

Preparing for the SAT

June 2, 2015
Rice University

Georgette Mills, Rice University Student
Joy Zhou, Rice University Student
Seth Berggren, Rice University Student
Gabby Armardi, Rice University Student
Susan Troutman, RUSMP Director of Secondary Programs

Outline

- * Overview
- * Critical Reading Section
- * Mathematics Section
- * Writing Section
 - Essay
- * SAT Subject Tests
- * Day-of-test checklist
- * What can I do today?
- * Upcoming Testing Dates
- * Future changes to the test

Redesigned SAT

- * In March 2016, the SAT will switch from the “old” SAT to a redesigned SAT
- * Keep in mind that once the redesigned SAT is released, there is no “old” SAT – plan when you take the test accordingly
- * We’ll go over the differences between the two throughout this presentation

A great reading before taking the test...

Getting Ready for the SAT

College Board SAT Bulletin

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/SAT/public/pdf/getting-ready-for-the-sat.pdf>

Old SAT Test Sections

Section	Number of questions
Writing	
Improving sentences	25
Identifying sentence errors	18
Improving paragraphs	6
Essay	1 prompt, 2 pages of writing space
Critical Reading	
Sentence completion	19
Passage-based reading	48
Mathematics	
Standard Multiple choice	44
Student-produced response	10
Field Test Section	
Critical Reading, Mathematics, or Writing	varies

New SAT Test Sections

Section	Number of Questions
Evidence-based Reading and Writing	
Reading Test	52
Writing and Language	44
Math	58
Essay (optional)	1

Old SAT Timing

Testing	3 hours, 45 minutes
Breaks	15 minutes
Set up	~ 30 to 45 minutes
Total Time	~4 hours, 30 to 45 minutes

- * 10 sections in all
- * Three 5-minute breaks after every other 25-minute section
- * Field Test Section: 25 minutes
 - This section is unscored, **BUT** you won't know which section it is
- * The essay is always first
- * Different test versions have different orders of sections

Section		Minutes	Total Time
Writing			60 minutes
	Essay	25	
	Multiple choice	25	
	Multiple choice	10	
Critical Reading			70 minutes
	Multiple choice	25	
	Multiple choice	25	
	Multiple choice	20	
Mathematics			70 minutes
	20 Multiple choice	25	
	8 Multiple choice, 10 student-produced	25	
	16 Multiple choice	20	
Field Test	Multiple choice	25	25 minutes

New SAT Timing

Section	Minutes
Reading	65
Writing and Language	35
Math	80
Essay (optional)	50

Old SAT Scoring

- * Total score for each section (Critical Reading, Writing (includes essay score), Mathematics)
 - On a 200- to 800-point scale
 - 10-point intervals
- Total score range: 600 – 2400

Type of Question	Correct Response	Incorrect Response	Answer Left Blank
Multiple choice	1 pt	-0.25 pt	0 pt
Student-produced response (“bubble-in number”)	1 pt	0 pt	0 pt
	Holistic Scoring		
Essay	2 readers x scale of 1 to 6 = 2 to 12 pt		

New SAT Scoring

- * Both sections (Evidence-based Reading and Writing, Math) graded on a scale from 200 to 800
- * Total score range: 400 – 1600
- * Essay reported as a separate score (three aspects graded from 1 – 4)
- * No penalty for wrong answers 😊
- * Subscores!

General Test-Taking Strategies

- * Answer the easy questions first
 - These **tend** to be the ones at the beginning of the section
 - EXCEPTION: passage-based questions are by logic of passage
- * Use process of elimination to make educated guesses
 - Cross out answers that you know are wrong
 - If you can eliminate answers down to 2 or 3, go ahead and guess

General Test-Taking Strategies

- * Skip questions on which you have no clue or that take too much time
 - Mark them in your test booklet and then come back to them if you have time at the end
- * Fill in your answer sheet **as you do the test** and occasionally check for bubbling mistakes
- * New SAT: make sure you answer every question, even if you can't eliminate any wrong answers

General Test-Taking Strategies

- * ALWAYS ANSWER WITH A NO. 2 PENCIL
 - All essays written in pen will receive a score of zero
 - Bubbles need to be filled in darkly and completely
- * When crossing out answer choices, don't cross them out too darkly (so you can still read them!)

The *best* way to study...

