

Final Test Specifications for the New SAT[®]

Writing

60 minutes (One 25-minute essay, one 25-minute multiple-choice section, and one 10-minute multiple-choice section)

Multiple-Choice Questions:

Improving Sentences (25 questions)

This question type measures a student's ability to:

- Recognize and correct faults in usage and sentence structure
- Recognize effective sentences that follow the conventions of standard written English

Identifying Sentence Errors (18 questions)

This question type measures a student's ability to:

- Recognize faults in usage
- Recognize effective sentences that follow the conventions of standard written English

Improving Paragraphs (6 questions)

This question type measures a student's ability to:

- Edit and revise sentences in the context of a paragraph or entire essay
- Organize and develop paragraphs in a coherent and logical manner
- Apply the conventions of standard written English

Essay:

The essay will always be the first part of the test. The essay will assess students' ability to think critically and to write effectively under time constraints similar to those they will encounter on essay examinations in college courses. Students will be given 25 minutes to handwrite an essay. The essay portion of the writing section was created with an understanding that an essay written in a short amount of time will not be polished but represents the initial phase of the writing process: the first draft.

Students will be asked to write in response to a prompt, which will consist of either a pair of quotations or a short paragraph (no more than 80 words) adapted from some authentic text. Prompts will be carefully selected so students can respond quickly in a variety of ways. Prompts will be easily accessible to the general test-taking population, including those for whom English is a second language. Prompts will be free of figurative, technical, or specific literary references and will not draw on specialized knowledge.

Prompts will outline a wide range of possible viewpoints within a single issue, stimulating critical thinking, and will be relevant to any number of fields and interests. They will give students the opportunity to draw on a broad range of experiences, learning, and ideas to support their points of view on the issue in question. Students may use the rhetorical approach that best suits their writing style and purpose. For instance, some students may use an expository or argumentative style; others may structure essays through comparison or contrast, or other techniques.

Critical Reading

70 minutes (Two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section)

Passage-Based Reading (48 questions)

The reading questions measure a student's ability to read and think carefully about passages ranging in length from about 100 to about 850 words. Passages are taken from the humanities, social studies, natural sciences, and literary fiction. They vary in style and can include narrative, argumentative, and expository elements. Some selections consist of a pair of related passages on a shared issue or theme that students are asked to compare and contrast.

The following kinds of questions may be asked about a passage:

- **Vocabulary-in-Context:** These questions ask students to determine the meanings of words from their context in the reading passage.
- **Literal Comprehension:** These questions assess students' understanding of significant information directly stated in the passage.
- **Extended Reasoning:** These questions measure students' ability to synthesize and analyze information as well as to evaluate the assumptions made and the techniques used by the author. Most of the reading questions fall into this category. Students may be asked to identify cause-and-effect, make inferences, recognize a main idea or an author's tone, or follow the logic of an analogy or an argument.

Sentence Completions (19 questions)

This question type measures a student's:

- Knowledge of the meanings of words
- Ability to understand how the different parts of a sentence fit logically together

Math

70 minutes (Two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section)

The new SAT will include expanded math topics, such as exponential growth, absolute value, and negative and fractional exponents. Function notation will also be introduced. Greater emphasis will be placed on other topics such as graphs of linear functions and scatterplots.

Standard Multiple-Choice (44 questions)

Student-Produced Response Questions (10 questions)

Questions of this type do not provide answer choices. Instead, students must solve the problem and fill in their answers on a grid provided on the answer sheet.