



How the **New SAT**® Essay Will Be Scored

1. General criteria for scoring

The SAT® essay will be scored by readers using a holistic rubric, or scoring guide. The readers will award a score according to the overall quality of the essay. They will take into account such aspects of writing as the development of ideas, supporting examples, organization, word choice, and sentence structure. **Readers will be trained to:**

- Read to gain an impression of the whole essay relative to the rubric.
- Read the entire essay before scoring, and then score immediately.
- Read supportively, looking for and rewarding what is done well rather than what is done badly or omitted.
- Ignore the quality of handwriting.
- Not judge an essay by its length.

2. Test reader qualifications

SAT readers must:

- Have at least a bachelor's degree.
- Teach or have taught within the last five years a high school or college-level course that requires writing; teachers of English, writing, or language arts courses will be preferred.
- Have taught for at least a three-year period.

3. Scoring procedures

The scoring procedures for the new SAT writing section will be similar to those that have been used for the SAT II: Writing Subject Test since 1994. Specifically:

- Each essay is scored independently by two readers.
- Essays are scored on a scale of 1 to 6 by each reader, with the combined score for both readers ranging from 2 to 12.
- If the two readers' scores differ by more than two points, the essay will be read by a third reader. (Less than 2 percent of all scored essays call for a third reader.)

4. Reader training and scoring

Unlike the current SAT II scoring arrangements — which call for readers to assemble in one place to conduct the scoring — essays for the new SAT writing section will be scanned and distributed to readers via the Web. The essays will be scored and readers will be supervised online by scoring leaders, experienced essay readers with special training in scoring. **Readers:**

- Must be able to score essays from home or office locations. Readers must have the necessary computer, Internet provider, and separate telephone connection for conversations with scoring leaders.
- Will not use shared office computers or work from institutional labs.
- Must commit themselves to a minimum of 20 hours, in at least four-hour blocks of time.

Recruitment of readers began in January 2003. Recruitment information is posted on the College Board Web site under "The New SAT 2005."

The SAT writing tutorial for prospective readers will include:

- An orientation to online scoring and a description of readers' duties.
- Information about holistic scoring and guidelines for scoring SAT essays.
- General information about eligibility, training, and the certification process.
- Information about scheduling, compensation, dealing with technical difficulties, and communicating with support staff.
- Information on contacting scoring leaders during scoring sessions.
- Detailed training in scoring of responses to representative writing prompts.

The training materials will include:

- The scoring guide and rubric.
- Detailed topic notes for each prompt.
- Annotated benchmark papers to exemplify papers at each score level, 1 through 6.
- Numerous practice training papers linked to feedback screens designed to provide explanatory comments on the score given by readers.
- A practice certification test.

After a reader completes the tutorial, he or she will take a certification test: Each reader will score upwards of 50 previously scored papers. Only after a reader performs successfully on the test will he or she be scheduled to score actual essays. Successful performance on the test occurs when a reader's scores closely approximate the scoring leader's scores, with no more than a few being more than 1 point away from the correct score.

Before each scoring session, readers will be required to successfully score a small set of prescored "calibration" essays to ensure that their scoring is fair and accurate during each session.

5. ESL students

Readers are not told anything about student test-takers, so no reader will know if a student is classified as ESL. Readers are trained to score the essays using the criteria provided by the scoring guide and the examples set by the benchmark papers. The holistic scoring method requires readers to consider many elements of an essay and reward what is done well.

6. Maintaining consistency in scoring

Uniform training for certification, described above, sets the foundation for uniform standards. Using scoring leaders to guide scoring sessions is another way to maintain uniform standards. A scoring leader monitors readers in real time via the Web and assists scorers via telephone throughout each session. If leaders have concerns during the course of a scoring session, they will contact the readers. Readers may also initiate contact with scoring leaders to discuss any scoring concerns or get assistance in scoring. Each reader's performance is analyzed during sessions and subsequent reading periods.

7. Monitoring reliability

The system monitors each reader's interrater reliability statistics, which show each reader's agreement rate with all other readers. Scoring leaders evaluate all readers by various criteria, including scoring accuracy and a general ability to accurately apply the scoring guide. Scoring leaders work closely with readers, so that they are constantly retrained. If readers seem to be scoring inaccurately, scoring leaders will direct them to revisit the tutorial for retraining. Readers with poor scoring performance will be dismissed.

The New SAT Scoring Guide

SCORE OF 6 An essay in this category is <i>outstanding</i> , demonstrating <i>clear and consistent mastery</i> , although it may have a few minor errors. A typical essay	SCORE OF 5 An essay in this category is <i>effective</i> , demonstrating <i>reasonably consistent mastery</i> , although it will have occasional errors or lapses in quality. A typical essay	SCORE OF 4 An essay in this category is <i>competent</i> , demonstrating <i>adequate mastery</i> , although it will have lapses in quality. A typical essay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using clearly appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates strong critical thinking, generally using appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates competent critical thinking, using adequate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is well organized and clearly focused, demonstrating clear coherence and smooth progression of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is well organized and focused, demonstrating coherence and progression of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is generally organized and focused, demonstrating some coherence and progression of ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibits skillful use of language, using a varied, accurate, and apt vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibits facility in the use of language, using appropriate vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibits adequate but inconsistent facility in the use of language, using generally appropriate vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates meaningful variety in sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates variety in sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates some variety in sentence structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is generally free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
SCORE OF 3 An essay in this category is <i>inadequate</i> , but demonstrates <i>developing mastery</i> , and is marked by ONE OR MORE of the following weaknesses:	SCORE OF 2 An essay in this category is <i>seriously limited</i> , demonstrating <i>little mastery</i> , and is flawed by ONE OR MORE of the following weaknesses:	SCORE OF 1 An essay in this category is <i>fundamentally lacking</i> , demonstrating <i>very little or no mastery</i> , and is severely flawed by ONE OR MORE of the following weaknesses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops a point of view on the issue, demonstrating some critical thinking, but may do so inconsistently or use inadequate examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops a point of view on the issue that is vague or seriously limited, demonstrating weak critical thinking, providing inappropriate or insufficient examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops no viable point of view on the issue, or provides little or no evidence to support its position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is limited in its organization or focus, or may demonstrate some lapses in coherence or progression of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is poorly organized and/or focused, or demonstrates serious problems with coherence or progression of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is disorganized or unfocused, resulting in a disjointed or incoherent essay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays developing facility in the use of language, but sometimes uses weak vocabulary or inappropriate word choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays very little facility in the use of language, using very limited vocabulary or incorrect word choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays fundamental errors in vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lacks variety or demonstrates problems in sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates frequent problems in sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates severe flaws in sentence structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics so serious that meaning is somewhat obscured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that persistently interfere with meaning

Essays not written on the essay assignment will receive a score of zero.