Official SAT Practice Test

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/sat-practice-test>

Old SAT – Critical Reading Section

Critical Reading General Notes

- * CALCULATORS MAY NOT BE ON YOUR DESK OR USED DURING THIS SECTION
- * Optimize your time
 - Work on the sentence completion questions first
 - Don't just skip around from passage to passage; attempt every question before you move on to the next passage

Types of Critical Reading Questions

Sentence Completions

- * Before the test
 - Read as many books as you can
 - Many SAT study books contain lists of vocabulary words to study
- * During the test
 - Focus on filling in one blank at a time and use process of elimination

Directions

Each sentence below has one or two blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Beneath the sentence are five words or sets of words labeled A through E. Choose the word or set of words that, when inserted in the sentence, best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

Example:

Hoping to ----- the dispute, negotiators proposed a compromise that they felt would be ----- to both labor and management.

- (A) enforce . . useful
- (B) end . . divisive
- (C) overcome . . unattractive
- (D) extend . . satisfactory
- (E) resolve . . acceptable

(A) (B) (C) (D) ●

Sample Question

- * Sentence Completion Question
- * Handout question #1
- * The novel's protagonist, a pearl diver, naïvely expects that the buyers will compete among themselves to pay him the best price for his pearl, but instead they ----- to ----- him.
 - * (A) venture . . reward
 - * (B) pretend . . praise
 - * (C) conspire . . reimburse
 - * (D) refuse . . cheat
 - * (E) collude . . swindle

Sample Question

- * Sentence completion
- * Handout question #1
- * The novel's protagonist, a pearl diver, naïvely expects that the buyers will compete among themselves to pay him the best price for his pearl, but instead they ----- to ----- him.
 - * (A) venture . . reward
 - * (B) pretend . . praise
 - * (C) conspire . . reimburse
 - * (D) refuse . . cheat
 - * (E) collude . . swindle

Passage-Based Questions

- * Before the test
 - Familiarize yourself with different writing styles
- * During the test
 - Answer the “line” and vocabulary questions first, then “big picture” questions
 - To read or not to read?

Directions

The passages below are followed by questions based on their content; questions following a pair of related passages may also be based on the relationship between the paired passages. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages and in any introductory material that may be provided.

Sample Question

- * Passage-based question
- * Handout question #2

What would be the most likely reaction by the author of Passage 1 to the argument cited in lines 18-23 of Passage 2 (“Nothing . . . another”)?

- (A) Surprise at the assumption that freedom of speech is indispensable to democracy
- (B) Dismay at the Supreme Court’s vigorous defense of vendors’ rights
- (C) Hope that the same reasoning would be applied to all unsolicited e-mail
- (D) Concern for the plight of mass marketers facing substantial economic losses
- (E) Appreciation for the political complexity of the debate about spam

Sample Question

- * Passage-based question
- * Handout question #2

What would be the most likely reaction by the author of Passage 1 to the argument cited in lines 18-23 of Passage 2 (“Nothing . . . another”)?

- (A) Surprise at the assumption that freedom of speech is indispensable to democracy
- (B) Dismay at the Supreme Court’s vigorous defense of vendors’ rights
- (C) Hope that the same reasoning would be applied to all unsolicited e-mail
- (D) Concern for the plight of mass marketers facing substantial economic losses
- (E) Appreciation for the political complexity of the debate about spam

Sample Question

- * Passage-based question
- * Handout question #3

The primary purpose of Passage 2 is to

- (A) confirm a widely held belief
- (B) discuss the inadequacies of a ruling
- (C) defend a controversial technology
- (D) analyze a widespread social problem
- (E) lay the foundation for a course of action

Sample Question

- * Passage-based question
- * Handout question #3

The primary purpose of Passage 2 is to

- (A) confirm a widely held belief
- (B) discuss the inadequacies of a ruling
- (C) defend a controversial technology
- (D) analyze a widespread social problem
- (E) lay the foundation for a course of action

New SAT – Reading Section

Main changes from Old SAT

- * Analysis in history/social science and analysis in science
 - * Some of the new SAT passages are history/social science or science passages
 - * Passages may include analysis of graphics
- * Relevant words in context
 - * Use context clues in passages to determine meaning of words and phrases
- * Use of evidence in text to answer questions

Sample Question

- * Analysis of science question
- * Question and passage on your handout – question #4

The passage most strongly suggests that Adelita used which of the following to navigate her 9,000-mile journey?

- (A) The current of the North Atlantic gyre
- (B) Cues from electromagnetic coils designed by Putman and Lohmann
- (C) The inclination and intensity of Earth's magnetic field
- (D) A simulated “magnetic signature” configured by Lohmann

Sample Question

- * Analysis of science question
- * See handout for passage and question – question #4
- * Passage difficulty: easy
- * Question difficulty: easy

The passage most strongly suggests that Adelita used which of the following to navigate her 9,000-mile journey?

