) the poem's speaker
 - (D) a character the speaker uses in a cautionary tale
 - (E) the person to whom the speaker dedicates the poem

Answer: The correct answer is C. This question falls in the category of narrative voice analysis.

Analysis: As the poem unfolds, it becomes clear that the speaker is a music lover who has spent a lifetime struggling against (and giving in to) the temptation of playing instead of working. Line 24 confirms that **Option C** is the best choice.

- Although lines 3 and 4 seem to point to **Option A**, the pronoun shift from *you* to *me* in line 13 suggests that the speaker had previously been generalizing, declaring the credo that guided his own life.
- No evidence supports **Options B, D, or E**.

2. In the context of the poem, lines 23–24 (“I ended up with forty acres;/I ended up with a broken fiddle—”) can be interpreted to mean:
- (A) I ended up materially and spiritually destitute.
 - (B) I prospered as a farmer, but I had to give up my art.
 - (C) Farming and music will both lead to disappointment.
 - (D) I prospered as a farmer and never compromised my art.
 - (E) I didn’t prosper materially, but I fully enjoyed my gift.

Answer: The correct answer is E. This question deals with meaning.

Analysis: Comparing lines 15 and 23 shows that the speaker’s farming career ended where it began, with forty acres. However, the last two lines suggest that he enjoyed himself immensely living the life of a musician. Only **Option E** covers both of these points.

- **Option A** is incorrect because “spiritually destitute” does not match the speaker’s claim in line 26 that he had “not a single regret.” **Option C** can be eliminated for the same reason.
- **Options B and D** are both incorrect because lines 15 and 23 show that the speaker did not prosper as a farmer.

3. The diction of the poem can be described as all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) homespun (B) esoteric
 - (C) sensory (D) concrete
 - (E) informal

Answer: The correct answer is B. This type of question concerns use of language.

Analysis: The various farm-related images can be described as “homespun” (**Option A**); the details used to describe these images are both “concrete” and “sensory” (**Options C and D**); and words like “Stepping it off” are best described as “informal.” Thus, by process of elimination, you can identify **Option B** as the choice that does *not* describe the generally accessible language of the poem.

4. Which of the following details support the interpretation of the speaker as a passive agent of forces beyond his control?
- I. “The earth keeps some vibration going/There in your heart” (lines 1–2)
 - II. “How could I till my forty acres . . . With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos/Stirred in my brain” (lines 15–18)
 - III. “And I never started to plow in my life/That some one did not stop in the road/And take me away to a dance or picnic.” (lines 20–22)
- (A) I only
 - (B) II only
 - (C) III only
 - (D) I and III
 - (E) I, II, and III

Answer: The correct answer is E. This question falls under the categories of narrative voice, character, and meaning-in-context.

Analysis: This item format, in which you must select one or more of the Roman numeral choices, is likely to appear at least once or twice on the SAT Literature Subject Test. In this case, all of the examples fit the criterion, which is whether they support the speaker’s self-presentation as a “passive agent.” **Option E** is correct because it includes all three choices.

Strategies for Responding to the Test Items

The best preparation for the SAT Literature Subject Test is experience in close, critical reading of a variety of English-language literary selections—an experience provided in your high school English classes. In addition to becoming familiar with the literary skills detailed on page 87, you should

- be familiar with basic literary terms such as alliteration, allusion, climax, contrast or opposition, dialect, dialogue, flashback, irony and satire, metaphor, and so on.
- count the number of questions in each section and plan to spend roughly that number of minutes reading that selection and responding to the associated questions. (Plan to spend a few of those minutes reading each selection and less than a minute answering each item.)
- mark items that you find difficult to answer so that you can return to them later if you have time.
- make an educated guess when you don’t know the answer by eliminating answers that you know to be incorrect. If you cannot eliminate any of the incorrect choices, you should probably not guess because incorrect responses are penalized.
- take the practice test in this book. Calculate your **raw score** by giving yourself 1 point for each correct answer and subtracting 1/4 point for each incorrect answer.

Preparing for the SAT Literature Subject Test

Practice Test

DIRECTIONS: This test is composed of literary selections (both poetry and prose, fiction and nonfiction) and questions about their form, style, and content. Read each passage. Then, select the best response to the items that follow, filling in the corresponding space in your answer sheet. Read each item carefully, paying particular attention to words such as LEAST, NOT, and EXCEPT.

QUESTIONS 1–10: Read the following novel excerpt carefully before responding to the items.

<p>Line 5</p>	<p>“Girl number twenty,” said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, “I don’t know that girl. Who is that girl?”</p>	<p>35</p>	<p>“Oh yes, sir.” “Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse.” (Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>“Sissy Jupe, sir,” explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtsying. “Sissy is not a name,” said Mr. Gradgrind. “Don’t call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.”</p>	<p>40</p>	<p>“Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!” said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behoof¹ of all the little pitchers. “Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>“It’s father as calls me Sissy, sir,” returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey. “Then he has no business to do it,” said Mr. Gradgrind. “Tell him he mustn’t. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?”</p>	<p>45</p>	<p>commonest of animals! Some boy’s definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.”</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>“He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir.” Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.</p>	<p>50</p>	<p>The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely white-washed room, irradiated Sissy. For, the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies,</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>“We don’t want to know anything about that, here. You mustn’t tell us about that, here. Your father breaks horses, don’t he?”</p>	<p>55</p>	<p>divided up the center by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the sunny side, came in for the beginning of a sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other</p>
<p>30</p>	<p>“If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.” “You mustn’t tell us about the ring, here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horsebreaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?”</p>	<p>60</p>	<p>side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous color from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired</p>
		<p>65</p>	<p>that the self-same rays appeared to draw</p>

1. behoof: advantage

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

out of him what little color he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of his lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white.

- 70
- 85
1. Mr. Gradgrind's attitude toward Sissy Jupe is best described as
- (A) kindly and encouraging
- (B) demanding but fair
- (C) impatient and dismissive
- (D) unctuous and wheedling
- (E) vengeful and vindictive
2. The author's description of Gradgrind "squarely pointing with his square forefinger" (lines 2–3) underscores Gradgrind's
- (A) social awkwardness
- (B) fondness for exactitude
- (C) tolerance for ambiguity
- (D) love of geometry
- (E) fair and balanced attitude
3. The author uses all of the following details to emphasize the severe atmosphere of the classroom EXCEPT
- (A) "intensely white-washed"
- (B) "'Girl number twenty'"
- (C) "'We don't want to know anything about that, here.'"
- (D) "ray of sunlight"
- (E) "bare windows"
- 80 "Bitzer," said Thomas Gradgrind. "Your definition of a horse."
- 85 "Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth." Thus (and much more) Bitzer.
- "Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind. "You know what a horse is." (Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, 1854)
4. Which of the following pairs express the contrast between Sissy Jupe and Bitzer?
- I. dark . . . light
- II. radiant . . . dull
- III. polite . . . ill-mannered
- (A) I only
- (B) II only
- (C) III only
- (D) I and II
- (E) II and III
5. In line 42, the author most likely calls the students in the classroom "little pitchers"
- (A) because most of the students play baseball after school
- (B) because it was a common endearment in the nineteenth century
- (C) because in the narrator's slangy dialect, "pitchers" refer to *pictures*, indicating that the author views the children as picturesque creatures
- (D) to underscore the commonly held notion that students were empty vessels waiting to be filled with facts
- (E) in reference to the expression "little pitchers have big ears"; Gradgrind implicitly accuses the children of eavesdropping

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

6. The tone of the passage can best be described as
- (A) satirical
 - (B) earnest
 - (C) lighthearted
 - (D) understated
 - (E) generous
7. According to the narrator, Gradgrind probably called on Bitzer after Sissy fails to answer his question because
- (A) Bitzer was illuminated by the same sunbeam that first drew Gradgrind's attention to Sissy
 - (B) Bitzer had been known to answer questions correctly in the past
 - (C) Bitzer enthusiastically volunteered to answer the question
 - (D) Bitzer was seated next to Sissy
 - (E) Bitzer's bright red hair attracted Gradgrind's attention
8. Which of the following are evidently valued in the educational system represented in this passage?
- I. facts and figures
 - II. memorization
 - III. imagination
 - IV. individuality
- (A) I only
 - (B) I and II
 - (C) I, II, and IV
 - (D) II, III, and IV
 - (E) III and IV only
9. Mr. Gradgrind's pronouncement in lines 88–89 ("Now girl number twenty . . . You know what a horse is.") is dubious for all the following reasons EXCEPT:
- (A) Telling students that they know something is not a true measure of their knowledge.
 - (B) Bitzer's definition of a horse is both peculiarly specific and broadly off the mark.
 - (C) Sissy, as the daughter of a horsebreaker, probably already knew more about horses than most.
 - (D) Defining a term with more difficult terms ("Quadruped. Graminivorous.") does little to enlighten young children.
 - (E) Sissy's initial response to Gradgrind's examination shows that she is a poor student, slow to grasp new concepts.
10. The author's purpose in writing the passage is likely to involve all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) amusing the audience
 - (B) exposing the flaws of a certain type of educational system
 - (C) introducing the characters of Gradgrind, Sissy Jupe, and Bitzer
 - (D) making a case against coeducational schools
 - (E) moving the plot forward

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

QUESTIONS 11–16: Read the following poem carefully before responding to the items.

Unnatural Speech

The game has changed
girl/child, no humming
or singing in these halls,
Line long, dark, ending at the desk
5 you want, where you'd sit
adding numbers one by one,
a C.P.A., daisies on your desk.
I study hard
you say, your smile true,
10 like dawn is, fresh, vulnerable,
but my English language scares
you, makes your palms sweat
when you speak before a class
I say my speeches
15 to my dolls
you say. Dolls? The game
has changed, girl/child.
I heard you once singing
to those unblinking eyes
20 lined up on your bed
*Víbora, víbora de la mar,*¹
your words light in your mouth.
Now at twenty
you stand before
25 those dolls tense,
feet together,
tongue thick, dry,
pushing heavy English
words out.
30 In class I hide
my hands behind
my back. They shake.
My voice too.

1. *Víbora, víbora de la mar*: Viper, viper of the sea

From "Unnatural Speech" from *Borders* by Pat Mora. Copyright © 1986 by Pat Mora.

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SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

- I know the new rules,
35 girl/child, one by one,
viboras I've lived with
all my life, learned to hold
firmly behind the head.
If I teach you, will your songs
40 evaporate, like dawn?

(1986)

11. The dual speakers of the poem could plausibly be which of the following?
- I. The girl/child, as a child and a woman
 - II. The girl/child and her older sister
 - III. The girl/child and her non-Spanish-speaking teacher
- (A) II only (B) III only
(C) I and II (D) I and III
(E) I, II, and III
12. Which of the following oppositions is NOT expressed in the poem?
- (A) Spanish/English
(B) childhood/adulthood
(C) play/work
(D) light/heavy
(E) male/female
13. In addition to being a character in a child's song, *vibora* (viper) most likely represents a force that
- (A) empowers the girl/child as she matures
(B) threatens the girl/child's success in the English-dominant culture
(C) demands that the girl/child retain her Spanish-language heritage
(D) makes English-only speakers fearful of the girl/child
(E) makes the speaker proud of her heritage
14. The attitude of the speaker toward the girl/child can be characterized as all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) mocking
(B) admonishing
(C) knowing
(D) playful
(E) protective
15. The title "Unnatural Speech" mainly refers to
- I. the English spoken by the girl/child
 - II. the Spanish used in the child's song
 - III. the combination of English and Spanish known as "Spanglish"
- (A) I only
(B) II only
(C) III only
(D) I and II
(E) II and III
16. In the last two lines of the poem, the speaker metaphorically expresses the fear that the girl/child will
- (A) get bitten by a snake
(B) no longer want to be friends with the speaker
(C) forget the musical language of her childhood
(D) fail to become a CPA
(E) not master the English language

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

QUESTIONS 17–26: Read the following short story excerpt carefully before responding to the items.

A dozen familiar and unfamiliar people sat in a small room on insecure chairs. A pretty woman peered into an open box and made the sign of the cross.

Line 5 About the box were unattractive bunches of fresh and wilted flowers. Judy knew suddenly that this was a coffin and that Uncle Eben was in it. She trailed after the favorite aunt like a young lamb to the slaughter.

10 “Smile down at him, Judy.”

A curious Thing made in the image of an unhappy man lay in a satin-lined casket. If Judy dared touch the smooth, dark cheek, she would find it a brown clay in her hand. She wished she could ask her mother, who alone might understand, whether Uncle Eben was somewhere else and this was a plaster cast.

15 “Go sit by your mother,” whispered the favorite aunt.

Judy tiptoed to the uncertain seat in the front row and sat quietly, her hands folded in her lap and her ankles crossed.

25 Slowly she became aware that the dim blob protruding above the rim of the casket was the tip of a nose. She was bewitched and held and gradually horrified.

30 But her horror was caught away by the violent sound of the father’s sobs. She jerked up her head and stared at him.

In all of her life she had never seen a man cry. To her tears were the weakness of children and women, who had not the courage of men. She was fascinated and appalled. The father’s head wobbled weakly. He made strangled snorts in his throat. Tears streamed down his cheeks

40 and ran into the corners of his mouth. His nose dripped.

She was ashamed. Her own eyes filled with tears. Her body burned. She thought in extremist torture, “My father is weak, and I am the child of my father. . . .”

45 The mother bent to her. “Judy, comfort your father.”

She swayed as if she had been struck. “He musn’t cry like that, Judy.”

50 She raised her sick eyes to her mother’s face. “Mummy, what do I do?”

“Just slip your hand into his. He loves you, Judy.”

That did not move her. A stranger wept beside her. She felt her stomach collapse. With a great effort she kept herself steady. Had the father’s life depended upon it, she could not have stretched out a soothing hand.

55 “Mummy,” she cried, “I can’t!” and burrowed against her.

An oily yellow man in a tight frock coat leaned down to the mother. “Are you pleased with the body?”

60 “He’s beautiful,” said the mother.

“For much or little I turn ’em out the same. I’d appreciate your coming to me whenever—God forbid!—you have to.”

65 He swung out a heavy watch and said humorously, “Our kind of people!”

“Yes. Service was set for three,” said the mother primly.

“Our kind of people,” he repeated.

“That cullud preacher is probably somwheres chewing the rag with Sister Fullbosom.”

70 The mother and undertaker laughed softly.

From “Funeral” by Dorothy West from *The Saturday Evening Quill*, April 1928. Copyright 1928 by Dorothy West. Reproduced by permission of **The Estate of Dorothy West**.

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

17. What type of figure of speech does the author use in lines 8–10 (“She trailed after the favorite aunt like a young lamb to the slaughter.”)?
- (A) metaphor
 - (B) simile
 - (C) personification
 - (D) onomatopoeia
 - (E) hyperbole
18. The first paragraph of the excerpt establishes that Judy is
- (A) a child attending a funeral for the first time
 - (B) a child unfortunately accustomed to attending funerals
 - (C) a clairvoyant with the ability to “see” through a closed casket
 - (D) a foreigner unused to American funeral customs
 - (E) a woman attending the funeral of her fiancé
19. Lines 12–32 (“A curious Thing . . . She jerked up her head and stared at him.”) reveal the transformation of Judy’s feelings from
- (A) horror to acceptance
 - (B) innocence to cynicism
 - (C) jadedness to compassion
 - (D) primness to passion
 - (E) curiosity to horror
20. The passage as a whole is told from the perspective of
- (A) a first-person narrator
 - (B) a third-person-omniscient narrator
 - (C) a third-person-limited narrator, following Judy’s point of view
 - (D) a third-person-limited narrator, following Uncle Eben’s point of view
 - (E) a third-person-limited narrator, following the father’s point of view
21. Upon seeing her father cry, Judy’s own eyes fill with tears because
- (A) she is filled with pity for her father
 - (B) she is deeply ashamed of her father and, by extension, herself
 - (C) she is angry that she has been made to attend the funeral
 - (D) she is angry that no one is trying to comfort her father
 - (E) she is having an allergic reaction to the funeral flowers
22. What appears to be the chief purpose of the passage?
- (A) to expose the hypocrisies inherent in funeral customs
 - (B) to show a man’s reaction to the death of his brother
 - (C) to expose the inequities in the funeral services available to African Americans and white people
 - (D) to reveal a sensitive child’s impressions of a funeral
 - (E) to ridicule a cynical undertaker

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

23. What is the likely reason that even had Judy's "father's life depended upon it, she could not have stretched out a soothing hand"?
- (A) She is now petrified with fear of the body in the casket.
 - (B) She is unprepared to cope with her father's unbridled emotions.
 - (C) She does not really care for her father.
 - (D) She hopes to draw attention away from Uncle Eben and toward herself.
 - (E) Her father is too far down the aisle from where Judy is sitting.
24. All of the following suggest that the mother and the undertaker are less affected by the proceedings than Judy is EXCEPT:
- (A) The undertaker jokes with the mother.
 - (B) The undertaker solicits the mother for her business in the future.
 - (C) The mother and undertaker note with annoyance that the preacher is late.
 - (D) The mother and undertaker exchange pleasantries about the body's appearance.
 - (E) The mother asks the undertaker about his family's health.
25. The tone of the passage is best described as
- (A) candid
 - (B) nostalgic
 - (C) urgent
 - (D) bitter
 - (E) didactic
26. In developing the passage, the author uses all of the following techniques EXCEPT
- (A) dialogue
 - (B) dialect
 - (C) figures of speech
 - (D) sensory details
 - (E) foreshadowing

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

QUESTIONS 27–33: Read the following poem carefully before responding to the items.

