

# The Guide to *Mastering the SAT English Section*

From Simple Studies, <https://simplestudies.edublogs.org> & @simplestudies.inc on Instagram

- The SAT is a standardized exam used across the United States to test proficiency in the areas of English and Mathematics and is used for the college admission process in the United States. It consists of two sections - English and Mathematics, each of which is scored out of 800 points, for a total of 1600 points:
  - *Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (English) - 800 points*
    - Contains two subsections: Reading and Writing
    - Reading Subsection: 65 minutes for 52 questions
      - Assesses reading comprehension and analyzation skills with respect to text passages
      - All the questions in this section are multiple choice ones
    - Writing Subsection: 35 minutes for 44 questions
      - Assesses grammar, sentence structure, and editing skills in context
      - All the questions in this section are multiple choice ones
  - *Mathematics - 800 points*
    - Contains two subsections: Calculator and Non-Calculator. For both subsections, you will be assessed on your ability to solve questions relating to the following topics: Heart of Algebra, Problem Solving and Data Analysis, Passport to Advanced Math, and Additional Topics (Geometry, Trigonometry, etc.)
    - Non-Calculator Subsection: 25 minutes for 20 questions
      - 20 multiple choice questions, 5 grid-in (student-produced response) questions
    - Calculator-Active Subsection: 55 minutes for 38 questions
      - 30 multiple choice questions, 8 grid-in (student-produced response) questions

This study guide focuses on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section of the exam.

From Simple Studies, <https://simplestudies.edublogs.org> & @simplestudies.inc on Instagram

If you are studying for the exam, here are some things to remember:

- Create your own study calendar! This way you will be sure to make some time to study for the SAT in a structured, organized manner. A popular practice schedule is to do three days of practice on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and two days of practice on the Mathematics section (or vice versa!) on weekdays and to take a practice exam on the weekend, where Saturday could be used to take a practice test, and Sunday to analyze the results of the practice test and look into any mistakes made and how to fix them. As you approach your SAT exam day though, switch to a different gear: spend most of your time taking, and reviewing results of, as many practice tests as possible.
- Read! On the SAT exam, you will be exposed to different types of passages across a broad range of topics that you will be expected to be able to understand well. Reading different kinds of passages in your free time will expose you to different writing styles and make you more accustomed to them.
- Look for the main idea! When reading, make sure you read the first few sentences of each paragraph in a passage over again to get a better understanding of the writing. When in doubt, read it again, so that you are not missing any key ideas, about which there may be questions.
- Proofread your work! By rereading and editing past work for grammar or sentence structure mistakes, you will practice spotting errors and improve your writing - a skill vital to mastering the SAT.
- Find out the areas in which you are struggling! During or after any study session or practice exam, note the questions you may have struggled with. After any practice assessment, it is important for you to go over your missed answers and become aware of where you went wrong, and then to refamiliarize yourself with those concepts and do more practice questions until you gain confidence in that area.
- Practice, practice, practice! You can only get better with practice, determination, and hard work. Practice is the name of the game! Yes, you can do it!

Raw Score Conversion Table - Grading

**RAW SCORE CONVERSION TABLE 1 SECTION AND TEST SCORES**

Raw Score (# of correct answers)	Math Section Score	Reading Test Score	Writing and Language Test Score	Raw Score (# of correct answers)	Math Section Score	Reading Test Score	Writing and Language Test Score
0	200	10	10	30	580	27	30
1	200	10	10	31	590	28	31
2	210	10	10	32	600	28	31
3	230	11	10	33	600	28	32
4	250	12	11	34	610	29	32
5	270	13	12	35	620	29	33
6	280	14	13	36	630	30	33
7	300	15	14	37	640	30	34
8	320	16	15	38	650	31	35
9	340	16	16	39	660	31	36
10	350	17	16	40	670	32	37
11	360	18	17	41	680	32	37
12	370	18	18	42	690	33	38
13	390	19	19	43	700	33	39
14	410	20	19	44	710	34	40
15	420	20	20	45	710	35	
16	430	21	21	46	720	35	
17	450	21	22	47	730	36	
18	460	22	23	48	730	37	
19	470	22	23	49	740	38	
20	480	23	24	50	750	39	
21	490	23	24	51	750	39	
22	500	23	25	52	760	40	
23	510	24	26	53	770		
24	520	24	26	54	780		
25	530	25	27	55	790		
26	540	25	27	56	790		
27	550	26	28	57	800		
28	560	26	29	58	800		
29	570	27	29				

(Image retrieved from *blog.prepscholar.com: How Is the SAT Scored? Scoring Charts*)

## Evidence-Based Reading

- This section of the exam consists of five passages in total, with four single passages and one set of paired passages (two passages in one set). Here is a breakdown of the test passage types:
  - Literature
    - One passage with ten questions
  - History and/or Social Studies
    - Two passages OR a paired passage set with around ten to eleven questions each
  - Science
    - Two passages OR a paired passage set with around ten to eleven questions each
- The questions themselves are organized in a way in which the more general questions are first and the more specific, comprehensive are after. It is important that you solve the questions and refer to the passage together, as a lot of questions will require using information in specific lines/parts of the passage.

### Skills Tested by the Evidence-Based Reading Questions:

Skills Tested by Reading Test Questions	
Information and Ideas	Close reading, citing textual evidence, determining central ideas and themes
Summarizing	Understanding relationships, interpreting words and phrases in context
Rhetoric	Analyzing word choice, assessing overall text structure, assessing part-whole relationships, analyzing point of view, determining purpose, analyzing arguments
Synthesis	Analyzing multiple texts, analyzing quantitative information

(Image retrieved from *kaptest.com: What's Tested on the SAT Reading and Writing Section?*)

## General Evidence-Based Reading Question Types:

- 1) Central Idea Questions
  - a) Are about the overall passage, theme, purpose, context, rhetorical strategies
  - b) Make you think about the big picture or the author's perspective of the subject
- 2) Specific Detail Questions
  - a) Are about the text itself and facts/information that pertains to the passage and its events
    - i) Usually, you are given a line or lines to refer to to find your answer for these questions
  - b) Assess how good you are at remembering key information and following through with events in the passage
- 3) Inference Questions
  - a) Enable you to make an assumption/hypothesis/theory that is based on the information given in the passage
  - b) Make you think about the broader implications of a paragraph/line/detail/word/phrase
    - i) When solving these questions, make sure your answer choice can be supported solely by the passage's details and that you aren't making up something new
- 4) Supporting Text Questions
  - a) Enable you to find specific evidence to support/defend the claim or idea that was assessed in the previous questions
    - i) When solving these questions, make sure the piece of evidence you choose is directly backing up your answer choice!
- 5) Purpose Questions
  - a) Make you figure out the purpose of a detail or the role it plays in the passage/paragraph overall
  - b) May also make you find out why the author may have worded or said a piece of information in the way that they did

## General Evidence-Based Reading Question Types: (continued)

### 6) Vocabulary-in-Context Questions

- a) Make you decipher the meaning of a word as it is used in the passage
  - i) Usually, you will be given the line(s) where the word is found
  - ii) To get better at solving these questions, try to expand your vocabulary by reading a thesaurus or dictionary

### 7) Connection Questions

- a) Enable you to compare two conditions or relationships as described in the passage or as *not* described in the passage
  - i) For example, you may have to describe a certain behavior that was seen in a passage to a behavior in an unrelated hypothetical situation

(1) These may be analogy questions! You have to figure out the underlying similarities or differences between the two ideas being discussed to solve these types of questions

### 8) Data Interpretation Questions

- a) Make you interpret given data and/or connect the information back to the central idea, find the purpose of the data, or detect the data in a graph or chart

*Now, let's proceed into each of the types of passages and look at some practice questions!*

## Literature Passage

- The literature passage is typically the first passage on the exam. The writing in these passages can be from many time periods, although they are mostly from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. They mainly tell a story, retell an experience, or reflect on an idea.
- While reading, you should think about the context, characters, turning points, conflicts, solutions, and the overall message. It is helpful to annotate the text -- writing the main idea of every paragraph or every few paragraphs or underlining any key information that hints towards any of the aforementioned elements will make sure you do not waste time rereading the passage when answering the questions.
- There is usually a sentence or two above the writing that establishes the scene of the passage. Make sure you read this, because it will help you understand the context of the passage!
- When answering the questions, make sure you are choosing answer choices that are not directly from your own interpretation of the text -- make sure your claims can be backed by the text
  - When you are choosing between 2 answer choices that sound similar, note subtle differences in word choice and choose the answer that can be most accurately explained using *solely* the information in the passage.
    - If you are still having trouble, and this is a question paired with another question that asks for textual evidence to support your answer, look at the answer choices and the lines in the passage they are referring to. Which one answers the question best? Now, go back to the previous question and use the evidence to help you!
- Think about the main idea, or takeaway, of the passage while reading. Usually, the title of the text or the lesson learned throughout the story will assist you in doing so.

*Let's practice! Read the passage carefully and think about its context, characters, turning points, conflicts, solutions, and the overall message.*

## Literature Passage Practice

This passage is excerpted from Louisa May Alcott, *Rose in Bloom*, originally published in 1876.

Three young men stood together on a wharf one bright October day awaiting the arrival of an ocean steamer with an impatience which found a vent in lively skirmishes with a small lad, who  
*Line 4* pervaded the premises like a will-o'-the-wisp and afforded much  
*5* amusement to the other groups assembled there.