- (A) The current of the North Atlantic gyre
- (B) Cues from electromagnetic coils designed by Putman and Lohmann
- (C) The inclination and intensity of Earth's magnetic field
- (D) A simulated “magnetic signature” configured by Lohmann

Sample Question

- * Evidence question
- * See handout for passage and question – question #5

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- (A) Lines 1–3 (“In 1996...way”)
- (B) Lines 33 – 35 (“Using...surface”)
- (C) Lines 60 – 63 (“In the wild...stars”)
- (D) Lines 72-75 (“Neither...it is”)

Sample Question

- * Evidence question
- * See handout for passage
- * Passage difficulty: easy
- * Question difficulty: moderate

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

(A) Lines 1–3 (“In 1996...way”)

(B) Lines 33 – 35
 (“Using...surface”)

(C) Lines 60 – 63 (“In the
wild...stars”)

(D) Lines 72-75 (“Neither...it is”)

Sample Question

- * Relevant words in context
- * See handout for passage and question – question #6

As used in line 4, “tracked” most nearly means

- (A) searched for.
- (B) traveled over.
- (C) followed.
- (D) hunted.

Sample Question

- * Relevant words in context
- * See handout for passage
- * Passage difficulty: easy
- * Question difficulty: easy

As used in line 4,
“tracked” most nearly
means

- (A) searched for.
- (B) traveled over.
- (C) followed.
- (D) hunted.

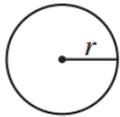
Old SAT – Mathematics Section

Mathematics General Notes

- * When studying, you don't need to memorize every formula
- * Use the test booklet for scratch work
 - Draw diagrams, underline/circle key words
- * Use your calculator wisely
 - All problems can be solved without a calculator
 - Some problems are done faster with a calculator **but** some are not
- * Check: *does your answer make sense?*
- * All figures are drawn to scale unless otherwise indicated

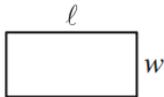
Formula Chart

Reference Information

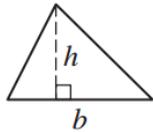


$$A = \pi r^2$$

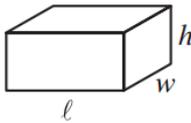
$$C = 2\pi r$$



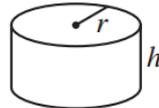
$$A = \ell w$$



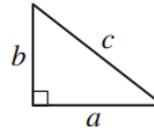
$$A = \frac{1}{2}bh$$



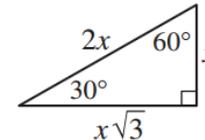
$$V = \ell wh$$



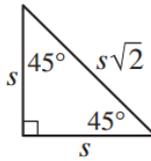
$$V = \pi r^2 h$$



$$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$$



Special Right Triangles



The number of degrees of arc in a circle is 360.

The sum of the measures in degrees of the angles of a triangle is 180.

Acceptable Calculators

- Most graphing calculators (see chart)
- All scientific calculators
- All four-function calculators (not recommended)

Casio	Hewlett-Packard	Texas Instruments
FX-6000 series	HP-9G	TI-73
FX-6200 series	HP-28 series	TI-80
FX-6300 series	HP-38G	TI-81
FX-6500 series	HP-39 series	TI-82
FX-7000 series	HP-40 series	TI-83/TI-83 Plus
FX-7300 series	HP-48 series	TI-83 Plus Silver
FX-7400 series	HP-49 series	TI-84 Plus
FX-7500 series	HP-50 series	TI-84 Plus Silver
FX-7700 series	HP Prime	TI-84 Plus C Silver
FX-7800 series		TI-85
FX-8000 series	Radio Shack	TI-86
FX-8500 series	EC-4033	TI-89
FX-8700 series	EC-4034	TI-89 Titanium
FX-8800 series	EC-4037	TI-Nspire/TI-Nspire CX
FX-9700 series		TI-Nspire CAS/TI-Nspire CX CAS
FX-9750 series	Sharp	TI-Nspire CM-C
FX-9860 series	EL-5200	TI-Nspire CAS CX-C
CFX-9800 series	EL-9200 series	
CFX-9850 series	EL-9300 series	Other
CFX-9950 series	EL-9600 series*	Datexx DS-883
CFX-9970 series	EL-9900 series	Micronta
FX 1.0 series		Smart ²
Algebra FX 2.0 series		
FX-CG-10 (PRIZM)		
FX-CG-20		

*The use of the stylus is not permitted.

Old SAT – Types of Math Questions

Multiple choice Questions

- Before the test
 - At least review the major math concepts described in the SAT bulletin
 - Review notes from Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry
- During the test
 - See *General Notes*
 - Bring a calculator you are familiar with—you want to know how to use it BEFORE the test!

