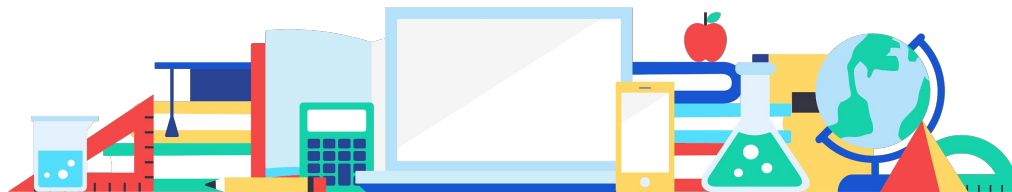




SAT Reading Review Guide

November 2020





Topics to Discuss

- About the SAT Reading Section
- Strategies Before the Test
- Strategies During the Test
- Strategies for Each Question Category
 1. Explicit Information vs. Implicit Information
 2. Point of View
 3. Analyzing Relationships
 4. Citing Evidence
 5. Main Idea and Summarizing
 6. Analogical Reasoning
 7. Overall Structure of Passage
 8. Word choice and word context
 9. Graphs and Data/Analyzing Quantitative Information
 10. Purpose of Text and Part-Whole Relationships
 11. Analyzing arguments
 12. Connecting multiple texts
 13. History/Social Science passages
 14. Science passages
 15. Strategies



1. About the SAT Reading Section

- Logistics and Types of Content
- Process of Elimination Guidelines

Logistics and Types of Content

- There are **52 questions** and 65 minutes allotted to this section, so you will have approximately **13 minutes per passage** to read and answer questions.
- There are **no penalties for wrong answers**, so process of elimination can be used to narrow down the answer choices.
- The passages range from a **9th grade reading to a first year college reading level**.
- Fictional literature, science articles, and opinion articles from magazines or newspapers are all examples of the different types of passages that students should be able to analyze.
- The Reading Test almost always includes:
 - ◆ One passage from a classic or contemporary work of U.S. or world literature.
 - ◆ One passage or a pair of passages from either a U.S. founding document or a text in the Great Global Conversation they inspired. The U.S. Constitution or a speech by Nelson Mandela, for example.
 - ◆ A selection about economics, psychology, sociology, or some other social science.
 - ◆ Two science passages (or one passage and one passage pair) that examine foundational concepts and developments in Earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics.

Process of Elimination Guidelines

- **Underline the verb in the question** to help eliminate answer choices: for example, if the question says “the author will most likely agree with the following statements” there are likely one or more answer options that can immediately be identified as a statement that the author disagrees with.
- There are normally **2 answer choices that can easily be identified as incorrect**. Cross these answers out as soon as you find them, and you can now focus on the other two answer choices.
- **Very extreme answer choices will likely be incorrect**. Word choice can also help you determine if the answer choice is too extreme. For example, if an answer choice that says “the author vehemently denies” is much more extreme than the answer choice that says “the author disagrees.”
- After eliminating 2 answer choices, you will likely be left with two fairly similar answer choices. If you are struggling to determine the better answer, identify the difference between the two options. That difference, even if it is subtle, can help you figure out which is the better answer.



2. Strategies Before the Test

→ General Standardized Test Taking Strategies

General Standardized Test Taking Strategies

- If you struggle with understanding the text the first time that you read it, **try skimming over the questions related to the passage first**. This can help direct your focus when reading the passage towards the parts of the passage that will help you understand the questions. However, do not simply skip to the lines referenced in the question. The answers require you to read the entire paragraph to understand the context of specific lines or phrases.
 - ◆ For example, if a question specifies lines 5-14, for example, the student should read lines 5-14 AND two sentences before and two sentences after. the right answer can always be figured out from that.
- If you often run out of time, reading books or articles in your free time is one of the best ways to decrease the amount of time you need to read and comprehend a passage. **Increasing the amount of time spent reading will increase reading comprehension.**
- Reading comprehension can be improved by improving your vocabulary. While the SAT no longer has specific vocabulary questions, it now has passage-based vocabulary questions.