“They are the Campbells, waiting for their cousin, who has been abroad several years with her uncle, the doctor,” whispered one lady to another as the handsomest of the young men touched his hat to her as he passed, lugging the boy, whom he had just rescued from a  
*10* little expedition down among the piles.

“Which is that?” asked the stranger.

“Prince Charlie, as he’s called a fine fellow, the most promising of the seven, but a little fast, people say,” answered the first speaker with a shake of the head. “Are the others his brothers?”

*15* “No, cousins. The elder is Archie, a most exemplary young man. He has just gone into business with the merchant uncle and bids fair to be an honor to his family. The other, with the eyeglasses and no gloves, is Mac, the odd one, just out of college.”

“And the boy?”

*20* “Oh, he is Jamie, the youngest brother of Archibald, and the pet of the whole family. Mercy on us he’ll be in if they don’t hold on to him!”

The ladies’ chat came to a sudden end just there, for by the time Jamie had been fished out of a hogshead, the steamer hove in sight  
*25* and everything else was forgotten. As it swung slowly around to enter the dock, a boyish voice shouted, “There she is! I see her and Uncle and Phebe! Hooray for Cousin Rose!” And three small cheers were given with a will by Jamie as he stood on a post waving his arms like a windmill while his brother held onto the tail of his  
*30* jacket.

Yes, there they were, Uncle Alec swinging his hat like a boy, with Phebe smiling and nodding on one side and Rose kissing both hands delightedly on the other as she recognized familiar faces and heard familiar voices welcoming her home.

35 “Bless her dear heart, she’s bonnier than ever! Looks like a Madonna doesn’t she? with that blue cloak round her, and her bright hair flying in the wind!” said Charlie excitedly as they watched the group upon the deck with eager eyes.

40 “Madonnas don’t wear hats like that. Rose hasn’t changed much, but Phebe has. Why, she’s a regular beauty!” answered Archie, staring with all his might at the dark-eyed young woman with the brilliant color and glossy black braids shining in the sun.

45 “Dear old Uncle! Doesn’t it seem good to have him back?” was all Mac said, but he was not looking at “dear old uncle” as he made the fervent remark, for he saw only the slender blond girl nearby and stretched out his hands to meet hers, forgetful of the green water tumbling between them.

50 During the confusion that reigned for a moment as the steamer settled to her moorings, Rose looked down into the four faces upturned to hers and seemed to read in them something that both pleased and pained her. It was only a glance, and her own eyes were full, but through the mist of happy tears she received the impression that Archie was about the same, that Mac had decidedly improved, and that something was amiss with Charlie. There was no time for  
55 observation, however, for in a moment the shoreward rush began, and before she could grasp her traveling bag, Jamie was clinging to her like an ecstatic young bear. She was with difficulty released from his embrace to fall into the gentler ones of the elder cousins, who took advantage of the general excitement to welcome both  
60 blooming girls with affectionate impartiality. Then the wanderers were borne ashore in a triumphal procession, while Jamie danced rapturous jigs before them even on the gangway.

65 Archie remained to help his uncle get the luggage through the Custom House, and the others escorted the damsels home. No sooner were they shut up in a carriage, however, than a new and curious constraint seemed to fall upon the young people, for they realized, all at once, that their former playmates were men and women now.

It's important to annotate key words and phrases while you are reading. Here is an example of what an annotation for this passage would look like:

This passage is excerpted from Louisa May Alcott, *Rose in Bloom*, originally published in 1876.

Line 4 Three young men stood together on a wharf one bright October  
day awaiting the arrival of an ocean steamer with an impatience  
which found a vent in lively skirmishes with a small lad, who  
5 pervaded the premises like a will-o'-the-wisp and afforded much  
amusement to the other groups assembled there.

“They are the Campbells, waiting for their cousin, who has been  
abroad several years with her uncle, the doctor,” whispered one lady  
to another as the handsomest of the young men touched his hat to  
her as he passed, lugging the boy, whom he had just rescued from a  
10 little expedition down among the piles.

“Which is that?” asked the stranger.

“Prince Charlie, as he's called a fine fellow, the most promising  
of the seven, but a little fast, people say,” answered the first speaker  
with a shake of the head. “Are the others his brothers?”

15 “No, cousins. The elder is Archie, a most exemplary young man.  
He has just gone into business with the merchant uncle and bids  
fair to be an honor to his family. The other, with the eyeglasses and  
no gloves, is Mac, the odd one, just out of college.”

“And the boy?”

20 “Oh, he is Jamie, the youngest brother of Archibald, and the pet  
of the whole family. Mercy on us he'll be in if they don't hold on to  
him!”

The ladies' chat came to a sudden end just there, for by the time  
Jamie had been fished out of a hogshead, the steamer hove in sight  
25 and everything else was forgotten. As it swung slowly around to  
enter the dock, a boyish voice shouted, “There she is! I see her and  
Uncle and Phebe! Hooray for Cousin Rose!” And three small cheers  
were given with a will by Jamie as he stood on a post waving his  
arms like a windmill while his brother held onto the tail of his  
30 jacket.

4 cousins  
in reunion →

Campbells  
waiting for  
cousin, most  
respected — Prince  
Charlie

playful

Yes, there they were, Uncle Alec swinging his hat like a boy, with Phebe smiling and nodding on one side and Rose kissing both hands delightedly on the other as she recognized familiar faces and heard familiar voices welcoming her home.

35 "Bless her dear heart, she's bonnier than ever! Looks like a Madonna doesn't she? with that blue cloak round her, and her bright hair flying in the wind!" said Charlie excitedly as they watched the group upon the deck with eager eyes.

40 "Madonnas don't wear hats like that. Rose hasn't changed much, but Phebe has. Why, she's a regular beauty!" answered Archie, staring with all his might at the dark-eyed young woman with the brilliant color and glossy black braids shining in the sun.

45 "Dear old Uncle! Doesn't it seem good to have him back?" was all Mac said, but he was not looking at "dear old uncle" as he made the fervent remark, for he saw only the slender blond girl nearby and stretched out his hands to meet hers, forgetful of the green water tumbling between them.

50 During the confusion that reigned for a moment as the steamer settled to her moorings, Rose looked down into the four faces upturned to hers and seemed to read in them something that both pleased and pained her. It was only a glance, and her own eyes were full, but through the mist of happy tears she received the impression that Archie was about the same, that Mac had decidedly improved, and that something was amiss with Charlie. There was no time for observation, however, for in a moment the shoreward rush began, and before she could grasp her traveling bag, Jamie was clinging to her like an ecstatic young bear. She was with difficulty released from his embrace to fall into the gentler ones of the elder cousins, who took advantage of the general excitement to welcome both 60 blooming girls with affectionate impartiality. Then the wanderers were borne ashore in a triumphal procession, while Jamie danced rapturous jigs before them even on the gangway.

65 Archie remained to help his uncle get the luggage through the Custom House, and the others escorted the damsels home. No sooner were they shut up in a carriage, however, than a new and curious constraint seemed to fall upon the young people, for they realized, all at once, that their former playmates were men and women now.

Charlie  
nice to  
Rose

Rose is  
welcomed

Archie same,  
Mac changed  
slightly, Charlie  
is OFF

ppl who grew up playing  
together are now  
mature

- Note that important ideas, phrases, or turning points are either circled or underlined, and main, important points are jotted down throughout the passage. It is much easier now to answer the questions without having to search the passage for certain words.
- Before we proceed to the questions, let's think about the main idea of the story as well as character shifts and turning points. In the beginning of the story, we are introduced to the Campbells, a group of cousins, that are about to enter what seems like a family reunion. We know the relationships between characters, and how the three men are waiting for their cousin, who has been abroad for several years. After they have met with Rose and her parents, we learn more about what Rose is feeling. She notes changes in some of the characters' behavior and feels pained to know that a bond that she and the other men once had as children is not the same anymore. The Campbells are maturing and this aging has impacted their relationships with family members, especially since Rose has been away for a while.

Now that we have annotated the passage, let's look at the questions. The questions assembled on these pages are organized in a manner that you will likely see on the SAT, ordered from more general to more specific. Take some time and answer these 5 questions; scroll down after to check your answers!

- Question 1: Which choice best summarizes the passage?
  - A. The passage provides an explanation of relationships within a family.
  - B. The passage presents a revelation about children growing older.
  - C. The passage captures a conversation regarding reuniting cousins.
  - D. The passage describes an anecdote about traveling by ship.
- Question 2: As used in line 3, "vent" most nearly means
  - A. opening.
  - B. outlet.
  - C. crack.
  - D. passage.

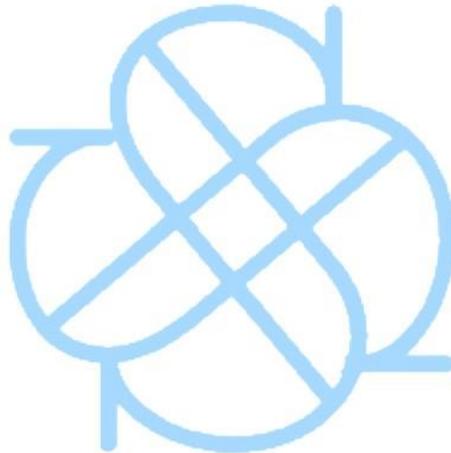
- Question 3: The conversation between the lady and the stranger in lines 6-22 (“They...him”) serves primarily to
  - A. show how the town locals tend to gossip about the family.
  - B. establish the relationships among the reuniting family.
  - C. introduce the traits of the family members who are waiting.
  - D. demonstrate the lady’s lack of knowledge about the family.
- Question 4: Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
  - A. lines 6-7 (“They...doctor”)
  - B. lines 12-13 (“Prince...say”)
  - C. lines 15-17 (“The...family”)
  - D. lines 20-22 (“Oh...him”)
- Question 5: It can be inferred that Rose is “both pleased and pained” when she views her cousins from the ship because she
  - A. feels exhausted and confused after a long journey by sea.
  - B. believes her cousins don’t recognize her anymore.
  - C. senses that her relationship with her cousins has changed.
  - D. concludes that her cousins’ lives have gotten better without her.

