



**SAT READING**  
STRATEGIES

# THE NEW SAT

## Overall Gist of Changes to the Reading Section

All questions are now based on passages.

The subject matter of passages are pre-determined. There's 1 passage concerning US and World Literature, 2 for History/Social Studies, and 2 for Science.

Some passages will now contain data and require interpretation of data.

**Greater emphasis on:** vocabulary in context; command of evidence; constructing logical arguments; scientific reasoning.



# NEW READING QUESTION TYPES:

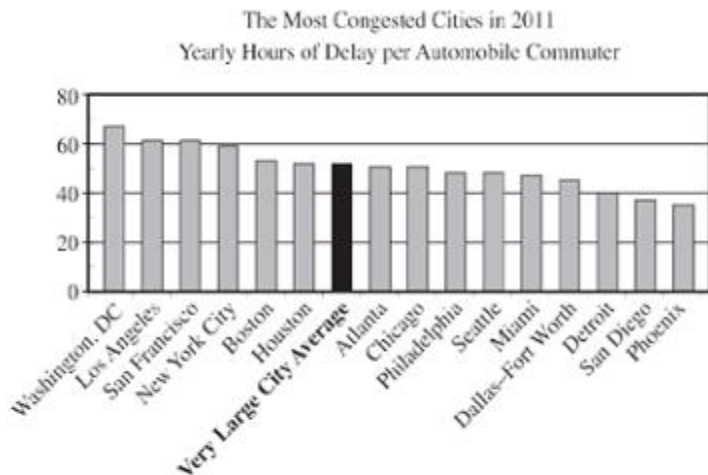
## *Evidence Support Questions:*

For the first time, the SAT Reading section will have questions that build on each other. The student will be prompted to answer a question about the passage - for example, the author's tone or stance on a topic - and in the next question be asked to **cite evidence** for the answer in the previous question. Here's an example:

4. In lines 49-54 (“Prosecutions . . . sense”), what is the most likely reason Jordan draws a distinction between two types of “parties”?
  - A) To counter the suggestion that impeachment is or should be about partisan politics
  - B) To disagree with Hamilton’s claim that impeachment proceedings excite passions
  - C) To contend that Hamilton was too timid in his support for the concept of impeachment
  - D) To argue that impeachment cases are decided more on the basis of politics than on justice
5. Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?
  - A) Lines 13-17 (“It . . . office”)
  - B) Lines 20-24 (“The division . . . astute”)
  - C) Lines 55-58 (“The drawing . . . misdemeanors”)
  - D) Lines 65-68 (“Congress . . . transportation”)

# DATA REASONING QUESTIONS:

For the first time, the SAT Reading section will include figures that show data. The student will need to interpret the data in the figure and place it in the context of the overall passage - for example, how does this figure support the author's argument?



Adapted from Adam Werbach, "The American Commuter Spends 38 Hours a Year Stuck in Traffic." ©2013 by *The Atlantic*.

3. Which claim about traffic congestion is supported by the graph?

- A) New York City commuters spend less time annually delayed by traffic congestion than the average for very large cities.
- B) Los Angeles commuters are delayed more hours annually by traffic congestion than are commuters in Washington, D.C.
- C) Commuters in Washington, D.C., face greater delays annually due to traffic congestion than do commuters in New York City.
- D) Commuters in Detroit spend more time delayed annually by traffic congestion than do commuters in Houston, Atlanta, and Chicago.

# HOW TO APPROACH THE SENTENCE COMPLETION: COVER THE ANSWER CHOICES!

- When approaching the sentence completion portion, people tend to get set in the “traditional” mode of test-taking: they read the question, and head straight to the answers without ever taking a second to think about what the answer *probably* is.

Here’s how you should approach a sentence completion question:

Cover the answer choices with your hand

Read the sentence

Write down a word that, based on the context clues given, you feel best completes the sentence.

Uncover the answer choices

Select the answer choice that is closest in meaning to the word you wrote down in step 3.



# IF YOU'RE A SLOW READER, SKIM THE PASSAGES.

The biggest problem people have with the SAT Critical Reading BY FAR is time. The SAT Critical Reading Section, much like the other sections, is designed to be difficult to finish in the amount of time given. By the end of the test, people often find themselves rushing to answer every question before the clock runs out. Many people end up having to guess on the last few questions, and some simply cannot finish the test.