Directions

For this section, solve each problem and decide which is the best of the choices given. Fill in the corresponding circle on the answer sheet. You may use any available space for scratch work.

Notes

1. The use of a calculator is permitted.
2. All numbers used are real numbers.
3. Figures that accompany problems in this test are intended to provide information useful in solving the problems. They are drawn as accurately as possible EXCEPT when it is stated in a specific problem that the figure is not drawn to scale. All figures lie in a plane unless otherwise indicated.
4. Unless otherwise specified, the domain of any function f is assumed to be the set of all real numbers x for which $f(x)$ is a real number.

Sample Question

- * Multiple Choice
- * Handout question #7

At the beginning of 2006, both Alan and Dave were taller than Boris, and Boris was taller than Charles. During the year, Alan grew 2 inches, Boris and Dave each grew 4 inches, and Charles grew 3 inches. Of the following, which could NOT have been true at the beginning of 2007?

- (A) Alan was shorter than Boris.
- (B) Alan was shorter than Charles.
- (C) Boris was shorter than Dave.
- (D) Dave was shorter than Alan.
- (E) Dave was shorter than Charles.

Sample Question

- * Multiple Choice
- * Handout question #7

At the beginning of 2006, both Alan and Dave were taller than Boris, and Boris was taller than Charles. During the year, Alan grew 2 inches, Boris and Dave each grew 4 inches, and Charles grew 3 inches. Of the following, which could NOT have been true at the beginning of 2007?

- (A) Alan was shorter than Boris.
- (B) Alan was shorter than Charles.
- (C) Boris was shorter than Dave.
- (D) Dave was shorter than Alan.
- (E) Dave was shorter than Charles.

Student-Produced Responses

- * “Bubble-in number” questions
- * No answer choices are provided
- * Only numbers that range from 0 to 9999
 - Anything not in range is wrong
- * Could be a fraction or a decimal
- * Zero can only be gridded in columns 2, 3, or 4

Each of the remaining questions requires you to solve the problem and enter your answer by marking the circles in the special grid, as shown in the examples below. You may use any available space for scratch work.

Answer: $\frac{7}{12}$

Write answer in boxes. →

7	/	1	2
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
•	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

← Fraction line

Grid in result. →

Answer: 2.5

2	.	5	
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	•	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	•
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

← Decimal point

Answer: 201

Either position is correct.

2	0	1	
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	•
2	•	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4

2	0	1	
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	•	1
2	•	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4

Note: You may start your answers in any column, space permitting. Columns not needed should be left blank.

- Mark no more than one circle in any column.
- Because the answer sheet will be machine-scored, **you will receive credit only if the circles are filled in correctly.**
- Although not required, it is suggested that you write your answer in the boxes at the top of the columns to help you fill in the circles accurately.
- Some problems may have more than one correct answer. In such cases, grid only one answer.
- No question has a negative answer.
- **Mixed numbers** such as $3\frac{1}{2}$ must be gridded as 3.5 or 7/2. (If

3	/	1	2
•	•	•	•

 is gridded, it will be interpreted as $\frac{31}{2}$, not $3\frac{1}{2}$.)
- **Decimal Answers:** If you obtain a decimal answer with more digits than the grid can accommodate, it may be either rounded or truncated, but it must fill the entire grid. For example, if you obtain an answer such as 0.6666..., you should record your result as .666 or .667. **A less accurate value such as .66 or .67 will be scored as incorrect.**

Acceptable ways to grid $\frac{2}{3}$ are:

2	/	3	
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	•	2	2
3	3	3	•
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6

.	6	6	6
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	•	•	•

.	6	6	7
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	•	•	•

Tips for Student-Produced Responses

- * Have a plan for where to begin gridding before the test
- * Do not use leading zeroes
- * Don't simplify fractions unless they don't fit
- * Be careful what you bubble
- * Go ahead and guess
 - No points are taken off if the answer is wrong
- * Only what is bubbled in the grid is scored!

Sample Question

- * Student-produced response
- * Handout question #8

For all positive integers a and b , let $a \diamond b$ be defined as

$$a \diamond b = \frac{a^b + 1}{a - 1}$$

What is $4 \diamond 2$?

Sample Question

- * Student-produced response
- * Handout question #8

1	7	/	3
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

5	.	6	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	5	5
6	6	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

5	.	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	5	5
6	6	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	6
7	7	7	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

New SAT - Math

Main changes from Old SAT

- * Heart of Algebra: linear equations and systems
- * Problem Solving and Data Analysis
- * Passport to Advanced Math: manipulation of complex equations
- * Additional Topics in Math: geometry, trigonometry, imaginary numbers
- * No calculator portion

Sample Question

- * Heart of Algebra
- * Handout question #9

When a scientist dives in salt water to a depth of 9 feet below the surface, the pressure due to the atmosphere and surrounding water is 18.7 pounds per square inch. As the scientist descends, the pressure increases linearly. At a depth of 14 feet, the pressure is 20.9 pounds per square inch. If the pressure increases at a constant rate as the scientist's depth below the surface increases, which of the following linear models best describes the pressure p in pounds per square inch at a depth of d feet below the surface?