## Literary Passage Answer Key

- Question 1: **B**
  - This question assesses you on your understanding of the entire passage and the events that take place. This passage, overall, serves to show how differences in relationships (may) arise as children become more mature and see each other less frequently. Choice B is the only answer choice that states how the passage is a story discussing changes in relationships among childhood friends who, as a result of being distanced, have grown more aloof as they have gotten older.
- Question 2: **B**
  - The above question tests you on how well you can answer vocabulary-in-context questions. Ensure that you go back to the question and reread the line(s) in which the word is found, as well as the lines above and below that/those line(s). In your head, think of a word you would choose to replace *vent*. Then, choose the answer that most aligns with yours.
    - If this process is difficult for you during an exam, you can try replacing each of the four answer choices in place of the word “vent” and find which one makes the most sense.
    - You will see that the choice “outlet” most closely answers the question because it describes how the cousins’ impatience was sourced from their “lively skirmishes.”

- Question 3: **B**
  - The primary function of the conversation in lines 6-22 is to establish background. At this point in the passage, all we really know is that there are a few men who are impatient to be let into some sort of meeting. Not only does conversation serve to introduce each character, but it also serves to tell us the *relationships* between this reuniting family.
    - If you find that you struggled to choose between answer choices B and C, notice the subtle difference between them. Question C says that the conversation serves to “introduce the traits of the family members who are waiting.” Although this is true, as we do learn a bit more about each character, we mainly learn their relationships as well -- mainly the connections between the characters waiting and the characters who are arriving.
- Question 4: **A**
  - This question asks you to provide evidence for your answer in the previous question. You are to find evidence in the passage that serves as the basis for a reasonable conclusion that has been drawn. We know, from the previous question, that the function of the conversation between the lady and the stranger was to establish context. Lines 6-7 do just that, as we learn that the characters introduced are the *Campbells* and that they are waiting for their cousin who has been abroad. Here, we learn about the relationship between the characters waiting outside AND the character(s) who have not been introduced yet.

- Question 5: **C**
  - This question enables you to think about how Rose's behavior has changed throughout the passage. We see, earlier in the passage, that Rose was delighted as she saw familiar faces after a long time. However, once she talks to the other characters, she notices confusion and changes in behavior for the most part. These changes that she observed are described in lines 48-62. She was pained since she has seen that her old mates are not exactly the same as they had been before, and she is reminded of their childhood days, and how much has changed since then. Choice C is the only choice that reflects this shift of behavior and Rose's moment of realization about it.



## History/Social Studies Passage

- The history/social studies mainly discusses historical events and social issues. There will either be a single passage or a *pair* of passages from a global event, important historical document or speech, etc.
- Paired passages
- Many of these passages are filled with old language, so before taking the exam, it's important that you familiarize yourself with language used in the olden times and practice reading historical documents.
- If you're someone who isn't all that interested in these topics, *force* yourself to be engaged and interested in the passage. You can also pretend you are giving a speech, as this will help you follow the argument better.
- Underline, circle, or write in the margins throughout the test to help you keep note of certain facts and information.
- Throughout the passage, think about the purpose of the speech or writing and why it was important during the time period it was part of it. Identify the author's thesis and implications -- what are they trying to show you with this account? What are the broader implications with this data? How is their word choice shaping the meaning, shape, style, and delivery of their message?
- Remember to use context clues to find the definition of unfamiliar words
- Reread the first and last sentences of each paragraph, as they are usually the openings and closings, to help you get the gist of the paragraph.

*Let's practice! Read the passage carefully and think about its context, main idea, and purpose.*

## Historical/Social Studies Passage Practice

This passage is adapted from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to James Madison. It was originally written in 1785, when Jefferson was residing in France.

Seven o'clock, and retired to my fireside, I have determined to enter into conversation with you; this [Fontainebleau] is a village of about 5,000 inhabitants when the court is not here and 20,000 when they are, occupying a valley thro' which runs a brook, and on each  
*Line 4* side of it a ridge of small mountains most of which are naked rock.  
*5* The king comes here in the fall always, to hunt. His court attend him, as do also the foreign diplomatic corps. But as this is not indispensably required, and my finances do not admit the expence of a continued residence here, I propose to come occasionally to  
*10* attend the king's levees, returning again to Paris, distant 40 miles.

This being the first trip, I set out yesterday morning to take a view of the place. For this purpose I shaped my course towards the highest of the mountains in sight, to the top of which was about a league. As soon as I had got clear of the town I fell in with a poor  
*15* woman walking at the same rate with myself and going the same course. Wishing to know the condition of the labouring poor I entered into conversation with her, which I began by enquiries for the path which would lead me into the mountain: and thence proceeded to enquiries into her vocation, condition and  
*20* circumstance. She told me she was a day labourer, at 8. sous or 4 d. sterling the day; that she had two children to maintain, and to pay a rent of 30 livres for her house (which would consume the hire of 75 days), that often she could get no employment, and of course was without bread. As we had walked together near a mile and she had  
*25* so far served me as a guide, I gave her, on parting 24 sous. She burst into tears of a gratitude which I could perceive was unfeigned, because she was unable to utter a word. She had probably never before received so great an aid.

This little attendrissement<sup>1</sup>, with the solitude of my walk led me  
30 into a train of reflections on that unequal division of property  
which occasions the numberless instances of wretchedness which I  
had observed in this country and is to be observed all over Europe.  
The property of this country is absolutely centered in a very few  
hands, having revenues of from half a million of guineas a year  
35 downwards. These employ the flower of the country as servants,  
some of them having as many as 200 domestics, not labouring. They  
employ also a great number of manufacturers, and tradesmen, and  
lastly the class of labouring husbandmen<sup>2</sup>. But after all these comes  
the most numerous of all the classes, that is, the poor who cannot  
40 find work. I asked myself what could be the reason that so many  
should be permitted to beg who are willing to work, in a country  
where there is a very considerable proportion of uncultivated lands?  
These lands are kept idle mostly for the sake of game<sup>3</sup>. It should  
seem then that it must be because of the enormous wealth of the  
45 proprietors which places them above attention to the increase of  
their revenues by permitting these lands to be laboured.



I am conscious that an equal division of property is impracticable. But the consequences of this enormous inequality producing so much misery to the bulk of mankind, legislators  
50 cannot invent too many devices for subdividing property, only taking care to let their subdivisions go hand in hand with the natural affections of the human mind. The descent of property of every kind therefore to all the children, or to all the brothers and sisters, or other relations in equal degree is a politic measure, and a  
55 practicable one. Another means of silently lessening the inequality of property is to exempt all from taxation below a certain point, and to tax the higher portions of property in geometrical progression as they rise. Whenever there is in any country, uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so  
60 far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labour and live on. If, for the encouragement of industry we allow it to be appropriated, we must take care that other employment be furnished to those excluded from the appropriation. . .

<sup>1</sup> emotion

<sup>2</sup> farmers

<sup>3</sup> animals that are hunted

It is important to annotate and look out for key facts and ideas that hint towards what the author's purpose or message is. Here is an example of how this passage can be annotated:

This passage is adapted from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to James Madison. It was originally written in 1785 when Jefferson was residing in France.

Line 4 Seven o'clock, and retired to my fireside, I have determined to  
5 enter into conversation with you; this [Fontainebleau] is a village of  
about 5,000 inhabitants when the court is not here and 20,000 when  
they are, occupying a valley thro' which runs a brook, and on each  
side of it a ridge of small mountains most of which are naked rock.  
The king comes here in the fall always, to hunt. His court attend  
him, as do also the foreign diplomatic corps. But as this is not  
indispensably required, and my finances do not admit the expence  
of a continued residence here, I propose to come occasionally to  
10 attend the king's levees, returning again to Paris, distant 40 miles.