3. Strategies During the Test

- Standardized Test Taking Strategies for Reading Sections
- Connotation and Denotation

Standardized Test Taking Strategies for SAT Reading

- After reading each paragraph, **write a sentence to paraphrase** the main idea or argument of that paragraph to stay on track. You can also break the passage into chunks if the paragraphs are long or dense, and summarize those chunks. Since this test is timed, it is vital to read the passage as thoroughly as possible the first time, to prevent the need for multiple reads. By annotating the passage, the student can mark their initial thoughts, questions, and observances on the paper so that they do not need to remember it later. It also allows the student to refer back to their annotations instead of needing to reread the entire passage to understand the context.
- **Do not take too little or too much time reading the passages.** You want to be able to understand the passage enough to answer the questions, so quickly skimming through will likely prevent you from grasping the subtleties of the passage. Taking too much time, however, will leave you rushing through answering the questions and possibly running out of time. Since each question is worth the same, **mark difficult questions and return later to read the passage more thoroughly if time permits.**
- Try to identify the thesis statement of each passage that you read, since this can help you identify the main idea. The concluding paragraph will often restate the thesis statement as well.

Connotation and Denotation

Additional resources

[Video lesson on determining connotation](#)

[Official SAT Word Choice and Context Lesson](#)

[Video lesson on connotation and denotation](#)

- The ability to distinguish the connotation of words is a key skill to utilize when analyzing passages. The connotation of the words used will often help you eliminate incorrect choices.
- ◆ Denotation is the direct meaning of a word regardless of any feelings or ideas suggested by the word. **Connotation is the feelings or ideas suggested by a word.**
 - ◆ Example: “Inquisitive” vs. “Prying” -- “Inquisitive” has a positive connotation, while “prying” has a negative connotation, but they can both describe someone who is asking a lot of questions or searching for information. If the author wanted to portray the person in a positive light, they would use “inquisitive.” If the author wanted to portray the person in a negative light, they would use “prying.”
 - ◆ If a student is struggling with connotation, advise them to find connotation practice worksheets online or watch the linked videos about connotation. **The best way to gain a better understanding of connotation is by reading and practicing.**

3. Strategies for Each Question Category

- Explicit Information vs. Implicit Information
- Point of View
- Analyzing Relationships
- Citing Evidence
- Main Idea and Summarizing
- Analogical Reasoning
- Overall Structure of Passage
- Word choice and word context
- Graphs and Data/Analyzing Quantitative Information
- Purpose of Text and Part-Whole Relationships
- Analyzing arguments
- Connecting multiple texts
- History/Social Science passages
- Science passages
- Strategies

Explicit vs. Implicit Information

Additional resources

[Explicit Information Guide](#)

[Implicit Information Guide](#)

[Lesson on the difference between explicit and implicit information](#)

[Video lesson on explicit and implicit information](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about explicit information: *“According to the passage...”* *“The passage states that...”* *“The author indicates that...”*
- **Search for buzzwords or key phrases** from the question in the passage.
 - ◆ For example, if a question or possible answer choice mentions “carrots,” skim the passage for “carrots” and reread that paragraph.
- **The correct answer to an explicit information question will always be stated directly in the passage.** Wrong answers will often make sense but are not directly stated in the passage.
- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about implicit information: *“Based on the passage...”* *“It can be reasonably inferred that...”* *“The author implies that...”*
- While the correct answer will not be something directly stated in the passage for implicit information questions, **it will always be a reasonable, clearly implied inference, not a drastic inference.** The correct answer will always have clear evidence to support it. Keep in mind, the answer will not directly quote the evidence but will be an inference based upon that evidence. However, be careful not to pick the answer that you personally understand or agree with. Make sure that you are analyzing what the *author* is implying.

Point of View

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about point of view: *“The narrator of the passage can best be described as...”* *“The author of passage 1 would most likely agree with which statement...”* *“Which of the following statements best characterizes the author’s attitude towards...”*
- **Focus on the connotation of words** used by the author and word context.
- **Always look at the whole passage for context.** An author may have a rebuttal to their argument in one paragraph that portrays the topic negatively, but the overall passage positively portrays the topic.
- **Try looking at the description of the passage and author** to gain a better perspective of the author’s point of view.
- Do not choose an option that is a more extreme version of the author’s argument.

Point of View

Additional resources

[Point of View Guide](#)

[Guide on the different types of point of view](#)

[Video lesson on the types of point of view](#)

- The three types of point of view:
- ◆ First person: a character is narrating their story and uses “I” pronouns
 - ◆ Second person: rare and uses “you” pronouns
 - ◆ Third person: the author or a narrator is describing the story and uses “he/she/they” pronouns
 - Third person omniscient: the narrator knows everything about the story and its characters, and can move freely throughout time and between characters.
 - EX: “They were unaware that the thief had been caught by the police a few hours prior.”
 - Third person limited: The narrator is limited to one character and their point of view. They often mention specific feelings or emotions of that character.
 - EX: “She wasn’t sure why he refused to speak to her but she was determined to find out.”

