

SAT Test Day - Essay Game Plan

#3: You Should Write More Than One Page

#4: Be Objective When Reading the Passage

#5: Before test day, memorize and Identify Specific Persuasive Techniques

Go into the essay knowing certain techniques that you can then scan the passage for.

Example Type #1: Facts and Statistics

Example Type #2: Anecdotes

Example Type #3: Counterarguments and Counterclaims

Example Type #4: Explanation of Evidence

Example Type #5: Vivid Language

Example Type #6: Direct Addresses and Appeals to the Reader

#1: Read and Answer the Prompt. The prompt **INCLUDES THE AUTHOR'S CLAIM**. **Knowing the author's claim will help keep you focused on the ARGUMENT**, rather than getting caught up in reading the passage (especially if the topic is one you're interested in).

DO NOT just summarize the passage in your essay, or merely identify persuasive devices used by the author - instead, be sure to actually analyze **the way** the author of the passage **uses** persuasive devices to build her argument. As *The Official SAT Study Guide* [states](#),

"[Y]our discussion should focus on what the author does, why he or she does it, and what effect this is likely to have on readers."

College Board makes a point of specifying this very point in its grading rubric as well - an essay that scores a 2 (out of 4) or below in Analysis "*merely asserts, rather than explains [the persuasive devices'] importance.*" If you want to get at least a 3/4 (or a 6/8) in Analysis, you need to heed this warning and **stay on task**.

#2: focus your discussion on just a few points. It's more important to show that you're able to pick out the most important parts of the argument and explain their function than it is to be able to identify every single persuasive device the author used.

#3: Support Your Points with Concrete Evidence - Only use information from the Passage. All the relevant information is in the passage, so avoid getting drawn into the topic and using your outside knowledge - you want to be sure to show that you've read the passage. In real life, there are many ways to support a thesis, depending on the topic. **But on the SAT, there's one kind of correct support: specific details drawn from the passage you're asked to analyze.**

Quote from the passage appropriately to support your points. This shows not only that you've read the passage (without your having to summarize the passage at all), but also that you understand what the author is saying and the way the author constructed her argument.

As an alternative to using direct quotations from the passage, it's also okay to paraphrase some of what you discuss. If you are explaining the author's argument in your own words, however, you need to be extra careful to **make sure that the facts you're stating are accurate** - in contrast to scoring on the old SAT essay, scoring on the new SAT essay takes into account factual inaccuracies and penalizes you for them.

#3: Keep Your Essay Organized

The SAT essay rubric states: "*The response demonstrates a deliberate and highly effective progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay.*"

Follow the standard structure for an SAT essay (introduction-body-body-conclusion). Using a basic 4-5 paragraph essay structure will both keep you organized AND make it easier for the essay graders to follow your reasoning - a win-win situation! Connect paragraphs with effective transitions.

#4: Make Time to Read, Analyze, Plan, Write, and Revise

Make sure you allocate appropriate amounts of time for each of the steps you'll need to take to write the essay - 50 minutes may seem like a long time, but it goes by awfully quick with all the things you need to do.

Acknowledgements: "SAT Essay Rubric: Full Analysis and Writing Strategies" SAT / ACT Prep Online Guides and Tips. Prep Scholar <https://blog.prepscholar.com> Aug 12, 2016. Accessed 17 October 2018.