This being the first trip, I set out yesterday morning to take a  
view of the place. For this purpose I shaped my course towards the  
highest of the mountains in sight, to the top of which was about a  
league. As soon as I had got clear of the town I fell in with a poor  
15 woman walking at the same rate with myself and going the same  
course. Wishing to know the condition of the labouring poor I  
entered into conversation with her, which I began by enquiries for  
the path which would lead me into the mountain: and thence  
proceeded to enquiries into her vocation, condition and  
20 circumstance. She told me she was a day labourer, at 8. sous or 4 d.  
sterling the day; that she had two children to maintain, and to pay a  
rent of 30 livres for her house (which would consume the hire of 75  
days), that often she could get no employment, and of course was  
without bread. As we had walked together near a mile and she had  
25 so far served me as a guide, I gave her, on parting 24 sous. She burst  
into tears of a gratitude which I could perceive was unfeigned,  
because she was unable to utter a word. She had probably never  
before received so great an aid.

on a trip,  
Jefferson  
talked to  
poor woman

← Jefferson  
gided her → she  
was thankful

If you do not know the definition of this word, use the footnote provided at the end of the passage to help you

This little attendrissement<sup>1</sup>, with the solitude of my walk led me  
30 into a train of reflections on that unequal division of property  
which occasions the numberless instances of wretchedness which I  
had observed in this country and is to be observed all over Europe.  
The property of this country is absolutely concentrated in a very few  
hands, having revenues of from half a million of guineas a year  
35 downwards. These employ the flower of the country as servants,  
some of them having as many as 200 domestics, not labouring. They  
employ also a great number of manufacturers, and tradesmen, and  
lastly the class of labouring husbandmen<sup>2</sup>. But after all these comes  
the most numerous of all the classes, that is, the poor who cannot  
40 find work. I asked myself what could be the reason that so many  
should be permitted to beg who are willing to work, in a country  
where there is a very considerable proportion of uncultivated lands?  
These lands are kept idle mostly for the sake of game<sup>3</sup>. It should  
seem then that it must be because of the enormous wealth of the  
45 proprietors which places them above attention to the increase of  
their revenues by permitting these lands to be laboured.

these poor  
conditions-  
observed a lot

lands kept  
idle to  
benefit rich  
proprietors



I am conscious that an equal division of property is impracticable. But the consequences of this enormous inequality producing so much misery to the bulk of mankind, legislators cannot invent too many devices for subdividing property, only taking care to let their subdivisions go hand in hand with the natural affections of the human mind. The descent of property of every kind therefore to all the children, or to all the brothers and sisters, or other relations in equal degree is a politic measure, and a practicable one. Another means of silently lessening the inequality of property is to exempt all from taxation below a certain point, and to tax the higher portions of property in geometrical progression as they rise. Whenever there is in any country, uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labour and live on. If, for the encouragement of industry we allow it to be appropriated, we must take care that other employment be furnished to those excluded from the appropriation. . .

<sup>1</sup> emotion

<sup>2</sup> farmers

<sup>3</sup> animals that are hunted

← address economic inequality solutions

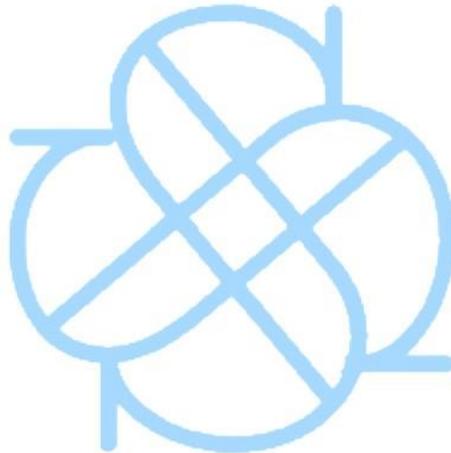
← earth → common resource

- Before answering the questions, let's remind ourselves of what we just read. What is Jefferson discussing here? Throughout the passage, he talks about the issue of economic inequality and provides an account of what made him reflect on the topic even more. He lists potential solutions to reduce the inequality and enforces ideas that promote equality and highlight the idea that the earth is a common resource and if we allow it to be appropriated, we should give job opportunities to the poor instead of sheltering them to benefit an elite minority.

Now that we have annotated the passage, let's look at the questions. The questions assembled on these pages are organized in a manner that you will likely see on the SAT, ordered from more general to more specific. Take some time and answer these 5 questions; scroll down after to check your answers!

- Question 1: Jefferson's central claim in the passage is that
  - A. The current system of inheritance and ownership is unlikely ever to change.
  - B. Wealth should be redistributed in a way that benefits the majority of society.
  - C. The unemployed should use their energies to work the land, rather than ask for money.
  - D. Everybody has the natural right to as much property as he or she thinks necessary.
- Question 2: Jefferson uses the example of the woman he meets on the road in order to
  - A. provide a moving anecdote in order to distract his reader from larger issues.
  - B. illustrate his surroundings with an atypical example of the native people.
  - C. support the claim that the economic situation is worse than Madison thinks.
  - D. transition from his specific experience to a more general argument.
- Question 3: Jefferson implies that the initial purpose of his walk was to
  - A. better understand the physical geography around him.
  - B. get out of the town in order to think more clearly.
  - C. understand the condition of non-American laborers.
  - D. avoid running into the king and his courtiers.
- Question 4: Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
  - A. lines 7-10 ("But as...miles")
  - B. lines 11-12 ("This...place")
  - C. lines 14-16 ("As soon...course")
  - D. lines 16-17 ("Wishing...her")

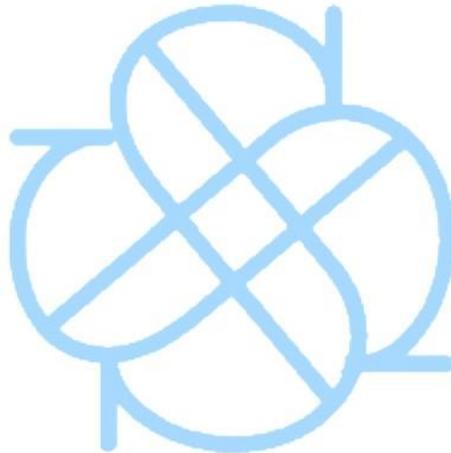
- Question 5: Which choice best describes Jefferson’s attitude toward socio-economic conditions in France?
  - A. He approves of the king’s policies on most, but not all, issues.
  - B. He sees France as an isolated case, with unique conditions not applicable to other countries.
  - C. He is affronted at the few opportunities given to the poor.
  - D. He is pleased that the United States does not experience the same conditions as France.



## Historical/Social Studies Passage Answer Key

- Question 1: **B**
  - This question is concerned with the *main* argument in this letter. Throughout his writing, Jefferson reflects on his opinions regarding the few opportunities available to the poor -- the majority of the people -- and the economic inequality in France. So, B, which is concerned with wealth being more effectively redistributed is the correct answer.
- Question 2: **D**
  - This question assesses how well you are able to identify the *function* of a piece of information in the letter. Jefferson starts out by mentioning that he wanted to set out on a trip to better explore his Fontainebleau, before he met a poor woman who described the poor economic conditions she was living in. This specific instance serves as an example that leads us into a more broad and general discussion of economic inequality in France as a whole, and the unfavorable conditions that poor people face in terms of their limited job opportunities. The only answer choice that describes this transition is answer choice D.
- Question 3: **A**
  - This question asks you to recall a specific event from the story. You have to be able to find out *why* Jefferson had gone on the trip to Fontainebleau in the first place. The only answer that supports this question is answer choice A, which states that Jefferson had gone on this visit to better explore his geography as he has not gone to the place before.
- Question 4: **B**
  - This question asks you to support your answer to the previous question with specific textual evidence. In the beginning of the second paragraph, we learn about Jefferson's reason for going to Fontainebleau, specifically in lines 11-12 where Jefferson says "This being the **first trip**, I set out yesterday morning to take a **view of the place**." This information lets us know the reason for Jefferson's trip and answers the question.

- Question 5: **C**
  - This question asks you to think about Jefferson's opinion regarding France's economic conditions. In order to answer it correctly, you need to understand the *purpose* of the article. The purpose of this article is to convey the argument that economic inequality is very prevalent in France, and actions need to be taken to counter that. These thoughts were sparked when Jefferson encountered the woman on the road in Fontainebleau and learned about the conditions she is living in. He believes the poorer class is given few job opportunities and thus are not able to escape their poor quality of life. Answer choice C best matches this explanation because he is expressing disapproval of the limited job opportunities given to the poor.



## Science Passage

- These passages often are about information gathered from experiments or observations, or both, and the implications and results from these. They can also be part of paired passages, in which you would have to read both passages thoroughly and think about the connections between them.
- Read a lot of scientific writing to familiarize yourself with the language -- whether it be articles, documents, graphic data displays, or scholarly journals.
- Mark up the passage with underlining or short annotations to keep yourself organized. Usually, for passages about experiments, you would have to follow the experiment and the steps that took place, so annotating will make that information clear for you.
- You do not have to know any science concepts or terms before the exam. All the information you need will be given to you and you only need to know the information from the passage.
- Make sure the answers chosen for each question can be directly inferred or supported with textual evidence from the passage. Remember that this is a scientific passage -- don't choose an answer that isn't scientifically true or proven from the text.
- Think about the purpose of the research, experiment, etc. conducted. What was the study's focus? What findings did it bring about and how did those findings contribute to scientific thought? *Did this study challenge any existing ideas?* How did the scientists in question execute their experiment and what challenges did they face along the way?
- If the passage is not about an experiment, think about the information collected or if there is a comparison between two things. What are the scientific breakthroughs and what data can be provided that will make a significant impact on the world we perceive? Is this a new finding and how will it change methodology and ideologies already present?
- Pay attention to the data. If there are specific statistics given, think about if those statistics changed throughout the course of the passage and what the statistics represented and how they contributed to the analysis of the study.

*Let's practice! Read the passage carefully and think about the findings and their purpose.*

## Science Passage Practice

This passage is excerpted from Joseph Mascaro, Gregory P Asner, Stuart Davies, Alex Dehgan, and Sassan Saatchi, *“These Are the Days of Lasers in the Jungle,”* ©2014 by Joseph Mascaro, et al, licensee Springer.