Before I got my eye put out
I liked as well to see—
As other Creatures, that have Eyes
Line And know no other way—

5 But were it told to me—Today—
That I might have the sky
For mine—I tell you that my Heart
Would split, for size of me—

10 The Meadows—mine—
The Mountains—mine—
All Forests—Stintless¹ Stars—
As much of Noon as I could take
Between my finite eyes—

15 The Motions of the Dipping Birds—
The Morning's Amber Road—
For mine—to look at when I liked—
The News would strike me dead—

20 So safer—guess—with just my soul
Upon the Window pane—
Where other Creatures put their eyes—
Incautious—of the Sun—

27. The speaker of the poem might plausibly be any of the following EXCEPT
- (A) blind as the result of an accident
 - (B) visually impaired in one eye
 - (C) a lover of nature
 - (D) highly perceptive
 - (E) blind from birth

28. In lines 5–7 (“But were it told to me—Today—/That I might have the sky/For mine—”), the speaker considers the hypothetical situation of
- (A) losing another eye
 - (B) having vision restored
 - (C) becoming master of the universe
 - (D) having a lost love return
 - (E) winning the lottery

1. stintless: unending; limitless

From “Before I got my eye put out” from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, J288. Copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Published by The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. Reproduced by permission of **Harvard University Press and the Trustees of Amherst College.**

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

29. In lines 9 and 10 (“The Meadows—mine—/The Mountains—mine—”), the speaker uses the metaphor of ownership to express the idea of
- (A) physically seeing
 - (B) permanent blindness
 - (C) heartbreak
 - (D) material wealth
 - (E) death
30. Which lines suggest that the speaker has a special, inner vision?
- I. “I liked as well to see—/As other Creatures, that have Eyes/And know no other way—” (lines 2–4)
 - II. “The Motions of the Dipping Birds—/The Morning’s Amber Road—” (lines 14–15)
 - III. “So safer—guess—with just my soul/Upon the Window pane—” (lines 18–19)
- (A) I only
 - (B) II only
 - (C) III only
 - (D) I and III
 - (E) II and III
31. All of the following lines contain alliteration EXCEPT
- (A) “Before I got my eye put out” (line 1)
 - (B) “The Mountains—mine—” (line 10)
 - (C) “All Forests—Stintless Stars—” (line 11)
 - (D) “The News would strike me dead—” (line 17)
 - (E) “So safer—guess—with just my soul—” (line 18)
32. One theme of the poem appears to be that
- (A) nature contains constant threats to one’s physical safety
 - (B) fighting against one’s physical limitations is an insult to God
 - (C) society can be intolerant of people with physical disabilities
 - (D) the soul’s ability to see is better than the eyes’
 - (E) life is full of wrenching dilemmas
33. Which of the following pairs characterize the contrast between the diction of lines 9–17 and 18–21, respectively.
- (A) dramatic vs. restrained
 - (B) cautious vs. bombastic
 - (C) formal vs. informal
 - (D) cultured vs. vulgar
 - (E) literal vs. figurative

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

QUESTIONS 34–43: Before responding to the questions, read the following excerpt from a philosophical treatise carefully.

In the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence;¹ thirdly, glory.

5 The first, makes men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the
10 second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons, or by reflection in their kindred, their friends,
15 their nation, their profession, or their name.

Hereby it is manifest,² that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that
20 condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man. For *war*, consists not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle
25 is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of time, is to be considered in the nature of war; as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather, lies not in a shower or two of
30 rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: So the nature of war, consists not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary.
35 All other time is *peace*.

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withal.³ In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious⁴ building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things; that nature should thus dissociate,⁵ and render men apt to invade, and destroy one another: and he may therefore, not trusting to this inference, made from the passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him therefore consider with himself, when taking a journey, he arms himself, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his house he locks his chests; and this when he knows there be laws, and public officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall be done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects, when he

1. **diffidence:** insecurity

2. **Hereby it is manifest:** Now it is obvious

3. **withal** (*archaic*): therewith

4. **commodious:** comfortable and spacious

5. **dissociate:** split (men) apart

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

- rides armed; of his fellow citizens, when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires, and other
- 75
34. In lines 1–16 (“In the nature of man . . . or their name”), the author employs the rhetorical devices of
- (A) allusion and repetition
 - (B) parallelism and rhetorical questions
 - (C) repetition and rhetorical questions
 - (D) parallelism and repetition
 - (E) analogy and allusion
35. According to the passage, what causes men to use violence for “trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons, or by reflection in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name” (lines 11–16)?
- (A) competition
 - (B) insecurity
 - (C) glory
 - (D) all of the above
 - (E) none of the above
36. In lines 22–34, the author draws an analogy between war and
- (A) time
 - (B) foul weather
 - (C) peace
 - (D) a shower
 - (E) a battle
- 80 passions of man, are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions, that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them; which till laws be made they cannot know: nor can any law be made, till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.
- 85
- (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651)
37. According to the author's argument in lines 17–22, what people lack in a time of war is
- (A) a unifying power that everyone respects
 - (B) a long stretch of fair weather
 - (C) the ability to rely on their own inventiveness
 - (D) a conventional notion of time
 - (E) sufficient food, shelter, and clothing
38. According to the author, what makes a man's life “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (lines 54–55)?
- (A) the unchecked spread of infection, disease, poverty, hunger, and illiteracy
 - (B) the state of living under the power of an authoritarian regime
 - (C) the constant state of actual war, where every man is against every man
 - (D) the simple facts of the human condition
 - (E) the state of living under no security other than what people can provide for themselves

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

39. In lines 56–78 (“It may seem strange to some . . . Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words?”), the author employs the rhetorical strategy of
- (A) attacking the person (ad hominem)
 - (B) addressing an audience objection
 - (C) using an emotional appeal
 - (D) citing statistical evidence
 - (E) playing the devil’s advocate
40. What observation does the author make about men in lines 63–75 (“Let him therefore consider with himself . . . what opinion he has . . . of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests.”)?
- (A) War makes enemies even out of brothers.
 - (B) People should not rely on their law enforcement officials.
 - (C) Even in times of peace, men do not trust each other.
 - (D) Family members are even more likely to steal from each other than strangers are.
 - (E) People who live in remote areas rely more on themselves than on their government.
41. What appears to be the author’s attitude toward humans?
- (A) They need laws to control their natural passions.
 - (B) They are innately sinful and ungovernable.
 - (C) They are largely destined to suffer dismal existences.
 - (D) Some are better than others, and those who are should be in charge.
 - (E) They are born in a state of innocence that is inevitably corrupted by society.
42. In context, lines 84–86 (“...nor can any law be made, till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it”) suggest that the author believes that
- (A) direct democracy is the only fair form of government
 - (B) men should follow their naturally good intuitions
 - (C) both men and women should have the right to vote
 - (D) men should have some say in determining who makes their laws
 - (E) ignorance of the law is no excuse for committing a crime
43. The text’s overall organization depends on which of the following elements?
- I. narration
 - II. definition
 - III. cause-and-effect analysis
- (A) I only
 - (B) II only
 - (C) I and II
 - (D) II and III
 - (E) I, II, and III

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

QUESTIONS 44–51: Read the following poem carefully before responding to the questions that follow.

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o’ertake me in my way,
Line Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
5 ’Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace:
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;
10 Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:
The offender’s sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence’s cross.
Ah! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.
(William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 34," c. 1600)

44. What, literally, does the speaker seem to address in the first four lines of the poem?
- (A) the sun
 - (B) a lover
 - (C) storm clouds
 - (D) bravery
 - (E) a weather report
45. The object of the speaker’s frustration in lines 1–4 is most likely a metaphor for
- (A) the sun
 - (B) a lover
 - (C) storm clouds
 - (D) bravery
 - (E) a weather report
46. In the poem’s metaphorical context, what do “base clouds” (line 3) and “rotten smoke” (line 4) most likely represent?
- (A) air pollution
 - (B) inclement weather
 - (C) a lover’s bad temper
 - (D) a fog of confusion
 - (E) a lover’s broken promise to quit smoking
47. According to the speaker, it is not enough that “through the cloud thou break,/To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face” (lines 5–6) because
- (A) the speaker has caught a cold
 - (B) the speaker is irreparably heartbroken
 - (C) someone else has already attended to the speaker’s needs
 - (D) the speaker’s hair and clothes are soaked
 - (E) the speaker still feels disgraced by the initial offense

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

48. In the context of the poem, the phrase “give physic to” (line 9) probably means, literally,
- (A) give physical form to
 - (B) quantify in a mathematical formula for
 - (C) give voice to
 - (D) give medical attention to
 - (E) provide a mirror image of
49. In line 13, “those tears are pearl” is an example of
- (A) alliteration
 - (B) metaphor
 - (C) simile
 - (D) personification
 - (E) hyperbole
50. In the context of the poem, line 14 (“And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.”) is best interpreted as:
- (A) “Your tears absolve you of your guilt.”
 - (B) “You must give up your pearls to make up for your transgression.”
 - (C) “Your pearls can be exchanged for my good will.”
 - (D) “Your tears are a form of emotional blackmail.”
 - (E) “The wealthy buy forgiveness by making donations to the Church.”
51. The tone of the poem is best characterized as
- (A) apologetic and remorseful
 - (B) giddy and optimistic
 - (C) pouting and playful
 - (D) bitter and hopeless
 - (E) joyous and reverent

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

QUESTIONS 52–60: Before responding to the questions, read the following excerpt from a novel carefully.

In their village, the tailors used to be cobblers; that is, their family belonged to the Chamaar caste of tanners and leather-workers. But long ago, long before
Line 5 Omprakash was born, when his father, Narayan, and his uncle, Ishvar, were still young boys of ten and twelve, the two were sent by their father to be apprenticed as tailors.

10 Their father's friends feared for the family. "Dukhi Mochi has gone mad," they lamented. "With wide-open eyes he is bringing destruction upon his household." And consternation was
15 general throughout the village: someone had dared to break the timeless chain of caste, retribution was bound to be swift.

Dukhi Mochi's decision to turn his sons into tailors was indeed courageous, considering that the prime of his own life had been spent in obedient compliance with the traditions of the caste system. Like his forefathers before him, he had accepted from childhood the occupation
20 preordained for his present incarnation.

Dukhi Mochi was five years old when he had begun to learn the Chamaar vocation at his father's side. With a very small Muslim population in the area,
30 there was no slaughterhouse nearby where the Chamaars could obtain hides. They had to wait until a cow or buffalo died a natural death in the village. Then the Chamaars would be summoned to remove the carcass. Sometimes the
35 carcass was given free, sometimes they had to pay, depending on whether the animal's upper-caste owner had been able to extract enough free labor from the

40 Chamaars during the year.

The Chamaars skinned the carcass, ate the meat, and tanned the hide, which was turned into sandals, whips, harnesses, and waterskins. Dukhi learned to
45 appreciate how dead animals provided his family's livelihood. And as he mastered the skills, imperceptibly but relentlessly Dukhi's own skin became impregnated with the odor that was part of his father's
50 smell, the leather-worker's stink that would not depart even after he had washed and scrubbed in the all-cleansing river.

Dukhi did not realize his pores had imbibed the fumes till his mother, hugging him one day, wrinkled her nose and said, her voice a mix of pride and
55 sorrow, "You are becoming an adult, my son, I can sniff the change."

60 For a while afterwards, he was constantly lifting his forearm to his nose to see if the odor still lingered. He wondered if flaying would get rid of it. Or did it go deeper than the skin? He pricked himself to smell his blood but the test was
65 inconclusive, the little ruby at his fingertip being an insufficient sample. And what about muscle and bone, did the stink lurk in them too? Not that he wanted
70 it gone; he was happy then to smell like his father.

Besides tanning and leather-working, Dukhi learned what it was to be a Chamaar, an untouchable in village
75 society. No special instruction was necessary for this part of his education.

From *A Fine Balance*, a novel by Rohinton Mistry. Copyright © 1996 by Rohinton Mistry.
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SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

Like the filth of dead animals which covered him and his father as they

80 worked, the ethos of the caste system was smeared everywhere.

(1995)

52. Dukhi Mochi apprentices his two sons to be tailors because
- (A) there is no work for tanners or cobblers in the village
 - (B) he wants to provide them with a better livelihood than the one he had
 - (C) his family has been banished from the village by the upper-caste landlords
 - (D) the upper-caste landlords have an increasing need for the services of a village tailor
 - (E) a religious conversion has prompted him to forswear handling animal carcasses
53. The villagers greet Dukhi Mochi's decision to apprentice his sons to a tailor with
- (A) incredulity and fear
 - (B) admiration and envy
 - (C) threats and intimidation
 - (D) stoic pride
 - (E) nonjudgmental passivity
54. Which of the following best illuminates the meaning of the term *caste*?
- (A) “. . . when his father, Narayan, and his uncle, Ishvar, were still young boys of ten and twelve, the two were sent by their father to be apprenticed as tailors.”
 - (B) “Like his forefathers before him, he had accepted from childhood the occupation preordained for his present incarnation.”
 - (C) “Then the Chamaars would be summoned to remove the carcass.”
 - (D) “Dukhi learned to appreciate how dead animals provided his family's livelihood.”
 - (E) “For a while afterwards, he was constantly lifting his forearm to his nose to see if the odor still lingered.”
55. From lines 28–33 (“With a very small Muslim population . . . death in the village”), it can be inferred that
- I. the Chamaars have driven the Muslims out of the area to avoid competition
 - II. the Chamaars live in a community that proscribes the slaughter of animals
 - III. much of the Chamaar's ability to provide for themselves is left to chance
- (A) I only
 - (B) II only
 - (C) III only
 - (D) I and II
 - (E) II and III

SAT Literature Subject Test: Practice Test, *continued*

56. The explanation of how the dead animal's owner decides whether to make the Chamaars pay for the carcass serves to
- (A) show how Dukhi Mochi became a skilled negotiator
 - (B) demonstrate the effectiveness of the barter system in a village setting
 - (C) reveal one way in which the Chamaars tricked the local elite into providing free carcasses
 - (D) show how members of the upper caste exploited the Chamaars
 - (E) illustrate the typical generosity of the upper-caste owners
57. Dukhi Mochi's mother is ambivalent when she notices her son's smell because even though she
- (A) enjoys the odor associated with Chamaars, she objects to the use of animal hides
 - (B) is proud that he is maturing, she is sad about the difficult life he will lead
 - (C) is proud that her son has learned a trade, she is sad that he will soon be leaving their village
 - (D) is proud of his rebelling against caste, she is afraid of the consequences
 - (E) is happy about the wealth her son will amass, she is repelled by the repugnant odor associated with his trade
58. The narrator compares "the ethos of the caste system" to the "filth of dead animals which covered [Dukhi Mochi] and his father as they worked" (lines 77–80) for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:
- (A) The ethos of the caste system pervaded the entire village.
 - (B) The ethos of the caste system was, in its essence, morally repugnant.
 - (C) The ethos of the caste system was oppressive, especially to members of the lower caste.
 - (D) Dukhi Mochi and his father could not avoid the ethos of the caste system.
 - (E) Though abused by some, the caste system had a positive ethos.
59. The author's attitude toward Dukhi Mochi is best described as
- (A) scornful
 - (B) condescending
 - (C) reverent
 - (D) admiring
 - (E) incredulous
60. Within the context of the novel, this passage evidently represents
- (A) the climax
 - (B) the epilogue
 - (C) a flashback
 - (D) the antagonist's first appearance
 - (E) a lyrical digression

Part V

Preparing for the ACT

Understanding the ACT Assessment English Test

SKILLS COVERED

The items on the ACT Assessment English Test deal with usage/mechanics and rhetorical skills. The subcategories for these areas are shown in bold in the left column of the chart. The topics shown in italics are not exhaustive. In grammar and usage, for example, a wide variety of topics will be covered on the test.

USAGE/MECHANICS SKILL	PROBLEM SENTENCE	CORRECTION/REVISION
Punctuation		
<i>using commas, colons, dashes, periods, and semicolons</i>	We were told to find <u>the following items</u> , a ladybug, an acorn, and a cloverleaf.	We were told to find the following items: a ladybug, an acorn, and a cloverleaf.
<i>using apostrophes, quotation marks, and exclamation points</i>	<u>Your</u> never too old to learn how to use a computer.	You're never too old to learn how to use a computer.
Grammar and Usage		
<i>agreement (subject-verb; pronoun-antecedent)</i>	<u>Everyone</u> made sure their porches were swept and their curtains were drawn.	All the neighbors made sure their porches were swept and their curtains were drawn.
<i>case</i>	My brother and <u>me</u> taught ourselves to put up a tent.	My brother and I taught ourselves to put up a tent.
<i>verb usage</i>	Every one of the architect's buildings <u>are</u> listed as a historical landmark.	Every one of the architect's buildings is listed as a historical landmark.
Sentence Structure		
<i>comma splices, run-ons, and fragments</i>	The nation struggled during the <u>Great Depression</u> , too many people were unemployed.	The nation struggled during the Great Depression; too many people were unemployed.
<i>placement of modifiers</i>	<u>I spotted a roadrunner driving on Route 66.</u>	Driving on Route 66, I spotted a roadrunner.
RHETORICAL SKILL	PROBLEM SENTENCE	CORRECTION/REVISION
Style		
<i>word choice</i>	The child's uncanny ability to spell complicated words brought her national <u>infamy</u> .	The child's uncanny ability to spell complicated words brought her national fame .
<i>clarity</i>	<u>The wrong conclusions about the experiment were drawn by me.</u>	I drew the wrong conclusions about the experiment.
Organization	Organization questions deal with the logical order of ideas. Although some questions may involve a single underlined transition, such as <i>however</i> , you may need to take the entire passage into account to determine whether that transition is appropriate.	
Writing Strategies	These types of questions require you to consider the impact of a certain revision on the purpose, audience, or unity of a passage.	