(A) $p = 0.44d + 0.77$

(B) $p = 0.44d + 14.74$

(C) $p = 2.2d - 1.1$

(D) $p = 2.2d - 9.9$

Sample Question

- * Heart of Algebra
- * Handout question #9
- * Question difficulty: medium

When a scientist dives in salt water to a depth of 9 feet below the surface, the pressure due to the atmosphere and surrounding water is 18.7 pounds per square inch. As the scientist descends, the pressure increases linearly. At a depth of 14 feet, the pressure is 20.9 pounds per square inch. If the pressure increases at a constant rate as the scientist's depth below the surface increases, which of the following linear models best describes the pressure p in pounds per square inch at a depth of d feet below the surface?

(A) $p = 0.44d + 0.77$

(B) $p = 0.44d + 14.74$

(C) $p = 2.2d - 1.1$

(D) $p = 2.2d - 9.9$

Sample Question

- * Problem Solving and Data Analysis
- * Handout question #10

	Solids	Liquids	Gases	Total
Metals	77	1	0	78
Metalloids	7	0	0	7
Nonmetals	6	1	11	18
Total	90	2	11	103

- * The table to the left classifies 103 elements as metal, metalloid, or nonmetal and as solid, liquid, or gas at standard temperature and pressure.
- * What fraction of all solids and liquids in the table are metalloids?

Sample Question

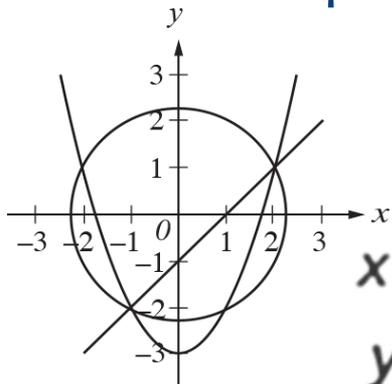
- * Problem Solving and Data Analysis
- * Question difficulty: easy
- * Answer: 7/92

7	/	9	2
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	9

	Solids	Liquids	Gases	Total
Metals	77	1	0	78
Metalloids	7	0	0	7
Nonmetals	6	1	11	18
Total	90	2	11	103

Sample Question

- * Passport to Advanced Math
- * Handout question #11



$$x^2 + y^2 = 5$$

$$y = x^2 - 3$$

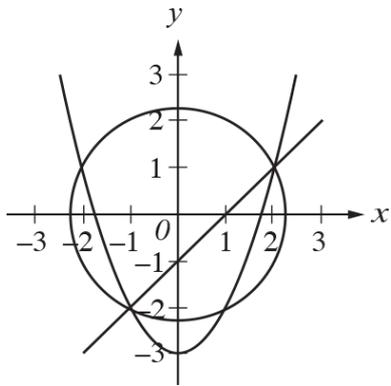
$$x - y = 1$$

A system of three equations and their graphs in the xy -plane are shown to the left. How many solutions does the system have?

- (A) One
- (B) Two
- (C) Three
- (D) Four

Sample Question

- * Passport to Advanced Math
- * Question difficulty: easy



$$\begin{aligned}x^2 + y^2 &= 5 \\y &= x^2 - 3 \\x - y &= 1\end{aligned}$$

A system of three equations and their graphs in the xy -plane are shown to the left. How many solutions does the system have?

- (A) One
- (B) Two
- (C) Three
- (D) Four

Sample Question

- * Additional Topics in Math
- * No calculator question
- * Handout question #12

Which of the following is equal to $(14-2i)(7+12i)$?

(Note: $i=\sqrt{-1}$)

(A) 74

(B) 122

(C) $74 + 154i$

(D) $122 + 154i$

Sample Question

- * Additional Topics in Math
- * No calculator question
- * Question difficulty:
medium

Which of the following is equal to $(14-2i)(7+12i)$?

(Note: $i=\sqrt{-1}$)

(A) 74

(B) 122

(C) $74 + 154i$

(D) $122 + 154i$

Old SAT – Writing Section

Writing General Notes

- * CALCULATORS MAY NOT BE ON YOUR DESK OR USED DURING THIS SECTION
- * Know your grammar rules
- * Don't get tricked by what "sounds" right
 - After hours of futile debate, the committee has decided to postpone further discussion of the resolution until their next meeting.