Just as the Moon’s history was disrobed by laser ranging 50 years ago, Earth’s tropical forests are giving up their secrets to the light. Airborne light detection and ranging—called LiDAR—has over the  
*Line 4* last ten years become a key tool that ecologists use to understand  
*5* physical variation in tropical forests across space and time. Like an MRI of the human brain, LiDAR probes the intricate three-dimensional architecture of the forest canopy, unveiling carbon that forests keep out of the atmosphere, and also the mounting threats to that carbon storehouse: drought, fire, clandestine logging and brash  
*10* gold-mining operations. Even the quintessential natural disturbance of the sun-filled light gap—long thought to enhance the incredibly high species diversity of tropical forests—has been deconstructed by laser technology.

Laser ranging in tropical forests is such a game-changing  
*15* technology that science results can scarcely get through peer-review before they are dwarfed by still larger-scale studies. In a decade, laser power on commercial-grade LiDARs has skyrocketed and costs have plummeted. These improvements in LiDAR technology allow airplanes to fly faster, higher and farther, covering more forest  
*20* area in a single day than every ground-based survey that has ever been collected in the history of tropical ecology. To estimate the amount of carbon stored in a 50-hectare tropical forest monitoring plot on the ground—the largest field plot in the world—takes a team of 12 people about eight months: a slog of rain and mud and  
*25* snakes with tape measures and data log books. Today’s airborne LiDARs can get you to within about 10% of the same carbon estimate in *eight seconds*.

It is this staggering contrast in scale between LiDAR and fieldwork that led us here: Before this decade is out, we could  
30 directly assess the carbon stock of every single square hectare of tropical forest on Earth. We could do it just as well as if we were standing there in the flesh with tape measures in hand. And we could do it for far less than what we have already spent to offset carbon emissions from forests. . . .

35 It is easy in principle, though logistically nightmarish, to measure carbon in tropical forests. A strict constructionist would cut, dry and weigh the biomass of the world's forests. But this is a self-defeating enterprise. As a result, it is likely that no one has measured carbon over a single hectare of tropical forest, even with  
40 the most detailed field surveys. For a century ecologists and foresters have relied on allometric<sup>1</sup> estimation in lieu of carbon measurements to translate field surveys of tree diameters, heights and wood densities into whole-forest carbon estimates. Given a volume with known dimensions and density, one would estimate its  
45 mass in a similar fashion.

As the new kid on the block, LiDAR has been tacked onto the back end—initially thought of as kind of large-scale helper to field surveys. Carbon estimates from the field have been treated as something inherently closer to the real thing than measurements  
50 made by LiDAR—ground “Truth” with a capital “T”. This is perhaps understandable historically, but vis-à-vis actual carbon, there is no such thing as ground truth: both field and LiDAR efforts rely on allometry to convert measurements into carbon estimates. *Prior* to using these measurements for carbon estimation, they exist as  
55 standardized, spatially explicit, archivable and verifiable data—the needed substrate for a REDD<sup>2</sup>-type accounting program.

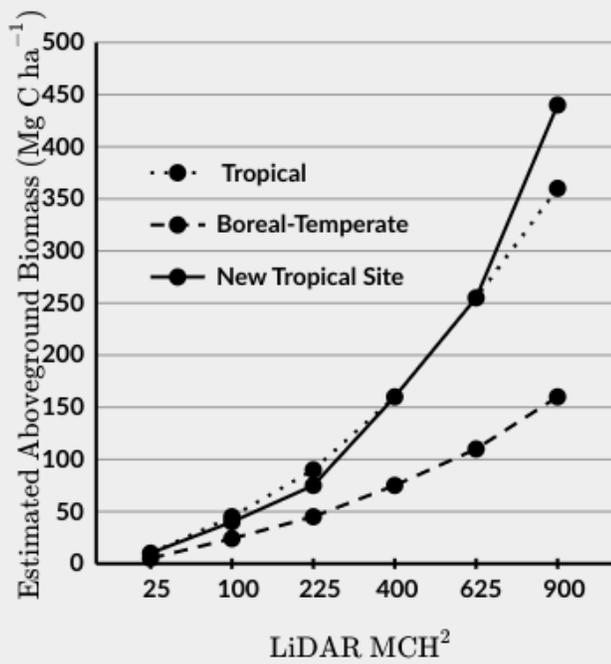
Due to the constancy of the underlying measurements, both field and LiDAR data could provide the needed information if they covered every hectare on Earth. But, in the case of field surveys, this is impossible. The surveys that do exist measure a tiny amount of actual forest, and so what might be verified is widely spaced. And to avoid fraud and protect landowners, many governments keep their plot locations secret. Satellite LiDAR data remain sparse, providing only extrapolated, coarse-resolution carbon estimates with very high uncertainties, and there is no prospect of wall-to-wall coverage in the near future. By 2020, airborne LiDAR could give us a direct measurement of 3-D forest structure for every hectare in the tropics: a standardized database from which to build a carbon economy.

<sup>1</sup> Pertaining to the study of changing proportions in part of an organism or body resulting from growth.

<sup>2</sup> Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, a program implemented by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



Carbon Biomass and Mean Canopy Height (MCH) in Different Types of Forests



The graph illustrates the relationship in different types of forests between mean canopy vertical height profiles (MCH), as measured by LiDAR, and field-based estimates of carbon biomass.

Adapted from Gregory P. Asner, "Tropical Forest Carbon Assessment: Integrating Satellite and Airborne Mapping Approaches." ©2010 Institute of Physics and IOP Publishing.

It's important to annotate the passage while reading to make sure we are aware of and can come back to key information. Here is what this passage annotated may look like:

This passage is excerpted from Joseph Mascaro, Gregory P Asner, Stuart Davies, Alex Dehgan, and Sassan Saatchi, "These Are the Days of Lasers in the Jungle," ©2014 by Joseph Mascaro, et al, licensee Springer.

Just as the Moon's history was disrobed by laser ranging 50 years ago, Earth's tropical forests are giving up their secrets to the light. Airborne light detection and ranging—called LiDAR—has over the last ten years become a key tool that ecologists use to understand physical variation in tropical forests across space and time. Like an MRI of the human brain, LiDAR probes the intricate three-dimensional architecture of the forest canopy, unveiling carbon that forests keep out of the atmosphere, and also the mounting threats to that carbon storehouse: drought, fire, clandestine logging and brush gold-mining operations. Even the quintessential natural disturbance of the sun-filled light gap—long thought to enhance the incredibly high species diversity of tropical forests—has been deconstructed by laser technology.

Line 4

5

10

15

20

25

Laser ranging in tropical forests is such a game-changing technology that science results can scarcely get through peer-review before they are dwarfed by still larger-scale studies. In a decade, laser power on commercial-grade LiDARs has skyrocketed and costs have plummeted. These improvements in LiDAR technology allow airplanes to fly faster, higher and farther, covering more forest area in a single day than every ground-based survey that has ever been collected in the history of tropical ecology. To estimate the amount of carbon stored in a 50-hectare tropical forest monitoring plot on the ground—the largest field plot in the world—takes a team of 12 people about eight months: a slog of rain and mud and snakes with tape measures and data log books. Today's airborne LiDARs can get you to within about 10% of the same carbon estimate in eight seconds.

LiDAR:

← key tool, explores forest canopy

← LiDAR: costs ↓ quality ↑

LiDAR: airplanes fly better, observation data given faster →

It is this staggering contrast in scale between LiDAR and fieldwork that led us here: Before this decade is out, we could directly assess the carbon stock of every single square hectare of tropical forest on Earth. We could do it just as well as if we were standing there in the flesh with tape measures in hand. And we could do it for far less than what we have already spent to offset carbon emissions from forests. . . .

It is easy in principle, though logistically nightmarish, to measure carbon in tropical forests. A strict constructionist would cut, dry and weigh the biomass of the world's forests. But this is a self-defeating enterprise. As a result, it is likely that no one has measured carbon over a single hectare of tropical forest, even with the most detailed field surveys. For a century ecologists and foresters have relied on allometric<sup>1</sup> estimation in lieu of carbon measurements to translate field surveys of tree diameters, heights and wood densities into whole-forest carbon estimates. Given a volume with known dimensions and density, one would estimate its mass in a similar fashion.

As the new kid on the block, LiDAR has been tacked onto the back end—initially thought of as kind of large-scale helper to field surveys. Carbon estimates from the field have been treated as something inherently closer to the real thing than measurements made by LiDAR—ground “Truth” with a capital “T”. This is perhaps understandable historically, but vis-à-vis actual carbon, there is no such thing as ground truth: both field and LiDAR efforts rely on allometry to convert measurements into carbon estimates. *Prior* to using these measurements for carbon estimation, they exist as standardized, spatially explicit, archivable and verifiable data—the needed substrate for a REDD<sup>2</sup>-type accounting program.

← assess all carbon stocks on forests

← LiDAR & field efforts rely on allometry

- This text is about LiDAR -- airborne light detection and ranging -- and how it has helped scientists to study carbon samples and other observations in tropical forests. The passage

Due to the constancy of the underlying measurements, both field and LiDAR data could provide the needed information if they covered every hectare on Earth. But, in the case of field surveys, this is impossible. The surveys that do exist measure a tiny amount of actual forest, and so what might be verified is widely spaced. And to avoid fraud and protect landowners, many governments keep their plot locations secret. Satellite LiDAR data remain sparse, providing only extrapolated, coarse-resolution carbon estimates with very high uncertainties, and there is no prospect of wall-to-wall coverage in the near future. By 2020, airborne LiDAR could give us a direct measurement of 3-D forest structure for every hectare in the tropics: a standardized database from which to build a carbon economy.

<sup>1</sup> Pertaining to the study of changing proportions in part of an organism or body resulting from growth.