Analyzing the ACT Assessment English Test

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND ANALYSES

The next pages contain a portion of a typical ACT Assessment English Test passage along with several sample questions. Each paragraph is followed by a discussion of the related questions and answers.

Many communities around the country are debating whether or not to enact helmet laws for (1) bicyclists, these laws would require riders to wear helmets while riding on public roads. As a result, riders of all ages are expressing clear opinions about the issue.

1. A. NO CHANGE
B. bicyclists. These
C. bicyclists; and these
D. bicyclists these

Answer: The correct answer is B. This is a question about sentence structure and punctuation.

Analysis: **Option B** corrects the comma splice in the underlined portion by breaking the two independent clauses into two sentences.

- **Option A** is incorrect because it allows the comma splice to stand.
- **Option C** is incorrect because a coordinating conjunction is not necessary when a semicolon is used to connect two independent clauses.
- **Option D** results in a fused sentence, another grammatical taboo.

Many adult bicyclists feel that their right to make personal decisions (2) are infringed upon by the law. They feel that, as adults, they should be free to decide when and if they need to wear a helmet. They object to the possibility

2. F. NO CHANGE
G. being
H. was
J. is

Answer: The correct answer is J. This is a question about usage.

Analysis: **Option J** is the only form of the verb that matches the subject in number and keeps the paragraph in the present tense.

- **Option F** is incorrect because *are* does not agree in number with the singular subject *right*.
- **Option G** is incorrect because *being* is not a verb but a participle; its use would result in a fragment.
- **Option H** is incorrect because the composition employs the present tense throughout.

of being ticketed by a (3) cop merely for having their heads exposed. Many adults who feel this way, however, also understand that requiring young cyclists to wear helmets makes sense. 4

3. A. NO CHANGE
B. policeman
C. police officer
D. police

Answer: The correct answer is C. This is a question about style.

Analysis: **Option C** is the only option that matches the tone of the essay and follows the conventions of standard English usage.

- **Option A** is incorrect because the word *cop* is too slangy for the relatively formal tone of the essay.
- **Option B** is incorrect because the police comprise both male and female officers.
- **Option D** is incorrect because *police*, in standard usage, refers collectively to all police officers or to a police department, not to a single officer.

4. Assuming all of the following sentences are true, which would most logically serve as the final sentence in the paragraph?

- | | |
|--|---|
| F. These are the same types who object to seatbelt laws for automobile operators. | H. Some people advocate bicycle safety training for all young bicyclists. |
| G. They understand the need to protect youngsters until they are old enough to make their own decisions. | J. These people evidently have no sense of the inherent hypocrisy in their arguments. |

Answer: The correct answer is G. This is a writing-strategies item. Unlike the previous items, this item includes a particular question and does not refer to an underlined portion of text but to the boxed number 4, which appears at the end of the paragraph.

Analysis: **Option G** is the only choice that follows logically from the preceding sentence without violating the overarching idea of the paragraph or the purpose of the essay.

- **Option F** is a poor choice because it makes a rather broad claim that has no logical connection to the sentence before it and seems out of step with the evenhanded tone of the essay.
- **Option H** is incorrect because although it connects to the preceding sentence, it makes an unnecessary departure from the paragraph's focus.
- **Option J** is an inappropriate choice because its hostile tone is out of step with the essay's balanced perspective.

(5) Furthermore, supporters of the laws point to the effectiveness of seatbelt laws in saving lives and preventing injuries in automobile accidents. They point out that accidents involving bicycles and cars almost always have worse results when the cyclists do not wear helmets. They argue that the cost to the community in helping helmetless riders recover from accidents is too great and that the benefits of preventing head injuries in cyclists offset any infringement of personal rights.

5. A. NO CHANGE
B. Consequently,
C. Nevertheless,
D. In contrast,

Answer: The correct answer is D. This is an organization question.

Analysis: **Option D** is the only option that accurately reflects the basic comparison-contrast structure of the essay.

- **Option A** (the transition *Furthermore*) suggests that the subsequent text will consist of an elaboration on the preceding text.
- **Option B** (*Consequently*) suggests that the effect of the preceding paragraph is about to be described.
- **Option C** (*Nevertheless*) suggests that an unexpected twist on the topic in the previous paragraph is about to be discussed

Question 6 refers to the passage as a whole.

6. Suppose the writer’s purpose is to persuade readers to adopt the helmet laws. Does the essay in its current state fulfill this purpose?
- | | |
|--|---|
| F. Yes; the writer explicitly takes a pro-helmet position in the first paragraph. | H. No; the writer fails to support the pro-helmet position with sound evidence. |
| G. Yes; the writer uses emotional language to advocate subtly for the pro-helmet camp. | J. No; the writer presents a balanced overview of both sides of the debate. |

Answer: The correct answer is J. This type of “passage-as-a-whole” question appears at the end of some, but not all, question sets.

Analysis: Since **Option J** most accurately describes the essay, the writer would have to make substantial revisions to change the essay from an informative to a persuasive one.

- **Option F** is a false statement; nowhere does the writer take an explicit pro-helmet position.
- **Option G** is also false. Throughout the essay the writer's language is balanced and unemotional.
- **Option H** is incorrect. The writer does not support a pro-helmet position because no such position has been taken.

Strategies for Responding to ACT Assessment English Test Items

The following strategies can help you succeed on the English test portion of the ACT.

- The ACT Assessment English Test consists of five passages, each followed by 15 questions. **You have 9 minutes to complete each passage and its question set.** Plan to spend a minute or two skimming the entire passage before you begin answering questions (because some questions require you to consider the essay's overall tone or the context of a word or phrase). Then you will have about 30 seconds to answer each question.
- Before answering a question, even a seemingly simple item involving one underlined word, read a sentence or two beyond the item. For example, to correctly answer an item involving an underlined verb, you may need to take into account the verb tense of the paragraph as a whole to determine whether the verb's tense is correct.
- Always check to see whether there is a question associated with an underlined item. Be on the lookout for capitalized words such as EXCEPT, NOT, and LEAST in question stems, because in some cases your task may be to identify the *least* appropriate substitute for the underlined passage.
- Keep in mind that in most cases there is no question associated with an item number. For these items your job is to identify the *best* substitute for the underlined passage or select NO CHANGE if the passage is correct as is.
- When selecting a substitute for an underlined portion of text, read the sentence (and the subsequent sentence) with your answer choice in place before making your final selection.
- When a usage or mechanics question appears in the same sentence as a rhetorical-skills question, answer the usage/mechanics question first, even it comes second in the number order.
- Remember that some passages have a deliberately informal tone; in answering questions about style, don't assume that the correct answer is the most formal one.

Preparing for the ACT

The ACT Assessment English Test

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: In the following four passages, words and phrases are numbered and underlined. In the right-hand column are numbered items matching the numbers in the text, each followed by four alternatives to the underlined text. For most items, your task is to choose the response that corrects an error in usage or mechanics, represents a better expression of the underlined text, or improves the style or tone of the underlined text. In these types of questions, the first option is always “NO CHANGE.” In some cases, you will be asked a question about the underlined text. Other questions, sometimes identified by a boxed number, will ask you about a paragraph or the passage as a whole. Because some questions require you to take in the entire context of the passage, you should read through the whole passage once before you begin marking your answers.

PASSAGE I**Queen Bees and Worker Bees****[1]**

Fairy tales and movies have shaped our ideas of what a queen’s existence is (1) like but for the queen honeybee, life can be quite tedious. The queen bee, like a human queen, does get the best food and has hundreds of attendants to groom and provide for her, (2) unless her life is extremely restricted.

[2]

(3) Talk about a gilded cage. The queen never leaves the hive she was born in except to

relocate to another (4) hive when a new queen is about to emerge. When this happens, the mother queen takes flight. However, she hardly gets to enjoy the fresh air as thousands of worker bees and up to a thousand drones surround her in a

1. A. NO CHANGE
B. like, but for the queen honeybee,
C. like but, for the queen honeybee
D. like, but for the queen, honeybee
2. F. NO CHANGE
G. until
H. therefore,
J. but
3. Which choice is the most appropriate first sentence for paragraph 2?
A. NO CHANGE
B. The hive is like a really small castle whose monarch is always female.
C. One way in which the queen is restricted is in her movements.
D. Honeybees are model social animals.
4. F. NO CHANGE
G. hive; when
H. hive. When
J. hive which is when

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

swarm designed (5) not only to be protective of her and also to be her escort to the new location.

- 5. A. NO CHANGE
- B. not only to be protective of her but also to be her escort
- C. to be protective of her and escort her
- D. to protect her and escort her

[3]

(6) Once established in the new hive, the queen continues to spend every day of her adult

- 6. F. NO CHANGE
- G. Since she establishes herself
- H. First, she establishes herself
- J. Although she is established

life laying eggs that (7) produces worker bees, drones, and eventually a successor—a new queen. The queen bee is the only female capable

- 7. A. NO CHANGE
- B. will produce
- C. produced
- D. had produced

of producing (8) eggs being why she is so valuable to the hive. The average queen bee can produce an egg every thirty seconds—up to 2,500 eggs per day—and (9) living up to eight years.

- 8. F. NO CHANGE
 - G. eggs which are why
 - H. eggs, being why
 - J. eggs, which is why
- 9. A. NO CHANGE
 - B. live
 - C. can have lived
 - D. was living

[4]

(10) Most of the bees that emerge from the eggs the queen lays will be worker bees. Worker bees are females that cannot reproduce. These bees live only about six weeks but are responsible for doing all the tasks that keep the

- 10. F. NO CHANGE
- G. Being in the majority of the bees born from the eggs laid by the queen are the worker bees.
- H. Born from the eggs that the queen lays, worker bees form the largest portion of the bees.
- J. Emergent from the queen's eggs are mainly the bees designated as workers.

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

hive viable. (11) Be careful around them, because they can sting. They collect food—nectar, pollen, and honeydew—from nearby flowers and plants. And of course, they cater to the queen. One of the tasks in caring for the

queen is to produce royal jelly. (12) A thick, white, oily substance that is rich in protein, worker bees produce it in their glands and it is reserved for the queen bee and the young larvae that may become queens. [13, 14]

11. In this paragraph, the writer intends to list some of the tasks of the worker bees. This sentence should represent the first task. If all of the options are true, which choice would best fulfill the writer's intention?
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. They build and repair the hive with a waxy substance that forms on their abdomens.
 - C. Without worker bees, the hive could not function.
 - D. Unlike honeybees, bumblebees do not have the ability to sting.
12. F. NO CHANGE
- G. Produced in the glands of worker bees is a thick, white substance that is rich in protein and which
 - H. A thick, white, oily substance that is rich in protein, royal jelly is produced in the glands of worker bees and
 - J. Royal jelly is produced in the glands of worker bees, a thick, white substance that is rich in protein and
13. During the revision process, the writer remembers to add to paragraph 4 a sentence expressing an important piece of information: *They produce honey.* After which sentence would this new sentence be most logical?
- A. the first
 - B. the second
 - C. the fifth
 - D. the last
14. In some ways paragraph 4 departs from the essay's focus on the queen honeybee. How can the writer bring paragraph 4 back to the essay's main focus?
- F. Revise the beginning of the paragraph to emphasize the queen bee's preeminent role in the worker bees' existence.
 - G. Add this sentence: *Another job of the workers is to keep the hive at a constant temperature of 93°F (34°C).*
 - H. Change the entire focus of the paragraph to deal with the drones instead of the worker bees.
 - J. Move paragraph 4 to follow the introduction.

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued***Question 15 refers to Passage I as a whole.**

15. Which characteristic feature of a conventional expository essay does this composition lack?
- A. an attention-grabbing beginning
 - B. a relatively formal tone
 - C. third-person point of view
 - D. a concluding paragraph

Passage II**After the Flood****[1]**

It was still dark outside when the van pulled up in front of the school to collect a dozen sleepy teenagers. We had volunteered to help rebuild a house (16) being devastated by flooding last spring. Wearing old jeans and sweatshirts that would soon become grubby with sawdust, (17) the van was soon loaded with us students and with our art teacher, Mr. Pelosi.

[2]

As we fumbled for seats, Mr. Pelosi thanked us for showing up and (18) promised that there would be breakfast at the site. In the meantime, he wanted to review our work for the day. Mr. Pelosi shouted over the noise of the bus, “Thanks to help from local businesses and volunteers like you, the flooded houses will get rebuilt over the next couple of weeks. Families (19) who’s lost everything will get their houses back (20) on time for Thanksgiving.” A cheer

- 16. F. NO CHANGE
- G. been
- H. that had been
- J. which has been
- 17. A. NO CHANGE
- B. we piled into the van
- C. we were piling into the van
- D. soon the van was loaded with us students and
- 18. F. NO CHANGE
- G. promising that there would be
- H. promised that there will be
- J. promising that there will be
- 19. A. NO CHANGE
- B. whose
- C. whom
- D. who
- 20. F. NO CHANGE
- G. on time by
- H. in time for
- J. in time with

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

(21) rised from the back of the van.

21. A. NO CHANGE
B. arose
C. risen
D. raised

[3]

(22) When we got to the site I was

22. F. NO CHANGE
G. When we got to the site.
H. When we got to the site;
J. When we got to the site,

(23) discouraged to see only a square, white concrete foundation in the middle of a muddy lot. There was still so much to do. As we picked

23. Three of the choices suggest that the narrator experienced dismay upon first seeing the construction site. Which choice does NOT carry that connotation?
A. NO CHANGE
B. surprised
C. crestfallen
D. disappointed

up our safety gear and hammers, (24) a man explained how to use a tool called a level.

24. Assuming that all of the options below are true, which would be the most appropriate in terms of maintaining a consistent tone and adding narrative detail?
F. NO CHANGE
G. someone
H. a gruff older man named Chico
J. an old crank name of Chico

It was a bar with a liquid-filled tube in the center. [25] When the level was placed against something perfectly vertical or horizontal, the bubble lined up exactly between two lines. Hillie and I hammered away for what seemed like hours.

25. At this point the writer wants to add a sentence that helps improve the coherence of the paragraph. Which option below is the best choice?
A. Inside the tube was a little oval bubble.
B. This man did not seem accustomed to explaining how things worked.
C. There was a thing in the middle that wobbled.
D. Other tools on the site included a circular saw and a nail gun.

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

When we finished, our arms were sore, (26) and we had built the frame for a whole wall, and it was perfectly level.

[4]

Once the bus was headed toward the site, Mr. Pelosi reminded us of some safety tips. (27) Helmets should always be worn by us while on-site and safety goggles when using any tools, including hammers. Then he divided us up into teams. My friend Hillie and I were on the blue team. We had hoped to be able to use some cool electric tools; (28) instead we would be

hammering pieces of wood together to make a frame. [29]

[5]

Since that day, other crews have finished the framing. The blue team is scheduled to install the sheetrock. [30]

26. F. NO CHANGE
G. but
H. so
J. after
27. A. NO CHANGE
B. While on-site, helmets should always be worn by us
C. Helmets while on-site should always be worn by us
D. We should always wear helmets while on-site
28. F. NO CHANGE
G. in addition,
H. nevertheless,
J. and
29. Given the narrative structure of the composition, which would be the best placement of paragraph 4?
A. NO CHANGE
B. after paragraph 1
C. after paragraph 2
D. after paragraph 5
30. Assuming one of this composition's goals is to reveal the personal significance of an experience, which of the following closing sentences would best help the writer achieve that goal?
F. Even if that involves a lot of dust and no power tools, I'll take pride in doing my part.
G. I don't know whether that same man will be there to help next time or not.
H. Sheetrock is a plaster-based material used for walls.
J. I don't know whether the family will be able to move in on schedule or not.

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

Passage III

The Art of Kabuki

[1]

Kabuki is considered one of Japan's most (31) treasured and cherished forms of theater, but it has its origins in street theater and was nearly outlawed twice. Kabuki is a stylized brand of theater that (32) feature lavish costumes, mime, choreographed dance movements, and traditional music performed on stringed instruments, flutes, and drums. Kabuki plays are (33) based on: historical events, folk tales, and original stories about doomed love affairs, often between people of different classes. Some plays are epic in (34) scope, while others feature a single character undergoing a personal and emotional transformation.

