



SAT Writing & Language Question Types



Editing



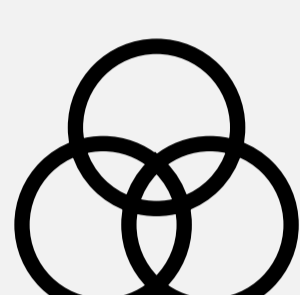
Adding, Deleting, and Revising Sentences

How to Spot

The question will ask you whether the sentence or phrase in question needs to be added, revised, or deleted.

How to Solve

Get the main idea of the paragraph and then ask yourself whether the sentence effectively contributes to the main idea or not.



Combining Sentences

How to Spot

The question will ask “Which choice most effectively combines the sentences at the underlined portion?”

How to Solve

Choose the grammatically correct choice that preserves the intended meaning. Shorter is generally better. Eliminating answer choices with incorrect grammar (usually punctuation and misplaced modifiers) is the ideal place to start!



Concluding Passages

How to Spot

The question will state how the writer wants to conclude the passage in some way.

How to Solve

Keep the big picture in mind. Every paragraph must contribute to the stated goal.



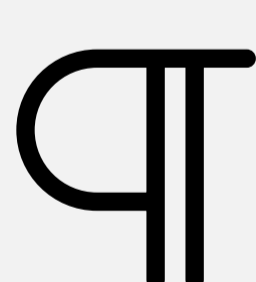
Evaluating Relevant Phrases

How to Spot

The question will usually ask for something specific. (Which choice provides a supporting example that is most similar to the examples already in the sentence?)

How to Solve

Do NOT do what “sounds best” to you. Instead, take the question literally and do exactly what it is asking. Read the question carefully to identify keywords (specifically, relevant, emphasizes, illustrates, etc.) and what you need to read in the passage (surrounding sentences, paragraphs, graphs). Once you are confident in your answer, reread the question again to make sure your answer addresses what the question requires!



Introduction, Conclusion, and Transition Sentences

How to Spot

The question will ask which answer choice provides the best introduction or conclusion to the paragraph or passage, or the best transition between two paragraphs.

How to Solve

Main Ideas! Find the main ideas of all relevant paragraphs, and pick the answer choice that best connects those together. DO NOT just read the sentence before and after the sentence in question.



Rearranging Parts of Passages

How to Spot

The question will ask you to place a part of a passage (usually a sentence or paragraph) in the correct place.

How to Solve

Read the part in question and identify specific clues that point to what comes before and after it (pronouns are very helpful!). Next, place the part, keeping the identified clues in mind. Lastly, make sure the part fits both the sentence before it AND after it.

Tips for Editing Questions

- SAT Editing Questions can be very nitpicky. As a general rule, read more of the passage than you think you need to in order to answer the question!
- Whenever a question asks about the first or last sentence of a paragraph, always check the paragraph before or after it to make sure the sentence fits.
- Outside of questions you have circled throughout the test, editing questions should be the first questions you review with any extra time you have at the end of the section.



Grammar



Punctuation

How to Spot

Answer choices will have different types of punctuation (commas, semicolons, colons, dashes).

How to Solve

There is no substitute for knowing the rules of punctuation. For a detailed breakdown of all things punctuation, review our Grammar Curriculum and Punctuation Cheat Sheet.



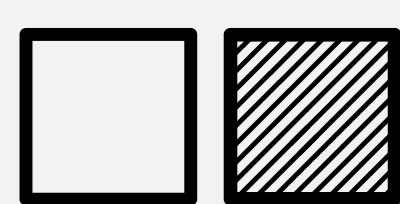
Verbs

How to Spot

Answer choices contain different verb tenses and conjugations (singular vs. plural).

How to Solve

ALWAYS start with assessing subject-verb agreement. Identify whether the subject (usually at the beginning of the clause) is singular or plural, and then make sure the verb matches the subject. If there are multiple answer choices that have the correct subject-verb agreement, then check the tense of the verbs in surrounding sentences.



Logical Comparisons

How to Spot

Answer choices will have different lengths. (They are a specific type of Wordiness/ Redundancy question types). Answer choices will usually have "that" or "those" in them.

How to Solve

Make sure the comparison in the sentence makes logical sense. (In N Out's burgers are better than Five Guys = bad. In N Out's burgers are better than those of Five Guys = good.) "That" = singular and "Those" = Plural.



Misplaced Modifiers

How to Spot

Answer choices will have different subjects and/or voice (active vs. passive), and there will usually be an introductory phrase or clause at the beginning of the sentence that doesn't describe the subject after the comma.

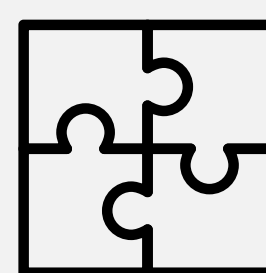
How to Solve

Identifying questions as Misplaced Modifiers is the hardest part! Once you have done so, make sure the descriptive clause or phrase correctly aligns with the subject it is describing.



Tip

To be safe, check for misplaced modifiers whenever you think you have a question that is just testing on word choice.



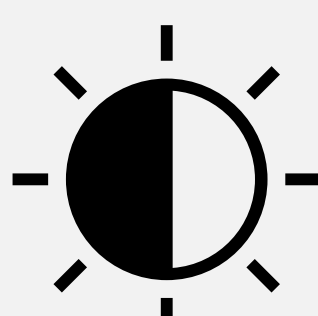
Pronoun Agreement

How to Spot

Answer choices will have singular and plural pronouns (hers/his/its vs their, usually).

How to Solve

Identify whether the antecedent (the word the pronoun is replacing) is singular or plural, and then make sure the pronoun matches the antecedent.



Pronoun Clarity

How to Spot

Some Answer choices will contain pronouns; others will contain specific nouns.

How to Solve

Pronouns cannot be used unless it is 100% clear what the antecedent is, so the relevant noun is always correct.



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Style



Commonly Confused Words

How to Spot

Answer choices will have vocabulary words that sound similar but mean different things (effect vs affect, its vs it's, then vs than).

How to Solve

Study the Commonly Confused Words Cheat Sheet! If you don't know the difference between two words, try to use another grammar rule to eliminate wrong answers (i.e. eliminating both affects and effects if you know you need a plural verb).



Transition Words

How to Spot

Answer choices will have different transition words (however, indeed, nonetheless, etc.).

How to Solve

Read both the sentence the transition word is in as well as the sentence before it. Pick the answer choice that correctly matches the relationship between sentences.



Wordiness/Redundancy

How to Spot

Answer choices will have different lengths.

How to Solve

Shorter is better as long as it is both clear and grammatically correct. To solve clarity issues, first ask yourself, is the meaning of the sentence with this answer choice clear? Common clarity issues include ambiguous pronouns, misplaced modifiers, and missing comparisons.



Word Choice/ Idiomatic Expressions

How to Spot

Answer choices will have different prepositional idioms (according to, because of, etc) or vocabulary words.

How to Solve

Plug the answer choices into the sentence and pick the one that sounds best. Do not overthink these, even if you do not know the words.