If you're a fast reader, and you can manage to read every word of every passage, and still have enough time to answer every question, great! Keep doing what you're doing!

If you're like most high school students and reading a bunch of boring passages isn't your thing, then skimming the passages is probably a good strategy for you.



## Important things to focus on when skimming:

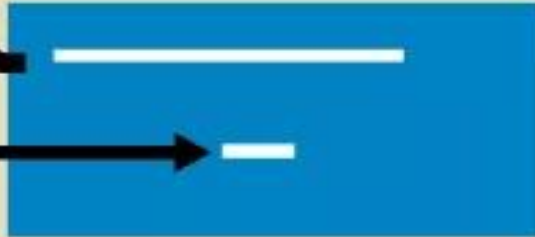
Introduction



Thesis (main idea  
of the passage)



Topic Sentences  
(main idea of the  
paragraphs)



Transition words  
(words that change  
the direction of the  
passage)



Conclusion

# SUMMARIZE PASSAGES AS YOU READ THEM.

- it's very easy to doze off while you're in the middle of reading a passage and forget what it's about. Rather than having to go back and reread the passage, here is a nifty little trick to help you keep track of what's going on in each passage.
- When reading a passage, stop after each paragraph and think for a few seconds about what you just read. Ask yourself “what happened in this paragraph?” and “what's important to take away from this paragraph?” After you've thought about the paragraph for no more than 10 seconds, write down a few words in the margin of the passage explaining the paragraph.





Questions 13-24 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from a 1996 book on sleep research.

How  
Multiple  
Choice  
Line  
5

To conduct some forms of sleep research, we have to find a way to track sleepiness over the day. Some people might believe that measuring sleepiness is a fairly trivial task. Couldn't you, for instance, simply count the number of times a person yawns during any given hour or so?

Yawning  
Vocab  
Line  
10

In most people's minds, yawning—that slow, exaggerated mouth opening with the long, deep inhalation of air, followed by a briefer exhalation—is the most obvious sign of sleepiness. It is a common behavior shared by many animals, including our pet dogs and cats but also crocodiles, snakes, birds, and even some fish. It is certainly true that sleepy people tend to yawn more than wide-awake people. It is also true that people who say they are bored by what is happening at the moment will tend to yawn more frequently. However, whether yawning is a sign that you are getting ready for sleep or that you are successfully fighting off sleep is not known. Simply stretching your body, as you might do if you have been sitting in the same position for a long period of time, will often trigger a yawn.

People  
and  
things  
disagree  
Line  
20

Unfortunately, yawns don't just indicate sleepiness. In some animals, yawning is a sign of stress. When a dog trainer sees a dog yawning in a dog obedience class, it is usually a sign that the animal is under a good deal of pressure. Perhaps the handler is pushing too hard or moving too fast for the dog to feel in control of the situation. A moment or two of play and then turning to another activity is usually enough to banish yawning for quite a while.

Context  
Extensive  
- gives  
a number  
Line  
30

Yawning can also be a sign of stress in humans. Once, when observing airborne troops about to take their first parachute jump, I noticed that several of the soldiers were sitting in the plane and yawning. It was 10 A.M., just after a coffee break, and I doubted that they were tired; I knew for a fact that they were far too nervous to be bored. When I asked about this, the officer in charge laughed and said it was really quite a common behavior, especially on the first jump.

Context  
Background  
- gives  
a number  
Line  
40

There is also a social aspect to yawning. Psychologists have placed actors in crowded rooms and auditoriums and had them deliberately yawn. Within moments, there is usually an increase in yawning by everyone else in the room. Similarly, people who watch films or videos of others yawning are more likely to yawn. Even just reading about yawning tends to stimulate people to yawn.

Context  
Example  
- Social  
Line  
50

The truth of the matter is that we really don't know what purpose yawning serves. Scientists originally thought that the purpose of yawning was to increase the amount of oxygen in the blood or to release some accumulated carbon dioxide. We now know that this is not true, since increasing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the air seems not to

Why  
yawn?  
- Just  
State  
Line  
50

make people more likely to yawn but to make them breathe faster to try to bring in more oxygen. On the other hand, breathing 100 percent pure oxygen does not seem to reduce the likelihood of yawning.