[2]

(35) Near a shrine, (36) the female dancer and Buddhist priestess, Okuni, staged the first kabuki performance in the early seventeenth century in a ravine. Before then, Japanese

31. All of the following options contain unnecessary repetition EXCEPT
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. customary and traditional
 - C. traditional and cherished
 - D. cherished and beloved
32. F. NO CHANGE
- G. features
 - H. featured
 - J. featuring
33. A. NO CHANGE
- B. based on—historical events
 - C. based, on historical events
 - D. based on historical events,
34. Each of the following is an acceptable substitute for the underlined words EXCEPT
- F. scope, but others
 - G. scope, although others
 - H. scope; therefore, others
 - J. scope; others, however,
35. The best place for the underlined phrase would be
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. after the phrase *in a ravine*.
 - C. after the word *Okuni*.
 - D. after the word *performance*.
36. F. NO CHANGE
- G. the female, dancer, and Buddhist priestess, Okuni
 - H. the female dancer and Buddhist priestess Okuni
 - J. the female dancer, and, Buddhist priestess, Okuni

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

theater was performed solely for the nobles in the royal court. Those plays, called Noh, (37) was highly stylized retellings of Japanese myths that focused on fate and the interference of angry gods in the lives of nobles. [38]

[3]

By the mid-1600s, kabuki (39) has become so popular among the working class that the

Japanese nobility decided to intervene. (40) The first step taken by the Japanese nobility was to ban women from performing. Kabuki survived when young male actors took on the women's roles. Later, the government objected to the

content of the plays, (41) which often showed the nobility in a bad light. Again, kabuki

37. A. NO CHANGE
B. OMIT the underlined word.
C. being
D. were
38. Assuming all of the options are true, which of the following options represents the best closing for paragraph 2?
- F. NO CHANGE
G. Kabuki was a theatrical form for the common people, and workers and merchants regularly attended the outdoor performances.
H. *Atsumori*, a well-known play of the Noh genre, is about a warrior's ghost returning to the site of his last battle.
J. Kabuki programs sometimes run from morning until evening, with audience members coming and going throughout the day.
39. A. NO CHANGE
B. become
C. is becoming
D. had become
40. F. NO CHANGE
G. Their first step
H. The initial salvo launched by the upper crust of the Japanese aristocracy
J. First, they
41. A. NO CHANGE
B. that
C. who
D. OMIT the underlined word.

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

survived (42) as other sources were turned to by its playwrights, including popular puppet shows, for their material. With these changes in place, kabuki continued to develop as an art form and eventually became a highly respected tradition.

[4]

[43] Details, including even the tiniest movements and expressions of the actors, are steeped in tradition. A kabuki actor may spend his entire career studying and perfecting one

role that he performs (44) over and over; innovation, however, is rarely rewarded in kabuki. Today audiences cherish the actors' ability to re-create a play exactly as it was performed hundreds of years ago.

Question 45 deals with the essay as a whole.

45. Suppose that one of the writer's goals is to compare kabuki and Noh theater. Does this essay accomplish that goal?

- A. Yes, because the second paragraph discusses the different audiences for Noh and kabuki.
- B. Yes, because the entire essay implicitly distinguishes between kabuki theater and Noh drama.

- 42. F. NO CHANGE
- G. as its playwrights turned to other sources, including
- H. and other sources were turned to by its playwrights that included
- J. its playwrights turned to other sources, including

43. Assuming all of the following sentences are true, which would be the most effective opening sentence for paragraph 4?

- A. Over the centuries, kabuki became so respected that the plays today are almost set in stone.
- B. Sometimes kabuki audiences are surrounded on three sides by stages.
- C. The word *kabuki*, in Japanese, is composed of three characters signifying song, dance, and skill.
- D. Traditional kabuki plays have moral elements that stress the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice.

- 44. F. NO CHANGE
- G. over and over, innovation, however,
- H. over and over; innovation however,
- J. over and over, innovation however

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

Passage IV

A Visit to Gettysburg

I (46) was feeling miserably trudging behind my parents in the humid heat of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, last summer. We were on a family outing to a historical place, something my parents insist is important. We had taken bus tours around the Civil War battlefield. The battle of Gettysburg, I learned, was actually several battles that (47) took place over three days in July 1863. Together, the battles represented an

important (48) showdown. Because the Confederate forces from the South hoped to push through into the North, but the Union forces managed to fend them off. The South never made it any farther north than Gettysburg after that. (49) That's why, the battles there were considered the turning point in the war, although the war would continue for almost two more years.

The Parks Department has done a (50) real good job of making the landscape look the way

it must have in (51) 1863. Since the late 1800s, though, hundreds if not thousands of stone statues and memorials have been erected all

46. F. NO CHANGE
G. felt miserably
H. was feeling miserable
J. is feeling miserable
47. A. NO CHANGE
B. took place by
C. taken place on
D. took place of
48. F. NO CHANGE
G. showdown, so
H. showdown; because
J. showdown, because
49. A. NO CHANGE
B. As a result,
C. Since that day,
D. However,
50. F. NO CHANGE
G. really
H. very
J. OMIT the underlined portion
51. All of the following are acceptable substitutes for the underlined portion EXCEPT
A. 1863. Since the late 1800s, however,
B. 1863, although since the late 1800s,
C. 1863, but since the late 1800s,
D. 1863. Likewise, since the late 1800s,

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

over the battlefields to (52) commemorate and remember each and every battalion's contribution to the fight. Some are beautiful with mournful-looking young soldiers. Others are typical heroic statues of generals on huge horses, hooves reared as if about to charge into battle. I have to say that these statues did not (53) float my boat. 54

Then my family entered the National Cemetery. About 51,000 soldiers were killed during the battles of Gettysburg, and most (55) is buried in the cemetery.

52. F. NO CHANGE
G. commemorate each
H. commemorate and memorialize every last
J. memorialize and remember every
53. Which of the choices below is most appropriate for the clarity and tone of the composition?
A. NO CHANGE
B. flip my wig
C. move me very much
D. effectuate an emotional response, either conscious or unconscious
54. Which of the following is the most logical closing sentence for this paragraph?
F. Still others are geometric with symbols, dates, and names carved into the sides.
G. They seemed old-fashioned and quaint, and the battles seemed far removed from my life.
H. We made plans to eat lunch at the nearest restaurant as soon as the tour was over.
J. OMIT any additional sentence; no further elaboration is needed.
55. A. NO CHANGE
B. has been
C. are
D. was

The ACT Assessment English Test: Practice, *continued*

(56) When you walk through the grounds, all you can see are rows and rows of grave markers, many of which are labeled only “Unknown.” Thousands

of young people hardly (57) older than me had given their lives to preserve the United States—and many can’t even be identified by name.

That (58) realization simply took my breath away, and at last I understood why my parents

insisted (59) on coming here. They hoped to teach me a valuable lesson about life and

history, and (60) it did.

56. To maintain consistency within the composition, how should the writer revise the underlined portion?
- F. NO CHANGE
 - G. Walking through the grounds, all you can see are
 - H. When you walk through the grounds, all we could see was
 - J. As we walked through the grounds, all we could see were

57. A. NO CHANGE
B. older then me had given
C. older than I was had given
D. older than me be giving

58. All of the following are acceptable substitutes for the underlined word EXCEPT
- F. skepticism
 - G. dawning
 - H. insight
 - J. awareness

59. A. NO CHANGE
B. in
C. with
D. OMIT the underlined term.
60. F. NO CHANGE
G. they
H. he
J. them

ACT Assessment Reading Test: An Overview

About the ACT Assessment Reading Test

The Reading Test is the third multiple-choice test on the ACT Assessment, following the English Test and the Mathematics Test. It is shorter than either of these, consisting of 40 questions (10 questions follow each type of passage) that must be answered in the space of 35 minutes. These questions relate to four reading passage types:

- **Prose Fiction:** The first passage on the reading test is typically a prose fiction passage, which takes the form of either a short story or a novel excerpt.
- **Social Sciences:** The second passage usually presents research-based information of a historical or sociological nature. Although the excerpt will not include endnotes, it will generally refer to scholarly research.
- **Humanities:** The humanities passage, which typically occupies the third slot in the reading test, may be a piece of literary or art criticism, or it may be a personal narrative (or other autobiographical form).
- **Natural Sciences:** Like the social science passage, this passage will present research, in this case on natural phenomena.

Purpose of the Reading Test

The passage-based reading sections test your ability to read critically in a variety of genres and content areas. In no case is prior knowledge of the topic in the passage required. Instead, the questions that follow each passage test your ability to identify main ideas and details, draw conclusions, make generalizations, understand causes and effects, and apply logical reasoning.

How the Test Is Scored

You will receive a total reading test score, plus two subscores: one for Arts/Literature, which relates to your performance on the twenty prose fiction and humanities questions, and one for Social Studies/Sciences, which pertains to the remaining twenty questions.

Preparing for the Reading Test

To prepare for the ACT Assessment Reading Test, study the instructions and work through the practice sections on pages 129–146. Just as you would do to prepare for the SAT Critical Reading tests, read a wide variety of challenging texts. Review any notes or textbook information you have on the critical-reading skills listed on the next two pages—these are the skills covered in most language arts classes at some point in your school career.

Budgeting Your Time

You have a little less than nine minutes to read each passage and answer the accompanying ten questions. Try to spend no more than four minutes reading each passage and 30 seconds answering each question.

Understanding the ACT Assessment Reading Test

Although the Reading Test covers a variety of content areas and prose genres, it tends to assess the same key reading skills. These skills, along with brief explanations and sample questions, are discussed in the chart below:

SKILL	EXPLANATION	SAMPLE QUESTION
Identify and Understand Details	This skill requires you to find information stated in the text. Little inferential work is required, although the correct answer choice may represent a paraphrase of the original text.	<i>For which of the following reasons does the author state that his ancestors migrated to Texas?</i>
Determine Main Idea	This skill involves identifying the most important idea in an expository paragraph or passage or the central theme or conflict in a narrative text.	<i>One of the author's main arguments in the second paragraph is: Which of the following expresses an important theme of the passage?</i>
Analyze Comparison-Contrast Relationships	Analyzing comparison-contrast relationships involves identifying similarities or differences, either stated or implied, between characters, concepts, or perspectives.	<i>According to the fourth paragraph (lines 12–23), compared with drug-susceptible tuberculosis, drug-resistant tuberculosis is:</i>
Analyze Cause-and-Effect Relationships	Analyzing cause-and-effect relationships involves understanding the causes or effects, or both, stated or implied, of an activity. Questions about causes or effects often include the words <i>why</i> , <i>cause</i> , <i>effect</i> , <i>result</i> , or <i>consequence</i> .	<i>It can be inferred that the narrator has become less enamored of Gloria over time as a result of:</i>
Make Generalizations	Making generalizations requires you to make a broad statement about something in the passage based on details in the passage.	<i>Which of the following best describes the Anasazi culture?</i>
Use Context Clues	This skill requires you to take into account the context surrounding unfamiliar words or expressions in order to figure out their meaning.	<i>When Aunt Minnie says, “‘You can get glad in the same pants you got mad in,’” she most likely means:</i>
Identify Sequence	Identifying sequence requires you to be mindful of the order of events in a narrative or stages in a process.	<i>According to information in paragraph 3, what must occur before salmon lay their eggs?</i>
Analyze Author's Aims and Techniques	This broad category covers such skills as identifying the author's purpose, tone, style, or intended audience and the methods used to achieve certain aims.	<i>It can be inferred from the passage as a whole that the author's attitude toward toddlers is:</i>

Analyzing the ACT Assessment Reading Test

The passage that follows is typical of one you might encounter in the ACT Assessment Reading Test. Read the passage. Then, study the analyses of the multiple-choice questions that follow it.

Sample Passage

NATURAL SCIENCE: This passage is from “Eat My Dust” by Michael Tennesen from *Audubon*, January-February 2007. Copyright © 2007 by Michael Tennesen. Reproduced by permission of the author.

The greater roadrunner, *Geococcyx californianus*, a member of the cuckoo family, is an icon of the desert, one of the most beloved—yet commonly misunderstood—of America’s birds and a fearsome sight in full charge. Immortalized in a colorful Warner Bros. cartoon, the real roadrunner may bear little resemblance to its famous counterpart, but it’s no less entertaining, from its boisterous vocals—cooing, barking, clacking, growling, whirling, whining, popping—to its quick-draw ability to snatch prey. The roadrunner is also a real live success story: Rather than declining in numbers, as so many other birds have done in these times of dwindling habitat, invasive species, and changing climate, roadrunners are doing better than some desert species because they’re able to live in the suburbs. Roadrunners are considered common in the cactus- and brush-filled Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts of southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and west Texas, and the species has, according to biologists, increased its presence in adjoining states during the past 10 to 20 years.

Perched on a rock, the roadrunner may look awkward, even comical, with its oversize tail extended above its head. Adults have a prominent blue-black crest, a long, stout bill, a multicolored mask, and heavily streaked feathers. Such features are probably what inspired Warner Bros. to pick the roadrunner to star in its classic *Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner*, the popular cartoon of the 1950s and ’60s that symbolizes a great American chase, and lives on in reruns. . . .

The real roadrunner, with its determined blue-black pupils ringed in yellow, its oversize legs, and its long black claws, is also an animal built for speed. Its body is 23 inches long—half of that tail feathers, which adds to its ground-based aerodynamics. The stride of an adult is about 6 inches on a slow walk but a ground-eating 19 to 20 inches when the bird breaks into a run. In the early 1920s naturalist H. H. Sheldon used his automobile to clock a wild roadrunner traveling 15 miles per hour. Jim Cornett, emeritus director of natural science at the Palm Springs Desert Museum, has also paced wild roadrunners, and he affirms previous reports that the roadrunner’s top speed could

reach 18 mph—better than a four-minute mile. . . .

- 35 [Biology Professor Robert] Ohmart believes that part of the roadrunner’s success in the Southwest stems from desert homeowners and commercial landscapers who are using more native Southwest vegetation, which has spines and thorns that native birds prefer to nest in because they provide protection against predators and supply food.
- 40 “Nonnative species like eucalyptus trees provide no insects for birds or lizards,” says Ohmart. Thus the Arizona Department of Transportation and other state and federal agencies have joined in and begun planting indigenous species along roads.

- Even some golf courses in Phoenix, Arizona, and Palm Springs and Palm Desert, California, are getting into the act. At The Reserve, an environmentally sensitive country club outside Palm Desert, desert cacti, shrubs, and trees surround minimal grassy areas that are rarely sprayed with pesticides or herbicides. “This really does make a difference,” Ohmart says. “Some of the golf courses are even using
- 50 native grasses.”

- As for the classic competition depicted on-screen, “There’s no eyewitness account of a coyote ever taking a roadrunner, not even a dead one,” says Cornett. But he thinks a real life race between the two might be a close match, even if the roadrunner can take to wing for
- 55 short distances.

1. The first paragraph answers all of the following questions EXCEPT:
 - A. Why has the roadrunner flourished while other species are in decline?
 - B. What types of vocalizations does the roadrunner make?
 - C. To what family of birds does the roadrunner belong?
 - D. What does the roadrunner subsist on?

Answer: The correct answer is D. This question involves understanding details.

Analysis: Basically, this question requires you to identify the detail that is NOT included in the first paragraph. **Option D** is the only question whose answer is not contained in the text.

- **Option A** is incorrect because the first paragraph gives one explanation for why the roadrunner has flourished.
- **Option B** is incorrect because the paragraph lists “cooing, barking, clacking, growling, whirling, whining, popping” as typical roadrunner vocalizations.
- **Option C** is incorrect because the first sentence states that the roadrunner is a member of the cuckoo family.

2. Compared with the Warner Bros. cartoon about a roadrunner, the real-life bird:
- F. bears no resemblance to the cartoon character in appearance or speed.
 - G. looks similar to the cartoon character but is not as flamboyant.
 - H. is equally entertaining but is not the coyote's rival.
 - J. is also prey to the coyote but cannot outrun it.

Answer: The correct answer is H. This question involves understanding comparison-contrast relationships.

Analysis: To answer this question, you must read the whole passage, as the author alludes to the cartoon roadrunner several times. The first paragraph mentions that the real roadrunner is just as entertaining as his cartoon counterpart, and the last paragraph contains the detail about the coyote. **Option H** is the only response that is entirely correct.

- **Option F** is not entirely correct because although the author says the real roadrunner “may bear little resemblance” to the cartoon roadrunner, the birds are never compared on the basis of speed.
- **Option G** is incorrect because in both behavior (lines 4–8) and appearance (lines 17–20), the real-life roadrunner is apparently quite flamboyant.
- **Option J** is incorrect because according to the last paragraph, coyotes do not hunt roadrunners.

3. According to passage, the roadrunner's long tail feathers enable it to:
- A. turn in mid-flight.
 - B. run efficiently on the ground.
 - C. camouflage itself around predators.
 - D. fly for short distances.

Answer: The correct answer is B. This is a question about causes and effects.

Analysis: Although none of the standard clue words are present (*because, effect, result, etc.*), the relationship is clear enough: One effect of the bird's long tail feathers is aerodynamics on the ground, which makes **Option B** correct.

- **Options A** and **C** are not mentioned anywhere in the text.
- **Option D** is incorrect because although the roadrunner's ability to fly short distances is mentioned in the final paragraph, this ability is not linked to the length of its tail feathers.

4. When the author says, “The stride of an adult is about 6 inches on a slow walk but a ground-eating 19 to 20 inches when the bird breaks into a run” (lines 27–29), what does *ground-eating* most likely mean?
- F. record breaking
 - G. digging ruts in the ground
 - H. causing to fall on one’s face
 - J. able to cover long distances

Answer: The correct answer is J. This question involves using context clues to decode unfamiliar terms.