<sup>2</sup> Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, a program implemented by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

← LiDAR ↓  
field surveys  
(FS) b/c FS  
measure small  
amount of real  
forest

then goes on to describe the way the LiDAR probes the forest canopy and how it is able to do so excellently. Laser power has improved (in quality and type) and costs have gone down, and these improvements are what enable efficient transportation. We also learn how carbon is measured in tropical forests.

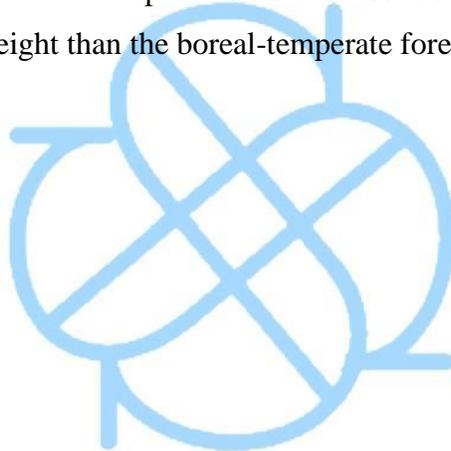
- The passage then contrasts LiDAR and fieldwork, and talks about how field surveys are unlikely to produce data as accurate as LiDAR as the data that field surveys may verify is “widely spaced.”
- The graph provided assesses the relationship between carbon biomass and mean canopy height and three different forest types (Tropical, Boreal-Temperate, New Tropical Site).

Now that we have annotated the passage, let’s look at the questions. The questions assembled on these pages are organized in a manner that you will likely see on the SAT, ordered from more

general to more specific. Take some time and answer these 5 questions; scroll down after to check your answers!

- Question 1: The authors' central claim in the passage is that
  - A. LiDAR's opponents have prevented the technology from advancing to a point where it might be scientifically useful, favoring traditional methods.
  - B. Fieldwork and LiDar are best used in combination when mapping carbon in tropical forests, in order to avoid human error while maintaining accuracy.
  - C. LiDAR is as important a technology as MRI scanning or the scientific study of the moon with lasers.
  - D. LiDAR technology is faster, cheaper, and nearly as accurate as traditional field methods for measuring the carbon biomass on Earth.
- Question 2: In the first paragraph, the words "disrobed," "unveiling," and "deconstructed" primarily serve to
  - A. highlight the negative connotations that laster technology current has.
  - B. emphasize the extensive reach of laser technology.
  - C. demonstrate the inherently unknowable characteristics of objects, even with laser technology.
  - D. implicitly compare lasers to other forms of technology.
- Question 3: The authors imply that the main benefit of using LiDAR, as opposed to fieldwork, for measuring carbon in tropical forests is the
  - A. scale and rapidity with which LiDAR can be used.
  - B. expense of hiring scientists to carry out fieldwork.
  - C. rapid changes and improvements in LiDAR technology.
  - D. precision of LiDAR, which eliminates human error.
  
- Question 4: Which choices provide the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A. lines 16-18 (“In...plummeted”)
  - B. lines 18-19 (“These...farther”)
  - C. lines 29-31 (“Before..Earth”)
  - D. lines 31-32 (“We could...hand”)
- Question 5: It can reasonably be inferred from the graph that
    - A. For the same mean canopy height (above  $25 \text{ MCH}^2$ ), tropical forests have more carbon biomass than temperate forests.
    - B. There is an inverse relationship between mean canopy vertical height and aboveground carbon biomass.
    - C. At a mean canopy height of  $625 \text{ MCH}^2$ , all three types of forests depicted will have approximately the same aboveground carbon biomass.
    - D. On average, the new tropical forest has less aboveground carbon biomass at a given canopy height than the boreal-temperate forest depicted.

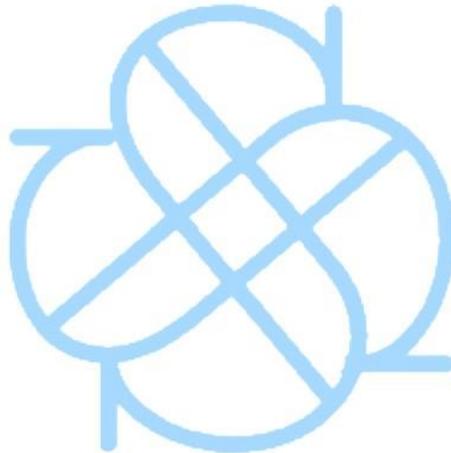


### Science Passage Answer Key

- Question 1: **D**

- This question is similar to ones we've seen before. We need to know the main idea of the passage and what the author wants us to take away primarily. As mentioned previously, the author's central claim is that the revolutionary LiDAR is one of the most cost-efficient, productive, and accurate ways to measure carbon biomass. We see this when the author explains LiDAR and the way it probes the forest canopy, how LiDAR would soon be able to directly assess the carbon stock of every square hectare of tropical forest, how LiDAR is better than field surveys, and how the improvements in LiDAR technology "allows airplanes to fly faster, higher and farther, covering more forest...tropical ecology" (lines 18-21). All this information points to the idea that LiDAR technology is an excellent way to measure carbon biomass, and this is summarized by answer choice D.
- Question 2: **B**
  - This question enables us to think about the *function* of the words "disrobed," "unveiling," and "deconstructed" in the first paragraph. Let's think about the connotation, or the idea that these words invoke, when used in general. When looked at in conjunction, these words highlight how laser technology has been used in different ways -- to "disrobe," or dig deeper into, to "deconstruct," or to break down, and to "unveil," or to reveal and/or disclose. In this context, these words describe how LiDAR has many purposes and can be utilized in various ways, as described by answer choice B.
- Question 3: **A**
  - This question assesses your ability to recall certain information from the passage. Throughout the text, the author studies how LiDAR is so efficient because of its scale and rapidity, so choice A is the best answer.
- Question 4: **C**
  - This question asks you to provide evidence to support your answer that LiDAR is viewed by the author as having great scale and rapidity. This is clearly stated in lines 18-19 when the author says "These improvements in LiDAR technology allow airplanes to fly faster, higher....more forest"
- Question 5: **A**

- This question asks you to study the trends in the graph provided. We can see from the graph that the relationship between the two variables studied is direct for the most part. It is also shown that for the mean canopy height above 25 MCH<sup>2</sup>, tropical forests have a higher value on the y-axis, or a larger estimated aboveground biomass, than do temperate forests. So, A is the answer.



## Analyzing Charts

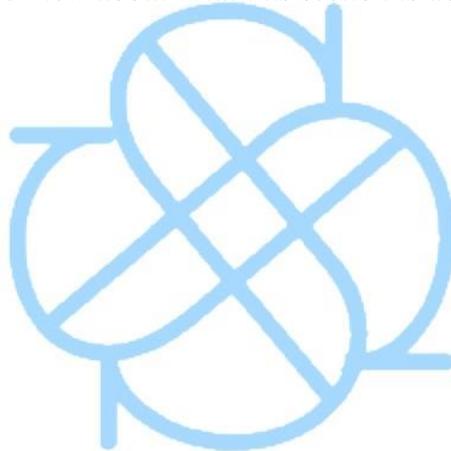
- Questions regarding analyzing charts assess students' ability to analyze quantitative *and* verbal information. When answering questions regarding graphs, charts, and/or any other type of media, ensure you read the graphs very carefully. What is this data showing and how is it related to the text? What are the variables being studied and what is the relationship between them? Read the title of the graph and the names given to the  $x$  and  $y$  axis, as well as any legend that may be given.
- Familiarize yourself with the graph! Make sure you are aware of every component of the graph and what role it plays. This is especially important when you are asked to interpret data or draw a conclusion based on the information presented. Make sure you are able to identify the task, think about the connection between the data shown and the text you have read -- what is the role of the graph? Read the question several times and make sure you know what you're looking for in the graph.
- Eliminate bizarre choices or choices that are about information that is not presented. Oftentimes, these answer choices offer conclusions that are too generalized or broad to be supported by the study presented, are out of the question's scope, describe a pattern between variables that cannot be justified, contain words on the extreme spectrum (ex. never, always), or choices that are *probably* true based on information you may have read earlier but cannot be concluded from the data presented solely.
- You can master these questions by *practice*. Do many practice tests and practice analyzing graphs and finding specific information.

## **Evidence-Based Writing**

- Now that we have looked at how to approach questions on the *Evidence-Based Reading* section, let's focus on *Evidence-Based Writing*, the second part of the English section of the SAT.
- This section is based only on passages where you will be assessed on your grammar, sentence-structure, and vocabulary skills.
- To get better at these types of questions, *study grammar rules!* Some rules may be common sense if you read and write a lot, but others aren't so clear. Regardless, practice reading academic articles and study sentence-structure and the way the author may have chosen to keep or delete certain information.
- Proofreading your old work and spot areas of improvement in terms of the grammar and delivery of your writing.
- Read the words/phrases/sentences around each word/phrase/sentence being studied to get a better context and understanding of the text.
- Read newspaper articles and academic writing to get a better idea about the various types of writing conventions.
- There are 4 primary types of questions you may see:
  - Grammar Questions
    - Will assess your knowledge about standard English conventions including punctuation, verb and noun tense, parallel structure, subject-verb agreement, as well as the proper usage of comma, semicolon, hyphen, etc.
  - Word-Usage Questions
    - Will assess your skills in improving the expression of ideas. How do you make a phrase more concise? How will you alter the style and/or tone of your words to optimize delivery?
  - Passage/Sentence Structure Questions
    - These questions ask you about whether the meaning of a passage is clear through the assembly of its sentences. They often ask if a sentence or passage should be moved/rearranged for the text to flow better.
  - Command of Evidence Questions

- These questions ask you about the big picture or underlying theme. You will be asked to make an improvement that impacts either sentence/passage structure or delivery. You will also need to note the *reason* that you will make that change. Understanding the context here is very important.
- Graph Interpretation Questions
  - These data interpretation questions are similar to the chart analysis questions posted earlier. The graphic provided will be in some way related to the passage. You will have to choose the answer choice that best supports and strengthens the argument.