Writing General Notes

- * CALCULATORS MAY NOT BE ON YOUR DESK OR USED DURING THIS SECTION
- * Know your grammar rules
- * Don't get tricked by what "sounds" right
 - After hours of futile debate, the committee has decided to postpone further discussion of the resolution until their next meeting.
 - After hours of futile debate, the committee has decided to postpone further discussion of the resolution until its next meeting.

Common Mistakes

Characteristics of Effective Writing

Multiple-choice writing questions focus on common problems associated with four characteristics of effective writing. Illustrations of problems are given below. Multiple-choice writing questions also require recognition of correct sentences and effective writing strategies.

Writing problem	Sentence illustrating the problem	Should be...
1. Being consistent		
Sequence of tenses	After he broke his arm, he is home for two weeks.	After he broke his arm, he was home for two weeks.
Shift of pronoun	If you are tense, one should try to relax.	If you are tense, you should try to relax.
Parallelism	She skis, plays tennis and flying hang gliders.	She skis, plays tennis and flies hang gliders.
Noun agreement	Carmen and Sarah are both a pilot.	Carmen and Sarah are both pilots.
Pronoun reference	Several people wanted the job, so he or she filled out the required applications.	Several people wanted the job, so they filled out the required applications.
Subject-verb agreement	There is eight people on the shore.	There are eight people on the shore.
2. Expressing ideas logically		
Coordination and subordination	Tawanda has a rash, and she is probably allergic to something.	Tawanda has a rash; she is probably allergic to something.
Logical comparison	Nathan grew more vegetables than his neighbor's garden.	Nathan grew more vegetables than his neighbor grew.
Modification and word order	Barking loudly, the tree had the dog's leash wrapped around it.	Barking loudly, the dog wrapped its leash around the tree.



3. Being clear and precise		
Ambiguous and vague pronouns	In the newspaper they say that few people voted.	The newspaper reported that few people voted.
Diction	He circumvented the globe on his trip.	He circumnavigated the globe on his trip.
Wordiness	There are many problems in the contemporary world in which we live.	There are many problems in the contemporary world.
Improper modification	If your car is parked here while not eating in the restaurant, it will be towed away.	If you park here and do not eat in the restaurant, your car will be towed away.
4. Following conventions		
Pronoun case	He sat between you and I at the stadium.	He sat between you and me at the stadium.
Idiom	Natalie had a different opinion for her.	Natalie had a different opinion of her.
Comparison of modifiers	Of the sixteen executives, Naomi makes more money.	Of the sixteen executives, Naomi makes the most money.
Sentence fragment	Fred having to go home early.	Fred has to go home early.
Comma splice	Mary took time out of her busy schedule to visit her aunt, John decided to continue working through the summer.	Mary took time out of her busy schedule to visit her aunt, but John decided to continue working through the summer.
5. Recognizing effective writing		
	Some sentences require students to recognize that there is no error.	

Types of Writing Questions

Improving Sentences

- Answer choice (A) indicates no error
- Go through your checklist of mistakes to do process of elimination

Directions

The following sentence tests correctness and effectiveness of expression. Part of the sentence or the entire sentence is underlined; beneath the sentence are five ways of phrasing the underlined material. Choice A repeats the original phrasing; the other four choices are different. If you think the original phrasing produces a better sentence than any of the alternatives, select choice A; if not, select one of the other choices.

In making your selection, follow the requirements of standard written English; that is, pay attention to grammar, choice of words, sentence construction and punctuation. Your selection should result in the most effective sentence — clear and precise, without awkwardness or ambiguity.

EXAMPLE:

Laura Ingalls Wilder published her first book and she was sixty-five years old then.

- (A) and she was sixty-five years old then
- (B) when she was sixty-five
- (C) at age sixty-five years old
- (D) upon the reaching of sixty-five years
- (E) at the time when she was sixty-five

(A) (C) (D) (E)

Sample Question

- * Improving sentences
- * Handout question #13

Certain shipwrecks have a particular fascination for those people which have a belief in finding the treasure in them.

(A) which have a belief in finding the treasure in them

(B) that belief there is treasure to be found in them

(C) who believe they hold treasure and that they can find it

(D) who believe that there is treasure to be found in them

(E) who believe about treasure to be found in them

Sample Question

- * Improving sentences
- * Handout question #13

Certain shipwrecks have a particular fascination for those people which have a belief in finding the treasure in them.