Analysis: Although the colorful expression *ground-eating* appears to be the author’s invention, its meaning can be inferred from the context of the sentence. Compared with the walking roadrunner’s 6-inch stride, the bird’s running stride covers a much greater distance. Only **Option J** accounts for the contrast between the bird’s walking and running strides.

- **Option F** is incorrect because nothing in the sentence or surrounding text suggests the roadrunner’s speed is record breaking.
- **Options G** and **H** are both incorrect because although the term *ground-eating* may initially seem to suggest something to do with digging into or eating dirt, that suggestion is not borne out by the context.

5. The main idea of the fourth and fifth paragraphs (lines 36–51) is that:
- A. the current trend toward native landscaping in desert areas is beneficial to the roadrunner.
 - B. pesticides used on lawns and golf courses in suburban areas have harmed native species.
 - C. desert birds prefer to nest in plants and trees that are free from thorns and spikes.
 - D. some golf courses are beginning to use native grasses.

Answer: The correct answer is A. This is a question about main ideas.

Analysis: As shown in this question, main-idea questions may apply not only to single paragraphs or whole passages but also to multi-paragraph sections within a passage. Only **Option A** expresses an idea covered consistently in both paragraphs mentioned.

- **Options B** and **D** are incorrect because although both ideas are mentioned, each is a detail that supports the main idea, not the main idea itself.
- **Option C** directly contradicts what is stated in the text.

6. Which of the following best expresses the author's purpose in this article?
- F. to inform readers in an entertaining manner by dispelling popular myths and providing surprising facts about a common animal
 - G. to persuade readers to take action to protect the dwindling habitat of an American icon
 - H. to entertain readers with amusing but ultimately frivolous comparisons between a cartoon animal and its real-life counterpart
 - J. to provide highly technical information to a specialized audience of professional ornithologists

Answer: The correct answer is F. This is a question that falls in the category of aims and techniques.

Analysis: The author uses colorful comparisons and turns of phrase throughout the article but also includes enough details about the roadrunner's size, speed, habitat, and behavior to suggest that the primary purpose is to inform, **Option F**.

- **Option G** is contradicted by the facts of the article.
- **Option H** is incorrect because the comparison to the cartoon roadrunner is not frivolous but purposeful: It allows readers to connect what they are about to learn with what they may already think they know about the roadrunner.
- **Option J** is incorrect because the article generally avoids technical language and is clearly meant for a general audience.

Strategies for Responding to ACT Assessment Reading Test Items

- Time yourself as you take the following practice test. Give yourself 35 minutes to complete the entire test or about 8 minutes to complete each passage and 10-question set.
- Some people find that previewing the questions before reading a passage helps them focus their reading. Try using this strategy on the first passage and question set. If you find that you have time to preview the questions, read the passage, and answer all questions, you can use this strategy on the actual test.
- Unlike the SAT, the ACT does not have a penalty for guessing, so answer every question.
- Read the brief paragraph that precedes each passage. In addition to telling you where the passage comes from, it may explain a key term in the passage.
- Read each passage quickly but carefully, and answer the questions based on the information in the passage—or on inferences based on evidence in the passage. Even if, for example, you have expert knowledge of roadrunners—the topic of the example passage in the preceding section—base your selection of answers only on the information in the passage.

Preparing for the ACT

The ACT Assessment Reading Test

PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: On the following pages are four reading passages. Read each passage, then answer the questions that follow it.

Passage I

PROSE FICTION: This passage is from *Migrant Souls* by Arturo Islas. Copyright © 1990 by Arturo Islas. Reproduced by permission of **Avon Books, a division of HarperCollins, Publishers.**

Line In their mother's eyes, Josie Salazar knew, she and her sister Serena were more like the Indians than the Spanish ladies they were brought up to be.

5 When they were children and growing up on the "American" side of the Mexican Texas border, it was, "Serena, get that braid out of your mouth. Do you want to be taken for an Indian?" Or, 10 "Josie, how many times do I have to tell you that a young lady does not cross her legs like an Indian?"

15 Later, when they were teenagers in the late forties and still on the border, Serena was criticized for wearing clothes that were too bright and immodest and Josie was told that if her hair got any stringier because she refused to wash it every day, the Indians were going to 20 claim her as their own and drag her off to Ysleta, or worse yet, to San Elizario, even farther into the lower valley.

25 Secretly, Josie longed to be dragged by anyone, to anywhere as long as it was out of her mother's house. "I wonder what life with the Indians was like?" she asked Serena, who remained silent.

30 Only Ofelia, the eldest of the three sisters, came close to fulfilling their mother Eduviges' dream of producing delicate and tactful young women worthy of their connection to the Angel family name and strong enough to endure the rigorous demands of marriage and 35 motherhood. Even before the age of reason, which the Church had set at seven years old, the girls learned very quickly

40 that their mother's side of the family—the Angel clan—was more important than their father's, the plain old Salazars.

Sancho Salazar, ever wary of large concepts, ignored his relatives altogether and devoted himself to his wife, his daughters and, as often as possible, to 45 hunting and fishing in the mountains and lakes of northern Chihuahua. In that wild country, he told his girls, his Indian blood came to life and made him feel at home with the land and sky. "Don't tell your mother I said these things to you." 50

Ofelia ignored him when he talked about Mexico. But Serena and Josie sensed that their blood was closer to the earth than an Angel's ought to be. And except for the annual Christmas Eve get-together, they saw that their father made certain he had something else to do whenever his wife reminded him that the Angels were gathering at so-and-so's 55 house to celebrate something or other.

60 "I am not going to sit through another of those phony family exercises," Sancho said to Eduviges. "I've got more important things to do. I'm going fishing." And, kissing the girls good-bye after pitching his gear into Serapio Fuentes' beat-up Buick station wagon, he went.

70 Only Josie did not kiss him back and refused to keep waving along with her sisters until Serapio honked the horn one last time and turned the corner on Cotton Street. Her spirit went with Sancho and she was often thought to be unwell at most Angel family celebrations. 75

"Are you sick, Josie?" her aunt Mema asked. They were at their great-aunt

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

Cuca's apartment after a baptism party for the girls' cousin JoEl. "Are you missing your daddy?"

Josie looked at her without blinking while Mema felt her forehead and face. She wanted to tell her aunt they were all lizards shedding their skins in the sun, but just then her grandmother said in Spanish, "Oh, she's all right. She's only being a baby. Always has been. That's what happens to girls who are their father's favorite."

"She'll be all right if you don't tease her," Serena said and put her arm around her sister.

"She's simply acting like an Indian, that's all," their mother said. . . .

Whispering in her ear, Serena was promising to show Josie the new kittens in Tia Cuca's closet. She knew that if she were not led away, her little sister would remain staring at the older women until they stopped talking about her as if Josie were invisible.

The girls walked quietly down the short hallway into Tia Cuca's bedroom. Shaded by the deep green leaves of the mulberry trees on West Yandell Street,

the room was cool and dark and smelled of lavender toilet water. . . .

Serena opened the closet door wide and they knelt down in front of a cardboard box lined with old scarves and newspaper. They heard the kittens before they saw them.

"Oh, look!" Serena said. "There are six of them!" She picked up one of the ugly, hairless creatures and put it in the palm of Josie's hand.

"It's hungry, the poor little thing." The high-pitched mewling and blind groping of the animal touched Josie.

"Its dumb mother is over there under the bed," Serena said. "Carlota, come here and feed your babies."

The dirty white she-cat ignored them and went on staring at the floor with demented, ice-blue eyes. "She's acting like they're not hers. I think one of them is dead." Serena shook her head in disapproval.

"Don't worry," Josie said, gently stroking the kitten's back with her little finger. "I'm an Indian. I'll take care of you."

1. A main conflict in the passage is:

- A. Josie's desire to embrace her Indian heritage despite her mother's disapproval.
- B. the bitter tension between Josie's parents over her father's failure to appear at her family's get-togethers.
- C. Josie's desire to have a kitten, despite her mother's cat allergy.
- D. the social tension between people of Mexican descent who consider themselves Indian and those who don't.

2. Serena's attitude toward Josie is best described as:

- F. lovingly disapproving.
- G. impatient and demanding.
- H. baffled yet tolerant.
- J. sympathetic and protective.

3. It is reasonable to assume that Josie longs to be dragged away to:

- A. find her Indian relatives.
- B. escape her mother's demands and disapproval.
- C. avoid going with her father on one of his hunting and fishing expeditions.
- D. test her endurance in the desert.

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

4. Based on evidence in the passage, it can be inferred that the author named Eduviges' family *Angel* for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:
- F. The family members were held to a high standard of virtue and propriety.
 - G. Eduviges and her relatives regarded a life lived close to the earth in disdain.
 - H. The author wants to create a contrast between Eduviges' virtue and Sancho's venality.
 - J. The family, at least in its own estimation, is regarded as better than Sancho's family.
5. Josie often appears to be ill at Angel family gatherings because:
- A. her spirit has followed her father on his outing.
 - B. the oppressive atmosphere at her Tia Cuca's house makes her queasy.
 - C. she hopes that if she feigns illness, her mother will take her home early.
 - D. she has not followed her mother's advice in observing proper hygiene.
6. What does the author likely mean when he says that Sancho is "ever wary of large concepts"?
- F. He does not trouble himself about what constitutes proper behavior in young ladies.
 - G. He does not try to articulate why it is that he feels at home in the "wild country."
 - H. He is neither a religious nor a spiritual person.
 - J. He doesn't recognize the political distinctions between the American and Mexican sides of the border.
7. At what point does Serena take Josie to see the new kittens in Tia Cuca's closet?
- A. after Aunt Mema asks Josie if she is sick
 - B. when the mother cat emerges from under the bed
 - C. when they hear the kittens' pathetic cries
 - D. after her mother tells everyone that Josie is just "acting like an Indian"
8. The atmosphere of Tia Cuca's bedroom (lines 102–107) is best described as:
- F. sickly sweet, slightly oppressive.
 - G. naturally cool and refreshing.
 - H. reeking of death and decay.
 - J. otherworldly, even holy.
9. A parallel can be drawn between the cat with the "demented, ice-blue eyes" and:
- A. Josie, with her eccentric, sometimes hostile behavior around her relatives.
 - B. Eduviges, with her non-nurturing attitude and her obsession with not appearing Indian.
 - C. Sancho, who feels one with nature in the Chihuaha Desert.
 - D. Ofelia, whose name alludes to the mad young woman in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.
10. Serena's simple declaration in lines 129–132 suggests that she believes:
- F. Her Indian side is nurturing and adept with animals.
 - G. It is the duty of Angels to take care of abandoned kittens.
 - H. The kitten has been sent to her as a test from God.
 - J. Her mother will enjoy having a kitten in the house.

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

Passage II

SOCIAL SCIENCE: This passage is from *Listening In* by Susan J. Douglas Copyright © 1999 by Susan J. Douglas. Reproduced by permission of **Times Books, a division of Random House, Inc.**

Line When radio listening as a craze, and
then as a daily pastime, swept through
America in the 1920s and '30s, it
5 disrupted the cognitive and cultural
practices of a visual culture and a literate
culture in a way that neither the telephone
nor the phonograph did. By the 1920s
Americans, especially those in cities, took
10 in a kaleidoscope of newspapers,
magazines, billboards, advertising
posters, vaudeville shows, electric lights,
and movies. Illustrations and photographs
had transformed nearly all printed
15 material. Everywhere there were more
and more pictures to help one reimagine
the world and one's place in it. Seeing
was regarded as the most important sense,
the visual privileged over everything else.
20 Seeing more, seeing farther, seeing better:
this was what so much of the new
technology in entertainment and in
science strove for.

And then came radio. Certainly the
device was hailed as the next logical step
25 in some inevitable march toward progress
and modernity. Here was a giant auditory
prosthesis that extended people's range of
hearing to distances previously
unimaginable.

30 But radio also carried people back
into the realms of preliteracy, into orality,
to a mode of communication reliant on
storytelling, listening, and group memory.
America became an odd hybrid in the
35 1920s and after, a modern literate society
grafted together with a traditional,
preliterate, oral culture. It was an atavism

Americans clearly loved. For orality
generates a powerful participatory
40 mystique. Because the act of listening
simultaneously to spoken words forms
hearers into a group, while reading turns
people in on themselves, orality fosters a
strong collective sensibility. People
45 listening to a common voice, or to the
same music, act and react at the same
time. They become an aggregate entity—
an audience—and whether or not they all
agree with or like what they hear, they are
50 unified around that common experience.
So even though the visual system of the
brain is larger and much more extensive
than its auditory system, it seems that
hearing's immediate and transitory
55 quality is what gives it such power. The
fact that we hear not only with our ears
but also with our entire bodies—our
bones, our innards vibrate, too, to sounds,
and certainly to music—means that we
60 are actually feeling similar sensations in
our bodies at exactly the same time when
we listen as a group.

In part because of this physical
response, listening often imparts a sense
65 of motion stronger than that imparted by
looking. "Listening," argues one
researcher on perception, "is centripetal;
it pulls you into the world. Looking is
centrifugal; it separates you from the
70 world." While sight allows us some
distance and power—the power to gaze,
study, dissect, to be removed, apart from
our surroundings—sound envelopes us,
pouring into us whether we want it to or
75 not, including us, involving us. Even
before we are born, we can hear others.
As infants, when our eyes are still
struggling to focus, we are much more
bothered, startled, or scared by sounds
80 than by sights. As we grow up, "hearing
is the precondition for the integration of

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

- people into their environment”; through listening, we learn proper social behavior and speech. . . .
- 85 And let’s not forget that radio performers and producers turned the use of sound into an art. Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, two pioneers in radio research, noted how radio produced
- 90 “close-ups” of sound, extracting the last ounce of emotional quality from even the “sound of silence.” “When it comes to producing eerie and uncanny effects,” they added, “the radio has no rival.” They
- 95 noted that even in the early 1930s, listeners would “enhance this distinctive quality of radio” by sitting in the dark and closing their eyes so that “their fantasies are free.” In no time the listener could
11. According to the first paragraph, in the era immediately preceding the advent of radio, seeing was regarded as the preeminent sense because
- A. a larger portion of the brain is devoted to the faculty of vision.
- B. reproducible media such as illustrations and photographs were everywhere.
- C. through the common experience of seeing the same images, communities were bound together.
- D. through film, Hollywood producers helped define societies’ sense of who they were.
12. As used in line 9, *kaleidoscope* means:
- F. an obscure muddle.
- G. an early version of television.
- H. a device that employs mirrors to refract a single image into many images.
- J. a colorful, often confusing, array.
- 100 jump from ancient Rome to a Los Angeles police precinct, then to a haunted house, and, even better, the image she conjured up could be three-dimensional, wasn’t confined to a movie screen or a
- 105 proscenium, didn’t have a curtain framing it, and wasn’t subject to theatrical artificiality. It was, in many ways, better than seeing. Celebrating this new emphasis on “the listener’s visual
- 110 imagery, a relatively neglected function of the adult human mind,” Cantril and Allport offered a prophetic prediction, and this in 1935: “The advent of television will change the situation and
- 115 will destroy one of the most distinctive benefits that radio has brought to a too literal-minded mankind.”
13. The author regards the telephone and phonograph as having had a less significant effect on “the cognitive and cultural practices” of society than radio because
- A. neither had radio’s unifying power.
- B. these early technologies were less advanced than radio technology.
- C. these technologies were nonexistent when radio came on the scene.
- D. fewer people had access to the telephone and the phonograph.
14. According to the author, radio was revolutionary for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:
- F. It extended people’s range of hearing well beyond what was previously possible.
- G. It drew people together into a preliterate realm of oral culture.
- H. It allowed advertisers to reach wider audiences.
- J. It enabled listeners to make mind pictures far superior to two-dimensional print images.

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

15. Based on the last three paragraphs (lines 30–117), which argument would the author be most likely to make?
- A. Television reaches a wider audience than radio.
 - B. As a tool of persuasion, radio is more effective than purely visual or print media.
 - C. Any medium that combines sound and images will trump a medium consisting of one but not the other.
 - D. Only by exerting political influence could the developers of television dominate the communications industry.
16. The author quotes Cantril and Allport to support her argument that:
- F. radio developed into a highly expressive art form.
 - G. television would build on the public benefits of radio technology.
 - H. radio producers inadvertently destroyed what was most powerful about the first radio programs.
 - J. FM radio was far superior in quality to AM radio.
17. From reading the passage, it can be inferred that television was developed:
- A. after radio was a well-established medium.
 - B. at a time when print media, not radio, were at the height of their influence.
 - C. in America in the 1920s and 1930s.
 - D. before the telephone and the phonograph.
18. According to the author, vision gives us power, whereas sound tends to exert power over us, for all of the following reasons EXCEPT:
- F. It is difficult to block out.
 - G. It is experienced in the womb, before vision.
 - H. It is the medium for imparting correct social behavior.
 - J. It tends to separate individuals from one another.
19. The most likely intended audience for this passage is:
- A. an advocate of deregulation of the radio industry.
 - B. critics of the television and film industries.
 - C. students of popular culture or communication.
 - D. the general population.
20. Based on the presentation of information in the passage, its writer is best described as:
- F. a stringent critic of the TV and movie industry.
 - G. an impressionistic memoirist.
 - H. a well-informed admirer of radio.
 - J. a skeptic of electronic media's influence.