33  
High  
Detail  
Multiple  
Choice  
Line  
50

Since yawning seems to be associated with a lot more than the need for sleep, we obviously have to find some other measure of sleepiness. Some researchers have simply tried to ask people how sleepy they feel at any time using some sort of self-rating scale. There are, however, some problems with getting people to make these types of judgments. Sometimes people simply lie to the researchers when asked about how sleepy they are. This occurs because in many areas of society admitting that one is fatigued and sleepy is considered a mark of weakness or lack of ambition and drive. In other instances, people may admit they need four cups of coffee to make it through the morning, but it may never occur to them that this might be due to the fact that they are so sleepy that they need stimulation from caffeine to be able to do their required tasks. For these reasons, many researchers have developed an alternate method to determine how sleepy a person is. It is based upon a simple definition of sleep need: The greater your sleep need, or the sleepier you are, the faster you will fall asleep if given the opportunity to do so.

Free  
Live  
Line  
63

70

What  
is  
the  
main  
purpose  
Line  
63

13. The question in lines 4-5 is based on which of the following assumptions?

- (A) Direct observation is the only reliable method of conducting sleep research.
- (B) People will yawn most frequently in the moments before they fall asleep.
- (C) There is a direct correlation between yawning and sleepiness.
- (D) Yawning is a behavior over which individuals exert little conscious control.
- (E) Conducting sleep research is a time-consuming process.

14. The comment between the dashes in lines 6-8 primarily serves to

- (A) clarify a claim
- (B) define a term
- (C) note a qualification
- (D) offer a humorous aside
- (E) voice a personal insight

15. The author uses which of the following in the fourth paragraph (lines 29-37)?

- (A) Understatement
- (B) Personification
- (C) Analogy
- (D) Metaphor
- (E) Anecdote

1.

Underline title & author for clues to topic.

# \*\*\*A Nonfiction Strategy:

3

ACT Reading Test -- Sample Nonfiction Passage

3

Passage IV

**NATURAL SCIENCE** This passage is adapted from the article "Zinc—The Immune System's Missing Link?" by Michael Janson, M.D., which appeared in *Health and Nutrition Breakthroughs* (©1997 by New Hope Communications).

To the general public, minerals are far less understood or valued than vitamins, though both are equally important to physiological functions. Among minerals themselves, calcium, magnesium and iron receive a disproportionate amount of attention, even though other minerals are equally necessary. Actually, all nutrients work in concert in our tissues to keep us healthy. One may well wonder, therefore, why some minerals are held in so much higher esteem than others. Well, calcium's popularity, for example, is due largely to advertising by the dairy industry to underscore the importance of milk, and iron is well known because its deficiencies are so easy to detect.

Mineral nutrients can be found in varying quantities in both our diets and our bodies. When they are present in our bodies in large amounts (measured in grams), they're called major minerals and include calcium, chlorine, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium and sulfur. Those that occur in smaller quantities (measured in milligrams or micrograms) are called trace minerals and include boron, chromium, cobalt, copper, iodine, iron, manganese, selenium, silicon and zinc. Deficiencies of either major or trace minerals can be as devastating to one's health as a lack of other better-known nutrients such as vitamins A, C, E and B complex.

Though zinc gets little attention, it is critical to a healthy body. Without it, more than 300 enzymes including trypsin and alcohol dehydrogenase cannot work properly, and physiological functions such as digestion and alcohol metabolism break down. The human body generally contains 1.4 g to 2.5 g of zinc. Much of this zinc is found in muscle and bone. It is also present in skin, hair and nails, as well as in the retina of the eye.

One of zinc's most essential roles is for the white blood cells of the immune system—where it helps the body fight off a range of viral infections—from strep and influenza to the common cold. Some white blood cells produce antibodies (humoral immunity), while others are phagocytes that attack and destroy invaders, thereby providing cellular immunity.