Analyzing Relationships

Additional resources

[Analyzing Relationships Guide](#)

[Understanding Relationships Practice Problems](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about analyzing relationships: “*Based on the passage, what choice best describes the relationship between ____ and ____?*” “*What choice best describes the contrast between ____ and ____?*”
- The three components that will help most with analyzing relationships are: **tone, word choice, and explicit information.**
- Always make sure there is evidence to support your answer choice. If you can’t identify a specific sentence or line that supports your answer choice, you don’t have enough evidence!
- Wrong answers may be partly correct but **always choose the better answer.** The process of elimination strategies previously identified can help students determine the better answer.
- Wrong answers will often switch the order of the correct answer.
 - ◆ For example, if the correct answer says “The cause was a hurricane, and the effect was shattered windows and fallen trees,” a wrong answer could be “The cause was shattered windows and fallen trees, and the effect was a hurricane.”

Citing Evidence

Additional resources

[Citing Evidence Guide](#)

[Command of Evidence Guide](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about citing evidence: *“Which choice provides the best evidence for...”* *“Which statement best supports the claim...”*
- Citing evidence questions are **often paired with another question asking you to identify a claim**. Remember, these questions are making sure that you can find specific sentences or lines in the passage that support your answer to the question asking you to identify a claim. If you can’t identify a specific sentence or line that supports your answer choice, you don’t have enough evidence!
- The following steps can be used to help with citing evidence questions:
 - ◆ **Read the questions prior to reading the text** (as mentioned previously). This will help you know what topics or keywords to look for when reading the text.
 - ◆ Utilize the process of elimination.
 - ◆ Prove the correct answer by finding textual evidence. This will then answer the question!
- **Try answering paired questions together** to ensure that your answers support each other.
- Rephrase the question to gain a better understanding of what the question is asking.

Main Idea and Summarizing

Additional resources

[Main Idea Guide](#)

[Identifying the Main Idea Guide](#)

[Summarizing Guide](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about the main idea: *“Which statement best summarizes...”* *“Which statement best describes the main idea of the passage?”*
- Make sure you always **look at the entire passage for context**. An answer choice that focuses on small details will be incorrect.
- **Try answering all other questions about a passage before answering questions about the main idea** to gain a better understanding of the passage.
- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about summarizing: *“Which choice best summarizes the purpose of the second paragraph?”*
- Summarizing is fairly similar to the purpose of the text questions. The best way to be prepared for these questions is to **write a one sentence summary of each paragraph after reading it**.

Anallogical Reasoning

Additional resources

[Anallogical Reasoning Guide](#)

[Improving your Anallogical Reasoning Skills Guide](#)

[Anallogical Reasoning Detailed Explanation](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about anallogical reasoning: “...describes an event most similar to...” “Which situation is most analogous to the scenario in lines...”
- **Look for patterns between the scenario from the passage and the scenarios outlined in the answer choices.** These patterns include cause/effect relationships, chronological sequences, etc.
- Anallogical reasoning questions are one of the hardest questions. If it seems that it will take a long time to answer, **skip the question and return later.** If there is not enough time remaining, do your best to make an educated guess.

Overall Structure of the Passage

Additional resources

[Overall Structure Guide](#)

[Text Structures Guide](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about overall structure: “...describes the overall structure of the passage?” “Over the course of the passage...”
- Look for the **thesis statement and conclusion** of the passage to identify the main claims and obtain a better understanding of the layout.
- Topic sentences can provide an idea of the content of a specific paragraph.
- **Transition words can convey contrast** (although, however, yet) or continuity (accordingly, therefore, thus).
- Think about why the author chose to structure the passage in a certain way and how it contributes to their position.
- Be careful not to choose an answer that focuses on minute details, since the context in regards to the entire passage is most important.

Word Choice and Words in Context

Additional resources

[Word Choice Guide](#)

[Words in Context Guide](#)

[Word Choice and Words in Context Practice](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about words in context and word choice: “___ *most nearly means...*” “...*most likely uses the phrase*___ *to indicate*___” “*the author’s use of the word* ___ *suggests...*”
- **Look at the overall meaning of the sentence** to help determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Word connotation is another way to help determine the meaning of a word.
- Swap the answer options with the word in question, and reread the sentence to see if it makes sense.
- Do not assume that the answer containing a word you do not know or a more complex word is the correct one. It is not meant to trick you, so choose the answer that best fits.