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

Passage III

HUMANITIES: This passage is from “Names” from *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood* by Mary McCarthy. Copyright © 1957 and renewed 1985 by Mary McCarthy. Reproduced by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Names have more significance for Catholics than they do for other people; Christian names are chosen for the spiritual qualities of the saints they are taken from; Protestants used to name their children out of the Old Testament and now they name them out of novels and plays, whose heroes and heroines are perhaps the new patron saints for a secular age. But with Catholics it is different. The saint a child is named for is supposed to serve, literally, as a model or pattern to imitate; your name is your fortune and it tells you what you are or must be. Catholic children ponder their names for a mystic meaning, like birthstones; my own, I learned, besides belonging to the Virgin and Saint Mary of Egypt, originally meant “bitter” or “star of the sea.” My second name, Therese, could dedicate me either to Saint Theresa or to the saint called the Little Flower, Soeur Thérèse of Lisieux, on whom God was supposed to have descended in the form of a shower of roses. At Confirmation, I had added a third name (for Catholics then rename themselves . . .); on the advice of a nun, I had taken “Clementina,” after Saint Clement, an early pope—a step I soon regretted on account of “my Darling Clementine” and her number nine shoes. By the time I was in the convent, I would no longer tell anyone what my Confirmation name was. . . .

The fear of appearing ridiculous first entered my life, as a governing motive,

during my second year in the convent. Up to then, a desire for prominence had decided many of my actions, and, in fact, still persisted. But in the eighth grade, I became aware of mockery and perceived that I could not seek prominence without attracting laughter. Other people could, but I couldn’t. This laughter was proceeding, not from my classmates, but from the girls of the class just above me, in particular from two boon companions, Elinor Heffernan and Mary Harty, a clownish pair . . . who entertained the high-school department by calling attention to the oddities of the younger girls. . . . We in the eighth grade sat directly in front of the two wits in study hall, so that they had us under close observation; yet at first I was not afraid of them, wanting, if anything, to identify myself with their laughter, to be initiated into the joke. One of their specialties was giving people nicknames, and it was considered an honor to be the first in the eighth grade to be let in by Elinor and Mary on their latest invention. This often happened to me; they would tell me, on the playground, and I would tell the others. As their intermediary, I felt myself almost their friend and it did not occur to me that I might be next on their list.

I had achieved prominence not long before by publicly losing my faith and regaining it at the end of a retreat. I believe Elinor and Mary questioned me about this on the playground, during recess, and listened with serious, respectful faces while I told them about my conversations with the Jesuits. Those serious faces ought to have been an omen, but if the two girls used what I had revealed to make fun of me, it must have been behind my back. I never heard any

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

- more of it, and yet just at this time I began to feel something, like a cold breath on the nape of my neck, that made me wonder whether the new position I had won for myself in the convent was as secure as I imagined. I would turn around in study hall and find the two girls looking at me with speculation in their eyes.
- 85 “We’ve got a name for you,” Elinor and Mary called out to me, one day on the playground. “What is it?” I asked, half hoping, half fearing, since not all their sobriquets were unfavorable. “Cye,” 95 they answered, looking at each other and laughing. “Si’?” I repeated, supposing that it was based on Simple Simon. Did they regard me as a hick? “C.Y.E.,” they elucidated, spelling it out in chorus. “The 100 letters stand for something. Can you guess?” I could not and I cannot now. The closest I could come to it in the convent was “Clean Your Ears.” Perhaps that was it, though in later life I have wondered whether it did not stand, simply, for “Clever Young Egg” or “Champion Young Eccentric.” But in the convent I was certain that it stood for something horrible, something even worse than dirty ears (as far as I knew, my ears were clean), something I could never guess because it represented some aspect of myself that the world could see and I couldn’t, like a sign pinned on my back. 105 Everyone in the convent must have known what the letters stood for, but no one would tell me. Elinor and Mary had made them promise. It was like halitosis; not even my best friend, my deskmate, Louise, would tell me, no matter how much I pleaded. Yet everyone assured me that it was “very good,” that is, very apt. And it made everyone laugh. 110 115 120
21. According to the passage, the saint’s name given to a Catholic at birth:
- A. is meant to be replaced with a new name at Confirmation.
 - B. is intended to serve as a role model for the child to emulate.
 - C. must be approved in advance by the parish priest.
 - D. is significant in the same way that Protestants’ birth names are.
22. The first paragraph answers all of the following questions EXCEPT:
- F. What is the tradition for selecting Jewish names?
 - G. What is the original meaning of the name *Mary*?
 - H. What sources do Protestant parents turn to for their children’s names?
 - J. Why did the author come to regret her choice for her Confirmation name?
23. The word *intermediary* in line 66 means:
- A. go-between.
 - B. junior.
 - C. listener.
 - D. apprentice.

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

24. A principle theme expressed in the passage as a whole involves:
- F. the author's loss, and eventual reclaiming, of her faith.
 - G. the author's feelings of marginalization as the only Catholic in her school.
 - H. the author's struggle to reconcile herself with the meaning of her name.
 - J. the effect on the author of the names given to her by others.
25. In lines 36–41, the author compares the period of her life when she was ruled by her fear of ridicule to:
- A. a lengthy prison sentence.
 - B. a time when she was motivated by a desire to serve others.
 - C. an earlier time when a desire for attention was her prime motive.
 - D. a time when she in turn controlled others through ridicule.
26. According to the passage, the author felt as if she were a friend of Elinor Heffernan and Mary Harty because:
- F. they confided in her about their own spiritual doubts.
 - G. they used her to relay the nicknames they had invented for the other girls.
 - H. they stood up for her when the girls in her class ridiculed her.
 - J. they appreciated her fine-honed sense of humor, laughing at her jokes.
27. During the period of her life discussed in this memoir, the author is best characterized as:
- A. optimistic and inquisitive.
 - B. mean-spirited and vindictive.
 - C. confident and self-reliant.
 - D. sensitive and insecure.
28. From the evidence in lines 99–123, it can be inferred that the author:
- F. quickly got over never knowing the meaning of her nickname.
 - G. has brooded over the meaning of her nickname for many years.
 - H. eventually figured out the meaning of her nickname.
 - J. learned from the experience of receiving nicknames that names aren't important.
29. Which of the following best paraphrases the following quotation: "I began to feel something, like a cold breath on the nape of my neck, that made me wonder whether the new position I had won for myself in the convent was as secure as I imagined?"
- A. The poorly insulated walls of the convent left me feeling vulnerable to colds.
 - B. I began to sense that my role as the older girls' confidante had not made me immune to their ridicule.
 - C. I started to feel invulnerable to the teasing and ridicule heaped on the other younger girls.
 - D. I felt the sneaking suspicion that someone was watching my every move.
30. The quotation from lines 118–121 ("It was like halitosis; not even my best friend, my deskmate Louise, would tell me, no matter how much I pleaded") contains an example of:
- F. personification.
 - G. metaphor.
 - H. simile.
 - J. understatement.

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

Passage IV

NATURAL SCIENCES: This passage is from “Most Bees Live Alone” by Susan Milius from *Science News*, January 6, 2007. Copyright © 2007 by Science Service. Reproduced by permission of **Science News, the weekly newsmagazine of science.**

Line Loner bees may seem unusual, but
5 honeybees are actually the oddballs. At
least 75 percent of the 4,500 bee species
in the United States and Canada live
solitary lives.

This unsung majority has attracted
new attention as concern rises that
populations of honeybees, and perhaps
other pollinators, may be declining. In
10 October 2006, a National Research
Council report on pollinators called for
new attention to solitary bees. They may
offer alternatives to honeybees as
pollinators for crops. . . .

15 The job market’s great for honeybees
these days, says James Cane of the Utah
lab. Commercial beekeepers rent their
hives to farmers, who rely on the bees to
pollinate some 100 commercial crops in
20 North America.

The 2-million-plus honeybee colonies
traveling the farm circuit represent a
shrinking labor force. It’s down by a third
since 1981, according to the USDA’s
25 statistics. Pesticide use, Africanized bees,
parasites, and diseases have taken their
toll. In 2005, California almond growers
became the first U.S. farmers since 1922
to get emergency permission to import
30 honeybees from outside the United States.

The new National Research Council
report notes a “demonstrably downward”
trend not only for honeybees but also for
some wild-living pollinators, such as
35 several bumblebees and bats.

Out of 115 crops worldwide . . . , 87
rely fully or partly on animals for
pollination. That represents a third, by
volume, of all crop production, report

40 Cane, Alexandra-Maria Klein of the
University of Göttingen in Germany, and
their colleagues. For example,
cantaloupes, watermelons, and cocoa are
almost exclusively dependent on insects.

45 While honeybees pollinate many
crops, they shirk that duty for some, such
as alfalfa. [Biologist Theresa] Pitts-Singer
demonstrates the problem by plucking a
little pom-pom of flowers from a field of
50 alfalfa.

When she squeezes the bottom petal
of an individual bloom with the tips of her
fingers, several yellow, pinhead-size balls
pop out. They barely tickle a human
55 fingertip, but they bother honeybees,
which “don’t like getting smacked in the
head,” says Pitts-Singer.

Honeybee foragers generally avoid
the drubbing. Most of them are looking
60 for nectar rather than the pollen that’s on
the yellow balls. The bees get what they
want by sidling up to alfalfa flowers and
sipping slantwise. The blossom’s spring
doesn’t trip to make the balls whop them,
65 so the honeybees don’t pick up pollen to
transfer to other blossoms.

A female solitary bee, in contrast,
needs pollen to pack away as food with
the eggs that she lays in her few weeks of
70 adulthood. If she visits alfalfa flowers,
she collects pollen, even though she gets
bumped on the head. So, in her short,
urgent season of motherhood, she spreads
lots of pollen among flowers.

75 Most U.S. alfalfa is grown for its
greenery, to be used as animal forage, so
only the suppliers of alfalfa seeds need
pollinators. Decades ago, the seed farmers
started taking advantage of solitary bees.
80 They had noticed that their crop yielded
extra seed when planted near salt flats
pockmarked with nesting holes from
alkali bees (*Nomia melanderi*).

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

- 85 However, because alkali bees nest in the ground, they couldn't be moved easily and so weren't supplied commercially in the way that honeybees were. Farmers began creating new bee beds by planting blocks of soil riddled with bee nests dug from natural nesting zones. It was a struggle to mimic those areas' moisture and chemistry. The farmers even had to add salt to the surface, "which seems horrible for agricultural land," Cane says.
- 90 When alkali bees find a suitable stretch of barren land, each female excavates a shaft ending in a cluster of nursery chambers about the size of small table grapes. To make a wad of food for hatchlings, the female uses a few drops of nectar to pack together pollen she has collected from about 5,000 alfalfa flowers. She works 11-hour shifts to outfit about one chamber a day.
- 100 The pollen wad contains the only nectar a young bee will need. Because they don't feed a large nursery and workforce through the winter, solitary bees don't bother with honey.
- 110 In recent decades, an easier-to-handle solitary species has been supplanting the alkali bees. It's the species that Pitts-Singer studies—the alfalfa leaf-cutting bee. It offers a great advantage over alkali bees: It doesn't need ground for nesting.
- 115 Female leaf-cutting bees nest in holes that beetles have bored into trees or almost any other small cavity. . . .
- 120 Commercial bee suppliers set out polystyrene blocks with rows of holes in them to serve as leaf-cutting bee nests. A female bee moves into a hole and, starting from the rear, creates a line of nursery chambers.
- 125 The supplier punches out a string of egg chambers to ship to an alfalfa farmer, who buys a fresh supply of leaf-cutting bees each year. It's convenient, though Pitts-Singer sounds wistful when she says that the species has become a "disposable bee."
- 130
31. A main idea of the passage is that:
- A. unlike honeybees, "loner bees" like the alkali bee do not pollinate crops.
 - B. alkali bees only nest in barren, salty soil.
 - C. with "loner bee" populations on the rise, honeybee populations must compete with them for food.
 - D. as honeybee populations wane, "loner bees" can play a valuable role in pollinating crops.
32. The decrease in the population of honeybees is attributed to:
- F. pesticides, Africanized bees, parasites, and disease.
 - G. the proliferation of alkali and leaf-cutting bees.
 - H. the importation by almond farmers of foreign honeybees.
 - J. a decrease in the demand for crops that honeybees prefer to forage on.
33. The word *circuit* as used in line 22 means:
- A. electrical path.
 - B. circumference.
 - C. route.
 - D. growing season.

The ACT Assessment Reading Test: Practice, *continued*

34. According to the information in lines 36–44, if two thirds of the world’s crops produce one third of the world’s harvest by volume, then:
- F. the remaining third of the crops produce two thirds of the world’s harvest by volume.
 - G. the remaining third of the crops produces another third of the world’s harvest by volume.
 - H. one remaining crop is responsible for most of the total volume of crops.
 - J. the depletion of the honeybee population is taking its toll on the remaining third of the world’s crops.
35. Honeybees avoid pollinating alfalfa plants because:
- A. the alfalfa plants don’t contain the type of nectar honeybees prefer.
 - B. they don’t like getting hit on the head with the balls that contain the pollen.
 - C. the alfalfa plants don’t produce the type of pollen they need to feed their larva.
 - D. they are repelled by the insecticide used on conventional alfalfa crops.
36. From the information on lines 75–78, it can be inferred that plants use pollinators to:
- F. make pollen.
 - G. produce greenery.
 - H. make fruit and seeds.
 - J. produce nectar for honey.
37. According to the passage, the alfalfa leaf-cutting bee has:
- A. become a major threat to domestic honeybee colonies.
 - B. been one of species most devastated by pesticide use.
 - C. been supplanted by the hardier alkali bee.
 - D. recently emerged as a simpler alternative for alfalfa farmers.
38. Which question is not answered by the information in lines 95–104?
- F. What do alkali bees use alfalfa nectar for?
 - G. How many eggs does an alkali bee lay?
 - H. How many nursery chambers can an alkali bee outfit in one day?
 - J. How many alfalfa flowers can an alkali bee pollinate?
39. What does Pitts-Singer mean when she says that alfalfa leaf-cutting bees have become a “disposable bee”?
- A. The supplier sells a new generation of bees to farmers each year.
 - B. The farmers kill the bees after they pollinate the alfalfa flowers.
 - C. The bees’ nests are made from disposable materials.
 - D. Like the honeybees, this species will soon face extinction.
40. All of the following are likely audiences for this article EXCEPT:
- F. people who are interested in science.
 - G. scientists.
 - H. college students.
 - J. people learning English.

Understanding the ACT Assessment Writing Test

Who Should Take the ACT Assessment Plus Writing

The essay portion of the ACT Assessment, unlike the essay portion of the SAT, is optional. When you register for the ACT, you will need to sign up for either the ACT Assessment (no essay) or the ACT Assessment Plus Writing. How do you decide which option to take? There are various sources you can check to see whether the ACT Assessment Plus Writing is required or recommended:

- the Web sites and application materials for the institutions to which you are applying
- your school counselor
- the ACT Web site, which maintains a list of institutions and their requirements

Also, consider the timing of the essay test. The SAT essay section is the first task on that three-plus-hour test. In contrast, the ACT essay is the last part of an equally long test. If you tend to write poorly after tiring mental activity, and the SAT essay score is a suitable substitute for the ACT essay, then you may want opt out of the ACT Assessment Plus Writing option.

Should you elect to take the optional writing test, you will stay at the test center after finishing the four multiple-choice sections. After a short break, you will begin the Writing Test.

Purpose of the ACT Assessment Writing Test

This 30-minute essay test is designed to test your ability to express your ideas in writing. The writing prompts almost always involve issues directly related to teenagers' lives, especially school-related issues. Your task will be to adopt and defend a position on the issue and to support your position with logical reasons and examples.

How the ACT Assessment Writing Test Is Scored

Like the SAT essay, your ACT Writing Test response will be scored holistically. In other words, you will receive a score that reflects the overall effectiveness of your writing. Of course, overall effectiveness is evaluated based on various criteria, which are described in the Six-point Holistic Scoring Rubric on the next page. This rubric summarizes the characteristics of essays at each score point.

Because every essay is read by two scorers, you will receive a Writing Test subscore of between 2 and 12, based on the sum of their two scores. You will also receive a combined English/Writing score, which reflects your scores on the ACT Assessment English Test and the Writing Test. (You will still receive an individual ACT Assessment English Test subscore.)

Remember, these scorers understand that you are writing under a time constraint. They do not expect a truly polished piece of writing. Do write as legibly as possible, so that the scorers can give you credit for well-expressed ideas. Study the instructions and samples that follow, and take the practice tests.

The ACT Six-Point Holistic Scoring Rubric

The ACT Assessment Writing Test is scored holistically, meaning that the readers evaluate the essay as a whole. The following scoring guide shows the general characteristics of an essay at each of the score points that a scorer can assign.

Score 6

Essays within this score range demonstrate effective skill in responding to the task. The essay shows a clear understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer a critical context for discussion. The essay addresses complexity by examining different perspectives on the issue, or by evaluating the implications and/or complications of the issue, or by fully responding to counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is ample, specific, and logical. Most ideas are fully elaborated. A clear focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained. The organization of the essay is clear: the organization may be somewhat predictable or it may grow from the writer's purpose. Ideas are logically sequenced. Most transitions reflect the writer's logic and are usually integrated into the essay. The introduction and conclusion are effective, clear, and well developed. The essay shows a good command of language. Sentences are varied and word choice is varied and precise. There are few, if any, errors to distract the reader.