The thymus gland, located just under the sternum, controls some of our immune functions and is affected by the amount of zinc in the body. For instance—the thymus produces thymulin, a thymic peptide that is responsible for cell-mediated immunity. As we age, the thymus gland diminishes in function and size—from nearly the same size as the heart in infants to almost undetectable in elderly people. This happens in both humans and animals. Although long considered a normal process, it appears related to zinc nutritional status. A zinc supplement given to aging mice restored

the function of their thymus glands and led to the glands' regrowth. Researchers thus concluded that the usual involution of the thymus gland is not inevitable and can be reversed with zinc supplements.

Thymus-derived cells (T-cells) and natural killer cells likewise depend on zinc. Both T-cells and natural killer cells support a variety of immune-system functions such as destroying foreign cells, virally infected cells and cancer cells. An in vitro study showed that zinc increased the response of T-cells to all immune stimuli by 100 percent. The authors concluded that "treatment with zinc may have immunotherapeutic relevance, particularly in the aged and stressed organism."

Zinc has been linked to the body's ability to resist viruses, especially respiratory infections. In a group of malnourished children, supplementation with zinc significantly reduced the incidence of cough, fever and respiratory secretions compared to placebo. However, after supplementation ceased, the symptoms returned to previous levels. In addition, two Italian doctors concluded that zinc deficiencies in elderly people may lead to depression of both hormonal and cellular immunity and a significant increase of susceptibility to infections.

Zinc deficiency is often the result of a poor diet—it is one of the hallmarks of malnourishment. Supplementing with zinc is quite safe—its only significant side effect is lowered copper levels in the body tissues, since the two minerals compete for absorption. Considering zinc's safety, people should consider taking zinc supplements, especially as they age—being sure to include copper in the proper balance. Most practitioners who supplement their patients' diets with zinc also recommend taking copper at a ratio of 10 mg to 15 mg zinc for each milligram of copper.

31. The author of the passage would most likely agree with which of the following statements?
- A. Zinc is the most important of all the body's minerals.
  - B. Trace elements are less critical to humans than are major minerals.
  - C. Though often unappreciated by the public, zinc is as important to the body as calcium or iron.
  - D. All people, young and old, should take large doses of zinc as dietary supplements.

4.

Read 1st sentence of other ¶s. Mark key words. Skim rest of ¶, looking for impt. info.

3.

Closely read last ¶ to verify thesis.

Reader should now know author's main point.

2.

Closely read 1st ¶ for author's thesis.

What does s/he want you to know, think, or believe?

# \*\*\*A Fiction Strategy:

1.

Read the 1st column to identify

- setting
- characters
- the problem

*Read with a pencil in hand!*

2.

Read the 2nd column to identify

- attempted solutions

\*\*\* *don't* expect a full solution

3 ACT Reading Test -- Sample Fiction Passage 3

READING TEST  
35 Minutes—40 Questions

DIRECTIONS: There are four passages in this test. Each passage is followed by several questions. After reading a passage, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding oval on your answer document. You may refer to the passages as often as necessary.

Passage I

PROSE FICTION: This passage is adapted from the novel *Power* by Linda Hogan (©1998 by Linda Hogan).

35 Ama Eaton isn't really my aunt. I call her that because it's what my mother called her the first time I came here with my uncles. Ama's about the same age as my mother, and they are cousins in a roundabout way, but Mama calls her that out of respect for what she knows and who she is. Mama respects her and is jealous. Mama's made her choices and they are different. She'd like to learn from the old people, live the way we used to, but she wants it modern, too. Ama says it's not about choices but about heart and heart is what Mama's low on. Because of how Ama lives, she's a woman both admired and ridiculed, sometimes by the same people and in the same moment of time. What she's got is herself, and that's all she has. She has no lights or television or washing machine, but sometimes, even so, I think she's got more than the rest of us because she believes in herself, in what she does. It's the way she lives in this place.

40 Since the first time I was here, I've kept coming back, but I come alone now. The first time I came was when my uncles sent me to ask her if they could cut some trees nearby. I stood in front of her, a small girl, but not as afraid of her as my uncles were. Her eyes were the color of river mud after the wash of a storm, her neck too bony, her collarbone protruding. I stood here with something like courage, on this very porch, and asked her about the trees.