(A) which have a belief in finding the treasure in them

(B) that belief there is treasure to be found in them

(C) who believe they hold treasure and that they can find it

(D) who believe that there is treasure to be found in them

(E) who believe about treasure to be found in them

Identifying Sentence Errors

- Answer choice (E) indicates no error
- Go through your checklist of mistakes to do process of elimination

Directions

The following sentence tests your ability to recognize grammar and usage errors. The sentence contains either a single error or no error at all. No sentence contains more than one error. The error, if there is one, is underlined and lettered. If the sentence contains an error, select the one underlined part that must be changed to make the sentence correct. If the sentence is correct, select choice E.

In choosing answers, follow the requirements of standard written English.

EXAMPLE:

The other delegates and him immediately
A B C
accepted the resolution drafted by the
D
neutral states. No error
E

A B C D E

Sample Question

- * Identifying sentence errors
- * Handout question #14

Maude Adams, after her
spectacular triumph as the
A
original Peter Pan, went about
B
heavy veiled and was accessible
C
to only a handful of intimate
D
friends. No error
E

Sample Question

- * Identifying sentence errors
- * Handout question #14

Maude Adams, after her
spectacular triumph as the
A
original Peter Pan, went about
B
heavy veiled and was accessible
C
to only a handful of intimate
D
friends. No error
E

Improving Paragraphs

- Skim the draft to get overall meaning
- Go back and refer to specific lines

Directions

The following passage is an early draft of an essay. Some parts of the passage need to be rewritten.

Read the passage and select the best answers for the questions that follow. Some questions are about particular sentences or parts of sentences and ask you to improve sentence structure or word choice. Other questions ask you to consider organization and development. In choosing answers, follow the requirements of standard written English.

Sample Question

- * Improving paragraphs
- * See handout for passage and question – question #15

In context, which is the best way to revise and combine the underlined portions of sentences 3 and 4 (reproduced below)?

A newspaper article suggested that they were wrong. It pointed out that nearly all stores now sell goods that are not made in this country.

- (A) A newspaper article suggested that the demonstrators were wrong, pointing out
- (B) They were wrong, a newspaper article suggested, it pointed out that
- (C) Suggesting that they are wrong, in a newspaper article it says
- (D) The newspaper article suggests that the shoppers were wrong,
- (E) In the newspaper article was the suggestion that they were wrong and

Sample Question

- * Improving paragraphs
- * See handout for passage and question – question #15

In context, which is the best way to revise and combine the underlined portions of sentences 3 and 4 (reproduced below)?

A newspaper article suggested that they were wrong. It pointed out that nearly all stores now sell goods that are not made in this country.

- (A) A newspaper article suggested that the demonstrators were wrong, pointing out
- (B) They were wrong, a newspaper article suggested, it pointed out that
- (C) Suggesting that they are wrong, in a newspaper article it says
- (D) The newspaper article suggests that the shoppers were wrong,
- (E) In the newspaper article was the suggestion that they were wrong and

New SAT – Writing and Language Section

Main Changes from Old SAT

- * Expression of Ideas: “questions focus on revision of text for topic development, accuracy (consistency between text and graphic[s]), logic, cohesion, and rhetorically effective use of language”
- * Standard English Conventions: essentially grammar
- * Also, like the Reading test, will include some Words in Context and Evidence-based questions
- * Be prepared to see social science/history and science pop up
- * Longer passages

Sample Question

- * Standard English Conventions
- * Handout question #16

When any one of these changes occur, it is likely the result of careful analysis conducted by transportation planners.

- * A) NO CHANGE
- * B) occur, they are
- * C) occurs, they are
- * D) occurs, it is

Sample Question

- * Standard English Conventions
- * Question difficulty: hard

When any one of these changes occur, it is likely the result of careful analysis conducted by transportation planners.

- * A) NO CHANGE
- * B) occur, they are
- * C) occurs, they are
- * D) occurs, it is

Sample Question

- * Expression of Ideas
- * Words in Context
- * Handout question #17

Kingman, however, vacated from that tradition in a number of ways, most notably in that he chose to focus not on natural landscapes, such as mountains and rivers, but on cities.

- * **A)** NO CHANGE
- * **B)** evacuated
- * **C)** departed
- * **D)** retired

Sample Question

- * Expression of Ideas
- * Words in Context
- * Question difficulty: hard

Kingman, however, vacated from that tradition in a number of ways, most notably in that he chose to focus not on natural landscapes, such as mountains and rivers, but on cities.

- * **A)** NO CHANGE
- * **B)** evacuated
- * **C)** departed
- * **D)** retired

Old SAT – Essay

- 25 minutes to prepare and write the essay
- Given 2 pages
- Do a quick, rough outline in the test booklet, final draft in the answer document
- MUST USE A PENCIL
- If you write in pen, you'll receive an automatic zero
- Choose an opinion and answer the prompt

Directions

The essay gives you an opportunity to show how effectively you can develop and express ideas. You should, therefore, take care to develop your point of view, present your ideas logically and clearly, and use language precisely.