Score 5

Essays within this score range demonstrate competent skill in responding to the task. The essay shows a clear understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer a broad context for discussion. The essay shows recognition of complexity by partially evaluating the implications and/or complications of the issue, or by responding to counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is specific and logical. Most ideas are elaborated, with clear movement

between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained. The organization of the essay is clear, although it may be predictable. Ideas are logically sequenced, although simple and obvious transitions may be used. The introduction and conclusion are clear and generally well developed. Language is competent. Sentences are somewhat varied and word choice is sometimes varied and precise. There may be a few errors, but they are rarely distracting.

Score 4

Essays within this score range demonstrate adequate skill in responding to the task. The essay shows an understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue and may offer some context for discussion. The essay may show some recognition of complexity by providing some response to counterarguments to the writer's position. Development of ideas is adequate, with some movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the specific issue in the prompt is maintained throughout most of the essay. The organization of the essay is apparent but predictable. Some evidence of logical sequencing of ideas is apparent, although most transitions are simple and obvious. The introduction and conclusion are clear and somewhat developed. Language is adequate, with some sentence variety and appropriate word choice. There may be some distracting errors, but they do not impede understanding.

From "The ACT Six-Point Holistic Scoring Rubric" from *The Real ACT Prep Guide*.
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Score 3

Essays within this score range demonstrate some developing skill in responding to the task. The essay shows some understanding of the task. The essay takes a position on the issue but does not offer a context for discussion. The essay may acknowledge a counterargument to the writer's position, but its development is brief or unclear. Development of ideas is limited and may be repetitious, with little, if any, movement between general statements and specific reasons, examples, and details. Focus on the general topic is maintained, but focus on the specific issue in the prompt may not be maintained. The organization of the essay is simple. Ideas are logically grouped within parts of the essay, but there is little or no evidence of logical sequencing of ideas. Transitions, if used, are simple and obvious. An introduction and conclusion are clearly discernible but underdeveloped. Language shows a basic control. Sentences show a little variety, and word choice is appropriate. Errors may be distracting and may occasionally impede understanding.

Score 2

Essays within this score range demonstrate inconsistent or weak skill in responding to the task. The essay shows a weak understanding of the task. The essay may not take a position on the issue, or the essay may take a position but fail to convey reasons to support that position, or the essay may take a position but fail to maintain a stance. There is little or no recognition of a counterargument to the writer's position. The essay is thinly developed. If examples are given, they are general and may

not be clearly relevant. The essay may include extensive repetition of the writer's ideas or of ideas in the prompt. Focus on the general topic is maintained, but focus on the specific issue in the prompt may not be maintained. There is some indication of an organizational structure, and some logical grouping of ideas within parts of the essay is apparent. Transitions, if used, are simple and obvious, and they may be inappropriate or misleading. An introduction and conclusion are discernible but minimal. Sentence structure and word choice are usually simple. Errors may be frequently distracting and may sometimes impede understanding.

Score 1

Essays within this score range show little or no skill in responding to the task. The essay shows little or no understanding of the task. If the essay takes a position, it fails to convey reasons to support that position. The essay is minimally developed. The essay may include excessive repetition of the writer's ideas or of ideas in the prompt. Focus on the general topic is usually maintained, but focus on the specific issue in the prompt may not be maintained. There is little or no evidence of an organizational structure or of the logical grouping of ideas. Transitions are rarely used. If present, an introduction and conclusion are minimal. Sentence structure and word choice are simple. Errors may be frequently distracting and may significantly impede understanding.

No Score

Blank, Off Topic, Illegible, Not in English, or Void

Analyzing the ACT Assessment Writing Test

THE ACT ASSESSMENT WRITING PROMPT

The prompt below is similar to the type found in the ACT Writing Test. Read the prompt and the analysis that follows.

DIRECTIONS. The following prompt is designed to evaluate your writing skills. You have 30 minutes to compose a response to the prompt. Make sure that you understand the prompt and that you spend a few minutes planning your response. Your response will be evaluated based on your demonstrated ability to:

- take a position on an issue
- focus your entire response on the topic
- support your position with logically developed reasons and examples
- organize ideas logically within and between paragraphs
- use clear, effective language and adhere to the standards of English grammar

As cell phones become less expensive, more and more teenagers enjoy the privileges of cell phone use. Since these ubiquitous communication devices have the potential to disrupt instruction, school boards are having to decide how to deal with them. Some school boards and parents favor banning cell phones, arguing that the possibility of ringing phones and text messaging in class will lead to annoying distractions at best and rampant cheating at worst. Others are against a ban, citing the safety benefits to children who have the ability to communicate with their parents in case of an emergency. In your opinion, should school boards ban students' cell phones in school?

In your essay, take a position on this issue. You can adopt one of the viewpoints presented in the paragraph above, or you can present a different viewpoint. Support your position with reasons and examples.

Analyzing the Prompt

Notice that the prompt begins with a paragraph discussing a controversial issue. (The issue always relates to the concerns or experiences of many high school students.) This part of the prompt presents two opposing points of view. You may defend one of these viewpoints, or you may choose to adopt a different position on the issue—perhaps one that lies somewhere between the two extremes presented in the paragraph.

Analyzing the Sample Responses

On the following pages are six sample responses to the prompt above, each corresponding to a different score point. Read the responses and the analyses.

SCORE 6 RESPONSE

Anyone who has ever watched the lunchtime dynamics of the average high school cafeteria knows that cell phones are ubiquitous communication devices. Students seem inextricably bonded to their instant messaging, e-mailing, custom-ringing cell phones. Since we can't live without them, how do we live with them in the world of learning? Schools and students can't function amid the racket of phone buzzes and bells. But luckily, they don't have to. By following a few sensible guidelines, students can keep their cell phones and learn, too.

Someday, when we have children of our own, we may tell them how kids once needed two quarters and a pay phone to make an emergency call. After we explain what a pay phone is, we can tell them that the world without cell phones was a place where students could wait outside locked buildings in dangerous conditions. In this world, parents often worried needlessly because they could not contact children who were on their way to or from school. Later, during a time that was almost as barbaric, students often did not correctly use the new technology of cell phones. They cheerfully carried the phones with them without turning the devices off in class. As a result, the phones could interrupt their teachers and their peers, disturbing even their owners' concentration.

How will we get to a happy future in which cell phone abuses are a thing of the past? Through smarter school policies. Tech-smart school districts have developed plans to control students' access to unsafe Web sites. The same thinking would acknowledge that cell phone technology has its place, within limits, on the school campus. No student wants to leave his or her phone at home. But similarly, no teacher wants her class to be interrupted by a student's phone call. The school district's job is to put into place sensible rules that give all students access to their phones in case of emergency while making sure that they do not impact their learning environment. For reasons of courtesy alone, phones should be kept in lockers during class time. With the development of instant messaging, phones can be a distraction even when they are not ringing. During tests, teachers need to know that tests are secure and answers are not being shared. School officials should always have the right to confiscate the phones of people who will not follow such reasonable rules.

Even with the sensible policies above in place, cell phones may still present the occasional annoyance, but the safety aspect of mobile communication is apparent to parents, teachers, and students. During times of bad weather, roadside accidents, or other emergencies, the availability of a cell phone can be vital. Cell phones provide parents with an important link to teenagers who spend hours away from home at school, after-school activities, and work. If schools banned cell phones from campuses, they might face as much opposition from parents as from students themselves. School administrators should understand that cell phones help keep students connected to their families. If this important tool is used correctly, it can provide students with a lifeline and help parents worry just a little less about their children.

Schools should have the option of banning cell phones from campuses, but they should not resort to such draconian measures. A situation in which phones are used in the classroom is unacceptable for teachers and for students. But mostly, phone distractions in the classroom are rude. Just as students learn the proper rules for addressing a letter, for responding to e-mail, and for safe driving, they should learn the proper rules for cell phone courtesy. Just as adults are warned that using cell phones while they drive is distracting and not safe, students should be warned that their education will be compromised if it is constantly interrupted by the racket of jangling ring tones. Once upon a time, we will tell our children, the technology for cell phones was so new and exciting that we thought we had to use them all the time. Then the excitement wore off, and we realized we could hang up and learn.

Analysis

This essay shows “effective skill” in writing. It represents a well-organized, thorough exploration of the writer’s position, which is clearly stated in the first paragraph (“By following a few common sense guidelines, students can keep their cell phones and learn, too”). The position statement itself, neither favoring an outright ban nor a cell phone free-for-all, represents a nuanced response to the prompt. Skillful use of transitions, especially between the second, third, and fourth paragraphs, guide the reader through the essay’s conventional organization. The second paragraph elaborates on the context for the controversy and acknowledges the issue’s complexity. In the third paragraph the writer supports her position by making an effective comparison between schools’ Internet policies and those they might adopt for cell phone usage, and in the fourth paragraph the writer deals with the counterargument that cell phones should be banned entirely.

Throughout the essay the writer demonstrates a mastery of language, employing a consistently engaging and humorous tone while always maintaining a

focus on the issue. A rhetorical strategy introduced early in the essay, in which the writer imagines explaining to the children of the next generation what the world was like before cell phones, is echoed in the final paragraph, bringing the essay full circle to a satisfying conclusion.

SCORE 5 RESPONSE

Your drama club meeting is cancelled at the last minute because your sponsor is ill. Should you: wait an hour in the parking lot for your ride, walk home in the dark, or pick up your cell phone and make new arrangements? For a growing number of high school and middle school students, the answer is to unzip their backpacks and dial away. But with that easy access comes a growing problem for teachers, students, and the school boards that set policies for classrooms. The phones conveniently placed in student backpacks may be ringing at the most inconvenient times. Student's cell phones are too important to ban from schools entirely. For the benefit of teachers and students, schools must develop policies that defend the classroom from cell phones while maintaining the convenience of cell communication.

No business would allow cell phones to disrupt their customers or threaten their livelihood. Businesses post signs asking people to put down their phones at the cash register. Why? Because they could slow down the checkout line and cost the businesses money. Similarly, no school district should allow cell phones to disrupt students or interfere with their instruction. School boards have the authority and the responsibility to pass rules that keep cell phones quiet in the classroom. School officials, including both teachers and administrators, should have the authority to confiscate cell phones that "sound off" during class. The business of school districts is educating kids, and schools are increasingly under pressure to show test results proving that students have mastered materials. If school test scores go down, administrators and educators have to explain what happened. Any distractions that get in the way of passing tests—including cell phones—should go away.

Just because school boards have the authority to ban cell phones doesn't mean that they should do it. For one thing, most students would just panic if they were separated from their phones, while the action might be justified, asking students to give up their phones for the entire day would be traumatic and not productive. For another thing, most students, if presented with a reasonable set of guidelines, can use

their cell phones responsibly. We have all felt first annoyed and then sorry for the person whose phone rang during a movie. We don't want to get those kinds of glares in biology class. A school district should develop a "safety and courtesy policy" that allows students access to their cell phones outside of the classroom. People who violate the rules can be subject to the glares of their peers, but also to having their phones confiscated until after school.

School districts are responsible for the safety and the education of their students. They can meet both by passing and enforcing sensible cell phone guidelines. With the proper guidelines, cell phones in the student population can actually help schools meet their goals of safety and education. Guidelines must protect the integrity of classroom instruction, but they should reflect the reality that cell phones are not going away, and students are plugged in for good.

Analysis

This essay shows "competent skill" in writing. From its engaging introductory lines to its clearly stated position ("For the benefit of teachers and students, schools must develop policies that defend the classroom from cell phones while maintaining the convenience of cell communication"), the essay promises, and largely delivers, a competent response to the prompt. Its organization is logical although the transition between the two body paragraphs could be smoother.

The second paragraph supports the writer's thesis through an interesting comparison with common business practices. The paragraph would benefit, however, from a reorganization of the ideas (better connecting of the practice of businesses with the "business" of schools). The third paragraph responds to the counterargument that cell phones should be banned entirely, although one of the writer's reasons for dismissing a ban ("most students would just panic") lacks convincing support. The skillful conclusion effectively returns to the thesis and summarizes the writer's main points.

The writer's use of language is competent and sometimes quite engaging, particularly in the introduction. The few errors do not distract from the writer's message.

SCORE 4 RESPONSE

You see the signs everywhere, "Please turn off your phone." "Don't get in line until you hang up." And the bumper stickers that say "hang up and drive." Our society is tied to its telephones, but phone users need a user's guide to using their phones safely, politely, and effectively. It is important for people to have access to cell phones. But it is also important for them to know how to use them politely.

The problem is especially tricky when it comes to schools. How can teachers and students concentrate if they're interrupted by custom rings? How can students get their work done if they're taking calls—or listening to half of a classmate's conversation? Clearly, phones in the classroom are unacceptable—it's so annoying! But what are the options? School boards could place a ban on cell phones, but it would never work. Parents would insist that they be allowed to contact their children via cell phone. What can you do with a situation like this, how can you find a compromise? How do you get kids to "hang up and learn"?

Schools can control cell phone use through a combination of reasonable rules and peer pressure. The rules could include requiring students to leave their phones in their lockers or backpacks during class time. No student would object to leaving their phone in a secure place, especially if it meant that they would not be bothered by other peoples' calls. Equally important, though, is creating a climate in which having a phone ring in class is considered "uncool." You've seen peoples' eyes roll when a phone rings in the middle of a wedding ceremony, and you don't want that to be you in World History. It's just to embarrassing to think about.

As prices for cell phones drop, there will be more and more services get added to cell phones. We can't even image what our cell phones might be able to do in a few years. There are going to be more of them in the classroom, not less. Schools and students need to be able to use cell phones for the important tools that they are. They also need to use common sense and discipline to prevent cell phones from being, at best, a nuisance to, at worst, a real hindrance to education. Students have a lot of important work to do in school. Listening to other people's phones ring is a waste of everyones' time, and we shouldn't have to do that in school.

Analysis

This essay shows "adequate mastery" of writing. It is logically organized, setting the context in the first two paragraphs by discussing the problems of cell phone use in general and then focusing on their use in schools in particular and finally asserting the thesis ("Schools can control cell phone use through a combination of reasonable rules and peer pressure."). The remaining body paragraph supports the writer's position, and the conclusion reasserts it.

The essay is slightly out of balance. Too much space is devoted to establishing context and not enough to supporting the writer's position. Counterarguments are mentioned but not seriously dealt with. Still, the writer keeps the essay focused

except for a stray point about the number of features that will be added to cell phones in the future.

The writer's voice is confident if somewhat uncontrolled (too many rhetorical questions and some unnecessarily broad generalizations). Like the higher scoring essays, the response includes a variety of sentences structures. The relatively small number of errors do not get in the way of the writer's message.

SCORE 3 RESPONSE

Should schools be allowed to ban cell phones? That is the question, and the answer is no.

Once, cell phones were used only by bussiness people who could afford such expenseve devices. Today, however, more and more people can afford cell phones, and they are important to busy families. I've seen a lot of kids get cell phones this year, and mostly, they use them to keep in touch with their parents. Parents use cell phones to touch base with their children before and after school, making sure that their kids are safe and have what they need. It is important for parents to be abel to get in touch with their kids if there is an emergency. What busy kids and parents don't need, though, is more trouble focusing on the lesson presented in the classroom. Parents are busy, and teachers are busy, too. They need to be able to teach their lessons without interruptions. You can't just put your teacher on hold while you take a call.

Banning cell phones, however, is not the right answer. Cell phones are to much a part of student's lifestyles, and they wouldn't know what to do if they had to leave their cell phones at home. Students are probably going to be using cell phones for the rest of there lives, and so they can learn to practice phone etiquette at school. Just like at the movies, teachers can say, "Please turn off your phones," at the beginning of class. Or the school could pass policies that say students must leave cell phones in their lockers. The schools would have to make sure that the lockers could be locked up, so the cell phones would be safe. There is no way to know when you're going to need to make an emergency call. Cell phones are too important to be banned by schools. But they also are too important to be used improperly.

Analysis

This response to the prompt shows “some developing skill” in writing. The strengths of the essay include a clear position on the topic, a strong attempt in the second paragraph to establish the context for the controversy, a fairly evident organizational pattern, and some variety in sentence structure. The essay suffers, however, from poorly developed paragraphs, a weak introduction and conclusion, little effort to address counterarguments, and some fairly distracting language errors.

In supporting the position that cell phones should not be banned, the writer uses the rather weak argument that students “wouldn’t know what to do if they had to leave their cell phones at home.” The student’s ideas for sensible school policies to use instead of banning phones is more convincing, though underdeveloped. The concluding lines, while demonstrating an attempt to use parallel structure for rhetorical effect, are marred by poor word choice in the final sentence (“Cell phones are too important to be banned by schools. But they also are too important to be used improperly”).

SCORE 2 RESPONSE

Cell phones allow students to be in almost constant communication with their families. Even while the students are in school. However, when cell phones become an unacceptable distraction, people should be able to create rules to keep them from bothering other students. I know I hate it when peoples' phones ring while I'm in the library or in a movie.

Cell phones allow parents to keep track of their kids. They can find out if kids arrived on time at a music lesson, or if their going home to study with a friend. If a student is on medicine or something, they might need a cell phone for health reasons. But most kids have a cell phone just to talk to their friends. They don't have to do that during class. There is no reason why kids can't turn off cell phones during class, they can leave cell phones in lockers, too.