45 She looked me over like she was thinking all the same things about me, then asked, "Which trees?"

50 I could smell fish frying behind her, in her house.

55 I pointed. "Those ones that are dying out there. We'll bring you back some of the wood," I said. "Uncle Sonny says you could use some."

60 "All right. Go ahead." And that was all we said.

65 She turned and went back to the fish dinner cooking on the stove. She had a screen door then. I had seen her through the screen. And I saw her older than she is. But when I went back to help take the wood to her, she invited me in and gave me a glass of sweet tea to drink.

70 I sat down with her at the table and we talked, and she looked nice then, her hair shiny and clean around her shoulders, her eyes soft.

75 "You know my mother," I said, taking in her hair, her hands that looked small and old from hard work. "She's your cousin." And she said, "Yes, I do, and you're nothing like her at all." That was what won me over to Ama.

80 After that, they told me not to be going out to her place. But I come here anyway and I help her out and no one says much to me about it. I bring her ice sometimes, or sugar for her tea, or other small things I pilfer from my mother's place, a can opener or strainer, perhaps. My mama knows I come and help her out even though she pretends she doesn't.

85 Ama likes having me here. It's better than being at home. It's like being part of the world. Some days we go out and fish. Fishing has its lessons. It teaches me to be still. And holding still is not something that comes easy to me. I'm learning from Ama how to survive and be friends with this land, and this is a place where a girl can get lost and the swamps and trees would eat her alive. It's a dangerous place with dark corners. On the days when Ama is silent, I learn from her stillness. It's not that she's moody. It's not an empty quiet, either, the way it would be with some people. It's a full silence and I like sitting with it and it's a relief from the chattiness of my sister and mom. I can't say what I learn from it; there's no words for it. Words are such noisy things and silence is something you have to listen to and when you do, it takes you by the hand, it catches hold of you. It tells you how to know things, like how sounds travel, where a certain bird is calling from.

90 But my feelings about Ama are mixed, I admit. Sometimes I love her, but there are times I don't even like her. I can't account for these feelings, but I think it has to do with how the world catches me up. It's when I've come from school I'm most likely to find her homely and strange. I see her through the eyes of other people and what they'd think of her. Through their eyes she looks wild and crazy. Still, I always want to stay with her. Maybe it's because I am afraid of everything and she's afraid of nothing and I want to learn this from her. Foolish, my mama calls her fearlessness, and she says foolish people don't last too long around here. But

ACT-81F 30 GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

# AVOID EXTREMES

You may have heard of this one before. It's a common trick used in many standardized tests and it almost never fails.

Basically, whenever you see extreme words like “never” or “always” used in answer choices, those answer choices are *never* the right choice, and you can almost *always* rule them out as possible answers.

# Words to Avoid

**ABSOLUTELY**

Always

Definitely

Never

**SURELY**

Indubitably

**UNDOUBTEDLY**

**WITHOUT A DOUBT**

## LET'S LOOK AT AN EXAMPLE TO GIVE YOU A BETTER IDEA OF WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT:

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1) Which of the following best states the main idea of the passage?

- A) Science **always** conflicts with religion
- B) Science is vulnerable to outside social forces.
- C) Ideally, scientific theories should reinforce religious doctrine
- D) Science operates in a vacuum
- E) Advanced technology is the **only** route to good scientific theories.

## **AFTER YOU FINISH READING EACH PASSAGE, ASK YOURSELF “WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THIS PASSAGE?”**

- The main idea may take the form of a trite moral like “don’t judge a book by its cover,” or the main idea of a passage might even be something as simple as giving a brief introduction into some topic.

Whatever the main idea of the passage, it’s important that you spot it, as there are bound to be **AT LEAST** one or two questions per passage relating to their main ideas.

However, these questions are easy to lose points on. Why? Because those crafty SAT test writers don’t want you to succeed.



# HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Read the passage.

Underline/circle the passage's main idea as it appears in the passage (often in the first or last paragraph).

If the main idea is not directly stated, you will have to infer the passage's main idea.

When faced with a question about the passage's main idea, simply refer to your notes on the passage.