Graphs and Analyzing Quantitative Information or Science Passages

Additional resources

[Science Passage Video Guide Part 1](#)

[Science Passage Video Guide Part 2](#)

[Graphs and Data Guide](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about analyzing quantitative information: “...*best supported by figure ____*...” “*the data in the table most directly supports...*”
- Look at the axes and key of the graph to get a better understanding of its information.
- **Do not choose answer choices that make unsupported claims.** Make sure that your answer choice is directly supported by information in the graph.
- For science passages, the writing will generally be more clear and concise. It is far less likely to come across implicit information or ideas, so **be careful not to make unsupported claims.**
- Look for the part of the passage that directly references the graph and use that content to help interpret the data.
- UWorld has great practice science passages, but it costs money. Khan Academy is a great free option! Kaplan Test Prep may also have some practice materials available for free, but most require payment.

Purpose of Text and Part-Whole Relationships

Additional resources

[Purpose of Text Guide](#)

[Part-Whole Relationship Guide](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about the purpose of text and part-whole relationships: “...*the main purpose of the passage...*” “*the third paragraph mainly serves to...*” “*The question in line ____ serves to...*” “*the purpose of the phrase in line ____ serves to...*”
- **Try to summarize each paragraph after reading it** and try to connect the claims to determine the purpose of the passage. **Ask “so what?” after each paragraph** to think about the reasoning for the argument.
- If a passage is offering multiple viewpoints on an issue, they will often bring up contrasting ideas and use transition words such as “however” and “despite.”
- **Look for the words “and” and “but”** (and their synonyms) in the passage that indicate whether there is reinforcement or disagreement between the part of the passage to the whole passage.

Analyzing Arguments

Additional resources

[Analyzing Relationships Guide](#)

[Evaluating Evidence Guide](#)

[Rhetoric Guide](#)

- These questions will often ask about the purpose of a certain sentence or paragraph in relation to the argument of the author. It may refer to the thesis, a rebuttal, or any other distinct part of an argument.
- Think about the 3 main methods used in arguments: **ethos** (appealing to credibility), **logos** (appealing to logical reasoning), and **pathos** (appealing to emotion).
 - ◆ Ethos example: The author mentions their college degree in childhood development in their article about parenting advice.
 - ◆ Logos example: The author cites scientific data on the causes of lung cancer in their article arguing against the sale of cigarettes.
 - ◆ Pathos example: The authors interviewed a mother who lost their child to a rare disease in their argument to increase funding for research to combat that disease.

Connecting Multiple Texts

Additional resources

[Connecting Multiple Texts Guide](#)

[Paired Passages Guide](#)

[Paired Passages Strategies](#)

- The following phrases are commonly used when a question asks about multiple texts: “...*both authors would agree with which of the following claims...*” “*which choice best describes how the author of Passage 1 would view the argument in Passage 2?*”
- **The main idea of the passages is extremely important** to understand for these questions, and be ready to compare and contrast the two.
- **Read the description of the passage** to gain an idea of the time period or origin of the author, which can help clarify the purpose of the passage.
- If an answer choice is wrong about just one of the passages, the answer choice is wrong. The correct answer choice must make accurate statements about both passages.
- When two passages are paired, most of the questions will only ask about one of the passages. 3 or 4 questions will ask you to examine both passages. Since questions asking about both passages are often more difficult, feel free to skip these questions and return later.

History and Social Science Passages

Additional resources

[History and Social Studies Passages Video Guide Part 1](#)

[History and Social Studies Passages Video Guide Part 2](#)

[Social Science Passages Video Guide Part 1](#)

[Social Science Passages Video Guide Part 2](#)

- Read the description of the passage to get an idea of the historical context of the passage.
- History passages are generally not very detail oriented; that is, it is far more important to understand the **main idea or overall argument of the author and the purpose of the passage.**
- To gain experience analyzing historical texts, try reading famous speeches or letters from history. **Analyze the persuasion techniques used.**
- Basic historical knowledge can be very helpful on this section and allow you to spend more time analyzing the text rather than guessing the historical context.
- Common authors: Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Jane Austen, Henry David Thoreau