It use to be that classroom interruptions were just the messages read over the loudspeaker. Now cell phones are the ubiquitous communication devices, as the quotation says, that keeps students from concentration. Schools should do whatever they need to do to allow teachers and students to do their jobs.

Analysis

This essay shows “inconsistent or weak” skill in writing. Although its organizational structure is evident—with a clearly demarcated introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion that reveal the writer’s awareness of basic writing strategies—the ideas within each paragraph are not expressed clearly or coherently. The writer’s position (“when cell phones become an unacceptable distraction, people should be able to create rules to keep them from bothering other students”) is not clear: The writer does not explain what constitutes “unacceptable distractions,” which people might create rules governing cell phone use, or whether these rules would make up an all-out ban or a group of policies to regulate cell phone use in school. The writer’s support for cell phone regulation only appears at the end of the body paragraph. Elsewhere in the body paragraph the writer does make a concession to the counterargument that some students need to carry a cell phone for health reasons—an effective strategy.

In addition to problems with ideas and their organization, the essay has some fairly significant language problems. The presence of fragments and run-on sentences, for example, compromises the effectiveness of the writer’s message.

SCORE 1 RESPONSE

I think school's should ban cell phones. If they become a problem for teachers. Cell phones have there place in school, and many students need them. Many parents provide cell phones to help keep their children safe. Usualy, kids get phones on there birthday or some other holiday. Sometimes kids save up money from there job to get special things for the phone or to get a better phone. There are a lot of cell phones in my school.

If schools banned phones, then kids would get really mad. Maybe the parents that want to call there kids would get mad to. I dont think that is necessary, it won't help kids learn. There is another way to take care of the problem. There could be rules about using cell phones so that they do not bother other people. Maybe the school could have a meeting and ask kids to turn off their phones. Or kids could come up with rules that they think are fair about phones. Teachers and other students should not have to put up with being annoyed by cell phones. I think schools' should ban cell phones, if they become a problem for teachers.

Analysis

This essay response shows “little or no skill” in responding to the prompt. The essay begins with a clear enough position statement (“I think school’s should ban cell phones”), but what follows frequently undermines or contradicts that statement. There is no clear distinction between the introduction, body, and conclusion, as ideas are strung together with few logical connections. Many of the ideas in the first paragraph have nothing to do with the prompt, but with a tangential issue (how students come to have cell phones) whose significance to the issue at hand is not explained. The ideas in the second paragraph have more to do with the issues raised in the prompt, but these ideas don’t add up to a coherent message. Problems with fragments and pronoun reference add to the confusion.

Strategies for Responding to the ACT Assessment Writing Test

PREWRITING

Plan to spend a few minutes (up to 5) identifying your position and roughly outlining your response. Although the ACT publishers do not dictate the number of paragraphs that should be included in a high-scoring essay, the best scoring essays will tend to have *at least* five well-developed paragraphs. Planning your essay with this number in mind, you will be able to use your writing time more efficiently.

A quick review of the ACT Six-Point Holistic Scoring Rubric (pages 148–149) serves as a reminder that in addition to the criteria listed in the writing directions (see page 150), two elements are key to obtaining a high score:

- an overview of the context in which the controversy at hand takes place
- an acknowledgment of the complexity of the issue, whether in the form of a summary of the various perspectives or a response to counterarguments

Thus, a typical five- (or six-) paragraph outline might look like this:

- I. introduction (include context and your position statement)
- II. further exploration of context *or* summary of perspectives
- III. support for your viewpoint (may require an additional paragraph or two)
- IV. counterarguments and your response to them
- V. conclusion

WRITING YOUR RESPONSE

Plan on spending about 25 minutes writing your essay. For writing strategies, refer to page 56 in this booklet. Keep in mind that although the demands of the SAT Writing Test are similar to those of the ACT, you will have five minutes more to respond to the ACT prompt than do students taking the SAT test. Use all your writing time to develop your ideas as fully, and logically, as possible.

PROOFREADING

Leave yourself a couple of minutes to review your essay for glaring errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Mark corrections neatly in your test booklet.

Preparing for the ACT

The ACT Assessment Writing Test

PRACTICE

Practice Prompt #1

DIRECTIONS. The following prompt is designed to evaluate your writing skills. You have 30 minutes to compose a response to the prompt. Make sure you understand the prompt and that you spend a few minutes planning your response. Your response will be evaluated based on your demonstrated ability to:

- take a position on an issue
- focus your entire response on the topic
- support your position with logically developed reasons and examples
- organize ideas logically within and between paragraphs
- use clear, effective language and adhere to the standards of English grammar

Many states and school districts require students to pass standardized high school exit exams, which usually cover math and English skills, before they can graduate from high school. Even students with passing grades in all their classes can potentially be held back on the basis of not passing these high-stakes tests. Advocates of such tests claim that they lead to higher achievement among students and help ensure that all students within a state or district are mastering the same skills. Opponents say that the tests cause teachers to teach a narrow set of skills tailored to passing the test; some students claim the tests cover material that they haven't learned in class. In your opinion, should students be required to pass a high school exit exam?

In your essay, take a position on this issue. You can adopt one of the viewpoints presented in the paragraph above, or you can present a different viewpoint. Support your position with reasons and examples.

Keep in mind:

- When you take the actual ACT writing test, you will write your response in pencil on the lined pages inside an answer folder. You can make prewriting notes on unlined pages in the separate test booklet in which the prompt appears. For this practice session, use your own lined paper.
- Respond only to the topic in the prompt. An essay that is “off-topic” will receive no score.

High-, medium-, and low-range sample responses to this practice prompt appear on pages 161–163.

PRACTICE PROMPT #1

Score 6 Response

Exit exams have changed the way students think about graduation. Not only do students need to receive the proper number of credits with passing grades, they also must pass a standardized test that reviews core information covered in high school classes. Many people have complained about the manner in which exit exams are developed and presented to students, explaining that tests are too hard and that they take time away from classroom instruction. Despite what the critics say, exit exams are the best tool schools have to measure a baseline of proficiency for their students. Although the manner of testing may be continually improved, exit exams should be kept in place because they maintain standards and keep schools, teachers, and students focused on fundamental information.

Standards for individual teachers and schools can vary widely, and work that receives an “A” in one school’s biology class might receive a “C” in a class that was more demanding and rigorous. Some state universities accept all students that graduate in the top 10 percent of their high school classes. University students will tell you that many of these “top-10-percenters” are much better prepared for college-level classes than others. Exit exams can help narrow this wide variation among high school seniors’ preparation for college. When the requirements for exit exams are in place, seniors everywhere will be responsible for the material that is most fundamental to preparing them for college. The result will be that more students will have covered the basics.

Some students may argue that preparing for exit exams leaves less time for teachers to individualize the curriculum of their classroom. I would argue that good teachers are going to be good teachers. Good teachers were probably already teaching the fundamentals of the exit exam. The presence of an exit exam does not diminish creative teaching; it only asks that teachers be creative within a format that includes an established core of instruction. An excellent, creative teacher will cover core materials while including all the interesting, fun activities that make students want to learn even more. When facing the reality of an exit exam, a teacher that would have been inclined to skip some basic material will be reminded to emphasize it before going on to related topics.

Some students argue that exit exams force them to spend class time on topics that are not interesting to them. This type of argument is more a reflection of the level of teaching that students experience than of the topics they study. No classroom topic is inherently boring or fascinating. When students can see the value of learning a topic, they will become more interested in it. Critics of these “uninteresting” topics also should recognize that exit exams give students a kind of core knowledge that is invaluable to us as a society. When high school students pass an exit exam to prove mastery of particular concepts of history, science, mathematics, and literature, it raises the cultural literacy of our entire society.

Students might complain that studying for exit exams takes up time that they would be using for extracurricular activities. They might ask themselves what they’re doing in school in the first place. Is it to learn about chess and scouting and

computer club? Or is it to get the tools they need to get jobs or continue their education? Life after high school is certainly interesting if you know how to debate or play tennis, but students are much better prepared, at age eighteen, if they have the tools they need to get a job or to do well in college.

Exit exams add pressure to the high school senior's year, and, if poorly designed, they can test material that students will not cover until later in the school year. These criticisms are valid, but they should not diminish the importance of exit exams for validating the work that students do in high school. If a high school diploma means only that teachers want to pass students out of their classes, then the value of a high school education is diminished for every graduating senior. High standards should never be considered a problem. The presence of exit exams only increases the value of each student's high school diploma.

Score 4 Response

Increasingly, schools are requiring that students pass exit exams to graduate from high schools. In theory, the exit exams set standards and make sure that students from high schools across a city or state are mastering the same information. In actual practice, exit exams only ratchet up a high school senior's anxiety level. If schools have confidence in their teachers' abilities and their own requirements, they should have no problems with giving a diploma to a student who passes all the required courses in a high school. If school administrators need an exit exam to make sure the student really learned something, then the school administrators should go back to school.

Exit exams are flawed in a number of ways. Are multiple-choice tests really the best way to find out if students have learned material? Some students do better with short answer tests or essay exams. And some students don't do well on standardized tests at all. The pressure on students to pass these tests is huge. Kids can get amazingly nervous about these tests, and that kind of pressure can't help them do well.

One of the ways that exit exams are flawed is that we have to talk about them all the time at school. If students don't pass the tests, then they can't graduate. If teachers have kids in their class that don't pass, they get in trouble, maybe they won't get a raise next year. And if schools have a certain number of students who don't pass, they get in trouble, too. Exit exams seem to be about avoiding trouble, and having schools look good for their passing rates. But there doesn't seem to be a lot of emphasis on learning. Students may have learned to pass the test, but in the process, they may become really negative about school and the whole learning process. Instead of having teachers worried about whether they'll lose their job, why not encourage them to find projects and books that make learning fun, and make kids want to learn more than what is just on the test?

The problem with exit tests is that they make so much of the learning process seem negative. Exit tests say, essentially, you'd better learn to pass this exam, or you won't get credit for attending high school. Isn't there a better way to motivate students to learn?

Score 2 Response

Should students have to pass an exit exam if they have passed all there classes? In order to graduate? I say no. Something is wrong if students have passed all their classes and still did not pass the exit exam. Something may be wrong with the teachers, or something may be wrong with the exam. I don't know. But if you pass one, you should pass the other. Some kids in our district that didn't pass the exit exam, and they weren't not smart. I think that some schools spent a lot of time just going over the exit exam. If you spend a year just practicing to take the exit exam, you'll probably pass it. If you spend a year going to band practice and taking some electives and doing experiments in chemistry that aren't tested on the exit exam, then you might not pass it. You will have learned alot of things, and they might not be tested on the exit exam.

Should you have to pass an exit exam in order to graduate from high school? What does it prove? It proves that somebody thinks a exit exam is important. But then are the classes we take not important? It's like somebody doesn't trust that our classes are good, that our teachers are good, and that our grades don't mean we learned anything. If people don't think student's passing grades are good enough, maybe somebody else should be taking an exit exam.

The ACT Assessment Writing Test: Practice, *continued***Practice Prompt #2**

DIRECTIONS. The following prompt is designed to evaluate your writing skills. You have 30 minutes to compose a response to the prompt. Make sure you understand the prompt and that you spend a few minutes planning your response. Your response will be evaluated based on your demonstrated ability to:

- take a position on an issue
- focus your entire response on the topic
- support your position with logically developed reasons and examples
- organize ideas logically within and between paragraphs
- use clear, effective language and adhere to the standards of English grammar

Some recent incidents have tested schools' tolerance for their students' freedom of expression. Some students feel they should enjoy the same First Amendment right to free speech that citizens in general enjoy, and the Supreme Court has ruled that students need not check their constitutional rights at the door. Many school administrators, however, feel that unfettered free speech leads to the disruption of a school's mission. In your opinion, should schools have the right to restrict students' speech?

In your essay, take a position on this issue. You can adopt one of the viewpoints presented in the paragraph above, or you can present a different viewpoint. Support your position with reasons and examples.

Keep in mind:

- When you take the actual ACT writing test, you will write your response in pencil on the lined pages inside an answer folder. You can make prewriting notes on unlined pages in the separate test booklet in which the prompt appears. For this practice session, use your own lined paper.
- Respond only to the topic in the prompt. An essay that is "off-topic" will receive no score.

High-, medium-, and low-range sample responses to this practice prompt appear on pages 165–167.

PRACTICE PROMPT #2

Score 6 Response

How do you take away the freedoms of a society? A little bit at a time. One easy place to start is with the rights of students. In the name of education, an authoritarian regime could restrict students' ability to protest an unpopular war to express themselves in student publications, or it could even try to control students' behavior outside the classroom. It is shocking and saddening that the rights that were so central to the founding of our nation are considered "optional" in the classroom. If the First Amendment is a key American right, it should be made available to all U.S. citizens, including those who attend our nation's public schools and universities.

Consider how many people put magnets on their cars or flag pins on their clothes that symbolize their support for America's soldiers. These symbols generally support U.S. policies and are accepted without question as examples of individuals' free speech. Now imagine that someone invented a symbol that meant "war is stupid and expensive and immoral." Would that symbol, one that questioned U.S. policies, also be accepted as an example of free speech? Would that symbol provoke comment and discussion in a school environment? I certainly hope so. Would the presence of such a symbol prevent schools from their mission of teaching? I would argue that the insertion of free speech and open debate could only add to students' educational experience. The Supreme Court agreed, too, and it ruled that students could wear armbands in school to indicate they did not support the Vietnam War.

Journalists continually return to the First Amendment's support, arguing that a free country must be supported by a free press. Why are publications produced in school any different from those produced in newspapers and magazines with wider circulation? If students really want to learn about the practice of journalism while they are in high school, they must learn about the pressures and responsibilities that journalists face. If a school board or administrator censors its schools' publications, he or she may have avoided an unpleasant topic or averted embarrassment. However, they also will have imparted the lasting lessons of censorship: Those in power can repress information when it suits them.

Carefully teach students in school not to ask uncomfortable questions or express unpopular ideas, and what kind of a society do you have when you are finished? A carefully trained group of individuals that see free speech as awkward or uncomfortable. This is a group that will not vigorously fight for the freedoms of others. This group might wonder why no one supports it when its own freedoms are taken away. Restricting students' speech in school teaches a number of lessons, none of them the kind supported by Thomas Paine or the Founding Fathers. For those arguing that free speech disrupts a school's mission, I would ask this question: What mission could possibly be more important than teaching students to defend the rights promised them by the U.S. Constitution?

Take away a student's right to protest. Then repress people who speak up in support of dissenters. Then criticize those who publish material that shows

authorities in an unflattering light. Little by little, the freedoms that our country was founded on can erode. Little by little, our ability to defend them diminishes. The mission of a school is to educate its students. But the ability to teach a range of opinions and ideas, with materials that are not censored propaganda, begins with the freedom of expression. Restrict that expression, and schools aren't educating, they're only brainwashing. A school in which freedom of speech is protected might be a louder, more argumentative, generally messier school than one in which student speech is restricted, but if you're trying to nurture people who will fight to the death for your right to disagree with them, what kind of school would you rather have?

Score 4 Response

The mission of schools is to provide students with an education. That mission can fail if there is not discipline in the school. Students cannot learn if other students talk over the teacher and prevent him or her from presenting instruction. Similarly, if the school environment is disruptive or frightening, students cannot concentrate on their work. I think that schools must maintain discipline in schools in order for schools to be productive and healthy learning places. If students' right to free speech is temporarily restricted, it is a small price to pay for the education that everyone wants to receive.

Imagine a school in which students can do anything they want. They can wear anything, no matter how revealing it is or what slogans are written on their t-shirts. They say anything they want to in school programs or presentations, no matter how vulgar it might be, or how offensive other students might find their statements. They can write anything they want in the school newspaper, even if some students think the topics are disturbing. This school might have complete freedom of speech, but is it a school in which any learning can take place? Students in this environment would be so defensive that they could not concentrate on their studies. Is this a school anyone would want to attend? Not if they wanted to learn anything. Learning cannot take place in the absence of discipline.

What about students' free speech? There are lots of ways to practice free speech. Students can say and do whatever they want outside the classroom. Schools are all about ideas. But students can express their ideas in ways that respect other people and do not disrupt the work of teachers or other students. Just because people are not being actively offended doesn't mean that First Amendment rights are being repressed.

The First Amendment is a sacred thing, and no one wants to say it is not important. However, school is important, too. Schools have to balance the work they have to do with the rights of others. Whose rights are more important? The people who want to wear a shirt with an offensive message, or the person who needs to get an education so they can make a living? If schools do their jobs right, they can restrict students' speech enough to create a disciplined learning environment. At the same time, they can provide forums so that students who have something important to say can express it in an appropriate way.

Score 2 Response

The Court says that students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse door. That means that students should not lose their rights just because they are students. Should schools have the right to restrict students' speech? The Court says no, and I think the court is right.

At our school, we often are told that we cannot wear certain clothes. We also cannot put certain things on our lockers. We cannot put certain words on posters or flyers if they are posted at the school. I think that these rules make us shed our constitutional rights. Students who are working hard at school should not also have to think about what they are wearing or what words that they can say or cannot say. What we are wearing or what words we write or don't write shouldn't affect the way we learn and it should not get in the teacher's way of teaching us. I think it only gets in the way of our rights.

At school we learn about history and we learn about how our country was built on the importance of certain rights. Freedom of expression is an important right. If schools are teaching us that are rights are not important, then I think schools are teaching us the wrong thing.