*Now that we have a general overview about what this section is about, let's look at some important grammar rules.*



## **Evidence-Based Writing Rules**

- Subject-Verb Agreement

- If the subject, or noun performing the verb, of a sentence is *singular*, it should be paired with a *singular* verb. Remember that the verb is the action being done by the subject. If the subject is *plural*, it should be paired with a *plural* verb.

Examples:

- Your dog *plays* in the park. (singular noun + singular verb)
  - Singular regular verbs end in “s”
- Your dogs *play* in the park. (plural noun + plural verb)
  - Plural regular verbs do not end in “s”
- Any other corresponding nouns in the sentence have to agree in number.

Examples:

- My sister and I are *great friend*.
  - This is an incorrect sentence.
- My sister and I are *great friends*.
  - This is a correct sentence.
- Here are some singular and plural noun forms that you should commit to memory:
  - Data (Plural) & Datum (Singular)
  - Criteria (Plural) & Criterion (Singular)
  - Fish (Plural) & Fish (Singular)
  - Phenomenon (Plural) & Phenomena (Singular)

- Sentence Fragments

- A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence that does not express a complete thought because either the *subject* or the *verb* is missing. Examples:
  - He ate the bread.
    - This is a complete sentence, with the subject and a verb.
  - Ate the bread faster than him.
    - This is an incomplete sentence because there is no subject? *Who* is eating the bread faster?
- Watch out for sentence fragments on the SAT, and make sure to watch out for answer choices with them!

- Run-on Sentences and Conjunctions

- Run-on sentences are sentences that contain two independent clauses together without proper punctuation. Run-on sentences are improper and do not flow well.

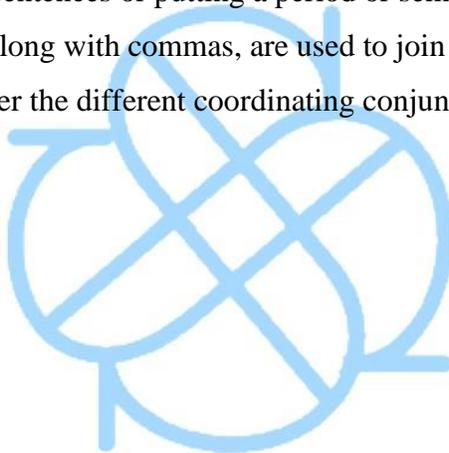
Example:

- I love to play basketball.
  - This is a correct sentence.
- I love to play basketball I play it every Monday for two hours.
  - This is an incorrect sentence because the clauses “I love to play basketball” and “I play it every Monday for two hours” are independent clauses, meaning that they can stand on their own. So, some type of punctuation has to be between them or some type of change has to occur, such as splitting the run-on sentences into two sentences or putting a period or semicolon between the clauses.

- Conjunctions, along with commas, are used to join independent clauses. The best way to remember the different coordinating conjunctions is by using the acronym

**FANBOYS:**

- F: For
- A: And
- N: Nor
- B: But
- O: Or
- Y: Yet
- S: So



- Conjunction usage examples:
  - Samuel was able to win the school art competition, **and** was even able to present his artwork to the White House!
  - It’s okay to not succeed sometimes, **but** remember to never give up.

- Pronouns

- Pronouns are words that take the place of a noun in a sentence and can be in either its subjective or objective form. Here are some examples of pronouns part of these two cases:

- Subjective: “I,” “you,” “he,” “she,” “they,” “it,” “who,” “we”

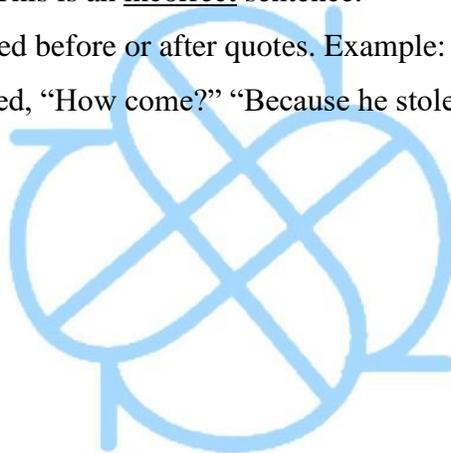
- Subjective pronouns also come after the word *than*. Example:
  - Sarah is better at soccer than *I* (am).
- Objective: “me,” “us,” “him,” “her,” “you,” it,” “them,” “whom”
  - Objective pronouns come after a preposition (by, with, without, of, for, etc.):
    - She told everyone except *him and her*.
    - By *whom* was this mess made?
  - Pronouns also must agree in number with their antecedent nouns. Example:
    - If a student studies well for *his or her* exam, *he or she* will get a good grade.
  - Verbs must agree in numbers with subject pronouns
    - Singular Pronouns examples: each, either, anyone, everything, someone somebody, neither
      - Sentence example: *Each* of the children who came to the party *is* a middle-schooler.
    - Plural Pronouns examples: many, several, few
      - Sentence example: *Many apples are* fresh, but *few are* not.

- Comma Use

- Commas go between independent clauses, but only when paired with a *FANBOYS* conjunction, as aforementioned.
- Commas are used to set off introductory phrases, dependent clauses, prepositional phrases (*in the beginning, before the summer, into the forest, etc.*) , transitional phrases (however, although, etc.), phrases that address a person by name, or other descriptive phrases, but are never used between a *subject* and a *verb*. Examples:
  - Furthermore, there are fifty states in the United States of America.
    - Here, “furthermore” is the introductory phrase.
    - This is a correct sentence.
  - The state of Florida, experiences warm summers.
    - This is an example of a comma in between the subject (Florida) and the verb (experiences).
    - This is an incorrect sentence.
- Commas are used between elements in a list. Example:
  - I brought my notebook, computer, jacket, and pencil to school.
- Commas are used between non-essential phrases or to set off supplementary information. Example:
  - My dad, a hard-working engineer, inspired me to follow my dreams.
    - Here, “a hard-working engineer” is a *nonessential phrase* as removing it will not alter the main idea of a sentence. It is an unimportant detail that only adds *extra* information.

- Comma Use (continued)

- Commas are used between adjectives *only* when reversing the adjectives would not alter the sentence's meaning. Examples:
  - A brown, furry dog walked up to me.
    - Here, a comma is used, because switching the adjectives “brown” and “furry” *would not* change the sentence's original meaning. Thus, these adjectives are *interchangeable*.
    - This is a correct sentence.
  - My local, high school is having a Halloween party.
    - Here, a comma should not be used because switching the adjectives “local” and “high” *would* change the sentence's meaning.
    - This is an incorrect sentence.
- Commas are used before or after quotes. Example:
  - She asked, “How come?” “Because he stole it from my house,” he replied.



- Semicolons, Colons, Dashes, and Parentheses

- A semicolon is used to separate two independent clauses that could each stand alone as a sentence. These clauses usually are related to each other. If two sentences are directly related, a semicolon placed between them can improve the flow of ideas in the sentence. Examples:
  - Getting enough sunlight is essential; sunlight promotes a healthy heart and a sense of comfort.
  - Dinosaurs were interesting creatures; they came in all shapes and sizes!
- A colon is used to introduce examples or items in a list. It is also used to separate two independent clauses, but it is more reasonable and common to use it when the second clause clarifies, elaborates on, paraphrases, highlights, or reflects on the first clause. Examples:
  - The teacher asks us to bring the following items for our field trip: a tent, a toothbrush, a set of clothes, and a towel.
  - Mikayla has three sisters: Amy, Nicole, and Brooke.
- A dash sets off non-essential phrases or elements in a sentence. They can be used to set off phrases in the middle or the end of a sentence, and are important because they clearly draw attention to a part of the sentence. Examples:
  - China — the most populous country — is in East Asia.
  - Youtube — an American video-sharing platform — is one of the most successful companies in the world.
- A set of parentheses surrounds non-essential or extra information in a sentence. Examples:
  - My sister (who claims she's the favorite child) has straight, blonde hair.
  - The SAT tests students' application of punctuation marks (including commas, periods, and semicolons).

- Parallel Structure

- Parallel structure is about having the form of a noun, adjective, verb, or adverb (or any other part of speech) consistent throughout a sentence. All ideas in a sentence should follow the same grammatical pattern and maintain this parallel structure.

Examples:

- Samuel likes biking, reading, and watching television.
  - This is an example of parallel structure as all the verbs end with “ing.”
  - This is a correct sentence.
- Samuel likes to bike, reading, and to watch the television.
  - The verbs do not all have the same grammatical structure.
  - This is an incorrect sentence.

- Apostrophes

- Apostrophes are used to form *contractions* of a word to symbolize letters that have been removed. Example:

- You can't solve this math problem.
  - This is a correct sentence.
- You cant solve this math problem.
  - This is an incorrect sentence.