Your essay must be written on the lines provided on your answer sheet — you will receive no other paper on which to write. You will have enough space if you write on every line, avoid wide margins, and keep your handwriting to a reasonable size. Remember that people who are not familiar with your handwriting will read what you write. Try to write or print so that what you are writing is legible to those readers.

Important Reminders:

- **A pencil is required for the essay.** An essay written in ink will receive a score of zero.
- **Do not write your essay in your test booklet.** You will receive credit only for what you write on your answer sheet.
- **An off-topic essay will receive a score of zero.**
- **If your essay does not reflect your original and individual work, your scores for the entire test may be canceled.**
- **An electronic copy of your essay will be made available to each of your designated score recipients: colleges, universities, and scholarship programs.**

You have twenty-five minutes to write an essay on the topic assigned below.

Fight Writer's Block

- * Use the brief introduction paragraph to your advantage
 - Would you agree or disagree with the author? Why?
- * Use ideas that you've explored in your earlier assignments from your classes
- * Pull from readings, studies, experience, observations, and/or current events

Fight Writer's Block

- * Think depth, not breadth
 - Two well-developed examples are better than three simplistic ones
- * Go ahead and use “Me, myself and I”
- * Use a concise introduction and conclusion

Sample Question

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Many persons believe that to move up the ladder of success and achievement, they must forget the past, repress it, and relinquish it. But others have just the opposite view. They see old memories as a chance to reckon with the past and integrate past and present.

Adapted from Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot,
I've Known Rivers: Lives of Loss and Liberation

Assignment: Do memories hinder or help people in their effort to learn from the past and succeed in the present? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

New SAT – (Optional) Essay

Main Changes from Old SAT

- * Essay is now optional
- * 50 minutes long
- * Analysis of a source
- * Prompt *will be the same* for all SAT essays, only the source will change
- * Score will not be included in SAT composite score – reported separately
- * Scored on three characteristics: Reading, Analysis, Writing

Sample Question

- * Take a look at the passage in your handout
- * **Prompt:** Write an essay in which you explain how Paul Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience that natural darkness should be preserved. In your essay, analyze how Bogard uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.
- * Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Bogard's claims, but rather explain how Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience.

SAT Subject Tests

- * Subject tests are as long as one subject's worth of sections from the regular SAT
 - Each test is 60 minutes, ~70 questions
- * Most selective universities require two subject test scores
 - * Not all care *which* tests, but double check; you may be applying to a university that requires specific tests.
- * Get study guides if you can—some tests have styles of questions that might be tricky if you haven't seen them before.

SAT Subject Tests

- * You can take up to three tests in one sitting
- * Not all tests are available on all dates! Check dates for the tests you want EARLY so you don't miss them!
- * If you're taking a test that is "with listening" (e.g., "French With Listening") you need to bring a CD player.

Getting Ready for the SAT Subject Tests

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/SAT/public/pdf/getting-ready-for-the-sat-subj-tests.pdf>

Day-of-the-test Checklist

- * Get a good night's sleep
- * Eat breakfast
- * Double-check that you have your:
 - Admission Ticket
 - An acceptable photo ID
 - LOTS of sharpened No. 2 pencils and a soft eraser
 - Approved calculator with **fresh** batteries
 - Watch, if you have one
- * Arrive by 7:45 a.m. at the test center
- * REMEMBER your cell phone may be collected and held during the test (and given back at the end)

What can I do *today*?

- * Enroll in challenging classes
 - The preparation for these courses can be used on the test
- * Visit CollegeBoard.org to register and find practice tests and directions
- * Register for the SAT Question of the Day (CollegeBoard.org) and Word of the Day (Dictionary.com) to get daily practice
- * Sign-up for the PSAT/NMSQT in your sophomore/junior year
 - College Board provides a personalized planning kit

What can I do *today*?

- * Keep a calendar of important deadlines from College Board and the universities where you wish to apply
 - Registration deadlines for the SAT are more than a month in advance
 - Many colleges will only accept scores before a certain date
- * Get acquainted with your school's counselor
 - Have more information about free testing vouchers
- * Plan to take the test early
 - You can re-take it as many times as you want

Upcoming Test Dates

2015	2016
October 3, 11	January 23, 24
November 7, 8	March 5, 6
December 5, 6	May 7, 8
	June 4, 5

The above dates are currently tentative, and might change. Keep an eye on <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-subject-test-dates> for official updates on testing dates.

The new SAT will be rolled out in March 2016.