- If a singular or plural noun does not end with an “s,” add a “s” to make it possessive. If it is plural and ends with an “s,” add an apostrophe (') at the end of the word. Examples:

- Singular noun: My mother used my sister's ideas to paint a picture.
  - Here, the noun “sister” is singular, so you should add the “s” at the end of the word.
- Plural noun: My mother used my sisters' ideas to paint a picture.
  - Here, the noun “sisters” is plural, so you should add an “'” at the end of the word.

- Modifiers

- A modifier is a word/phrase/clause that *modifies* or *describes* a noun or verb in a sentence. In order for ideas to flow as best as possible, modifiers have to be placed *as close as possible* to whatever noun or verb they are modifying.

Examples:

- Eating her favorite food, Jenna felt happy.
  - Here, the modifier “eating her favorite food” has to be placed as closely to the noun “Jenna” for the sentence to read properly.
  - This is a correct sentence.
- Eating her favorite food, happiness came to Jenna.
  - Here, the modifier “eating her favorite food” is placed far away from the noun it is modifying, “Jenna.”
  - This is an example of a “misplaced modifier.” It is important to catch these errors and correct them on the SAT. This is an incorrect sentence.

- Style and Tone

- Throughout your writing, it is important to maintain word choice consistent with the overall *style and tone* of the passage. Make sure the word and sentence usage is appropriate for the type of passage being presented.
- Don't choose answer choices that contain words that are too formal or too casual. *Informal writing* contains words and phrases such as “a bit,” “a lot of,” “till,” “kind of,” etc. On the SAT, always choose the most academically appropriate word/phrase/sentence. Examples:

- Camping is an invigorating experience until when you have to leave shortly after.
  - This sentence is academically appropriate and formal.
  - This is a correct sentence
- Camping is sort of fun till you gotta go home after a bit.
  - This sentence is informal and resembles the type of language we use when we casually speak.
  - This is an incorrect sentence.

- Wordiness and Concision

- Wordiness means that a sentence can be shortened without making any grammatical errors, and is eliminated by *concision* to convey a message more clearly and effectively. Concise sentences are easier to understand and the correct answer on the SAT will always be the most concise and grammatically correct answer choice. Examples:
  - Not many people are able to make origami as wonderfully as I do.
    - This sentence uses as few words as possible to convey the same message as the sentence below.
    - This is a correct sentence.
  - Not many people are able to apply the same skills of origami-making as wonderfully as I typically do.
    - This sentence uses too many unnecessary words that make the sentence sound awkward and hard to understand.
    - This is an incorrect sentence.

*When asked about specific words/phrases, read the context around the word to make the best decision regarding tense, word/sentence structure, punctuation use, etc. Now that we have studied these important grammar rules, let's put them to the test and study this passage.*

## Truman's Winning Whistle-Stop Tour

[1] In 1948, United States President Harry S. Truman faced reelection for a second term, but the polls did not favor him. [2] Since the end of World War II three years earlier, the US economy had been unsteady. [3] Citizens had trouble finding and purchasing goods due to shortages. [4] Many people felt a fresh face on the political scene in this uncertain time would be welcome. [5] As the campaign moved into high gear in May of 1948, Truman lagged 11 percent behind Dewey in the polls. [6] Instead, the polls predicted a win for New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey, Truman's charismatic opponent. [7] However, Truman would engage in a hard-fought, unorthodox campaign style that became known as the first successful "whistle-stop" tour. **1**

Using train travel in a political campaign was a fairly common practice that had begun in the nineteenth **2** century. The specific term "whistle stop" wasn't coined until Truman used it to describe his whirlwind campaign tour. **3** Truman, delivered hundreds of speeches in towns across the United States from an open platform on the back of his train car. His arduous travels **4** were covering 30,000 miles and over 200 train stops, starting in the summer of 1948 and ending that fall before the November 2nd election. He began the tour in Michigan, then moved on to Iowa, Ohio, Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado as the summer progressed. In September, he headed west to Nevada, Utah, California, and Arizona. At one of his stops in **5** Arizona. An estimated 20,000 people waited to greet him at the train station. In October, he headed back east again to Oklahoma, Illinois, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Now that we have annotated the passage, let's look at the questions. Take some time and answer these 5 questions; the question numbers below will pertain to that same number on the text. Scroll down after to check your answers!

- Question 1: To make the first paragraph most logical, sentence 6 should be placed
  - A. where it is now
  - B. after sentence 1
  - C. after sentence 2
  - D. after sentence 7
- Question 2: Which choice most effectively combines the sentences at the underlined portion?
  - A. century, but the
  - B. century; also, the
  - C. century, so the
  - D. century; meanwhile, the
- Question 3:
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. Truman delivered hundreds of speeches in towns
  - C. Truman delivered: hundreds of speeches, in towns
  - D. Truman delivered hundreds of: speeches in towns
- Question 4:
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. cover
  - C. will cover
  - D. covered
- Question 5:
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. Arizona, an estimated 20,000 people waited
  - C. Arizona, an estimated 20,000 people waiting
  - D. Arizona, with an estimated 20,000 people waiting

## Evidence-Based Writing Passage Answer Key

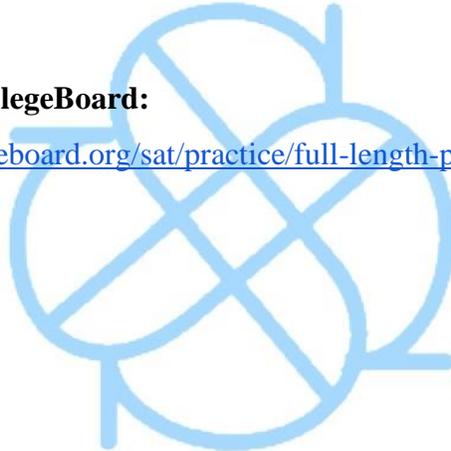
- Question 1: **B**
  - The question is asking about passage structure and to answer this question, reread question 6 and determine what it is about. Question 6 has the word “Instead” in the beginning, and this word implies that the idea before it is in contrast to the idea in sentence 6. Sentence 1 is talking about the polls not favoring Truman, and Sentence 6 is talking about who the polls favored *instead*. So, it would make most sense to place sentence 6 after sentence 1.
- Question 2: **A**
  - This question is asking about how to efficiently combine the two sentences in the beginning of the paragraph. If you read carefully, you’ll see that the two sentences are contrasting in idea by presenting that although using train travel was a common practice at the time, the term “whistle stop” wasn’t coined until later. This contrast can be reflected with the phrase “but the,” and because a FANBOYS conjunction is used, there should be a comma before it.
- Question 3: **B**
  - This question assesses your ability on how to use commas properly. The beginning of the sentence reads “Truman delivered...” The subject, or noun, here is “Truman” and the verb is “delivered.” Remember that commas should *not* be used between a subject and verb, and choice B is the best answer here as it eliminates this comma.
- Question 4: **D**
  - To solve this question, remind yourself about using the context around the specific word/phrase/sentence in question. You would notice that the words “delivered,” “began,” and “headed,” are surrounding that word. So, to best maintain parallel structure, we would use the word “covered” in this sentence.

- Question 5: **B**
  - The beginning of the sentence in question reads “At one of his stops in Arizona.” This is an incomplete sentence, or a segment fragment, as no clear verb is present. So, this sentence must be combined with the text one, and the best way to do that is to use a comma to connect an introductory modifying phrase to the independent clause following it. So, choice B is the best answer.

This wraps up everything you need to know to be prepared for the SAT English section of the exam! Good luck to everyone preparing for the SAT exam, and make sure you keep the rules, tips, and tricks discussed in mind. If you'd like to take some practice tests to assess your skill level, simply follow the link below. Happy studying!

**SAT Practice Tests from CollegeBoard:**

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/full-length-practice-tests>



## **Sources**

### **Screenshots of Passages:**

- Retrieved from *khanacademy.org*: *Official SAT Practice - Reading: Literature*

### **Practice Questions:**

- Retrieved from *khanacademy.org*: *Official SAT Practice - Reading: Literature*

### **Content:**

- <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>
- <https://khanacademy.org>
- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/breakdown-of-every-question-type-in-sat-reading-by-percentage>
- <https://magoosh.com/hs/sat/2020/sat-grammar-rules/>
- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/sat-sections>
- <https://thecollegepanda.com/the-18-sat-grammar-rules-you-must-know/>
- <http://www.aceittestprep.com/content/SAT-and-ACT-Grammar-Review.pdf>
- [https://info.methodtestprep.com/hs-fs/hub/47282/file-14335653-pdf/docs/mtp\\_sat\\_grammar\\_rules\\_and\\_vocab\\_packet.pdf](https://info.methodtestprep.com/hs-fs/hub/47282/file-14335653-pdf/docs/mtp_sat_grammar_rules_and_vocab_packet.pdf)
- [https://ivyglobal.com/sat/Downloads/IvyGlobal-SAT\\_Grammar\\_Review.Pdf](https://ivyglobal.com/sat/Downloads/IvyGlobal-SAT_Grammar_Review.Pdf)
- <https://www.albert.io/blog/10-essential-grammar-rules-for-sat-writing/>
- <https://www.manhattanreview.com/sat-reading-question-categories/>
- <https://blog.collegevine.com/the-new-sat-reading-test-strategies-for-question-types/>
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning/about-the-sat-reading-test/a/the-sat-reading-test-information-and-ideas>

### **Images:**

- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/how-is-the-sat-scored-scoring-charts#:~:text=Overview,you%20earn%20on%20each%20section.>
- <https://www.kaptest.com/study/sat/whats-tested-on-the-sat-reading-and-writing-section/>