



Breaking Down the New SAT

The College Board people who produce the SAT have been losing ground to the ACT for years, and their solution to this competition is a redesigned SAT . . . that has many similarities to the ACT. In this case, imitation seems to be the sincerest form of competition. Or is it survival?

So What's New?

1) **Shout This from the Rooftops: VOCAB IS NO LONGER A HUGE ISSUE!!!!!!!!!!**
This is the biggest difference in the "new" test. In the old test, vocab was a major issue in the 67-question Critical Reading section – it impacted 35-40 percent of those questions, in one way or another. Now, the arcane words that tormented generations of students and forced them to learn hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of words, well, they're history. In fact, my vocab list was more than 1400 words and it included *arcane*, which means "known or understood by very few; mysterious; secret; obscure; esoteric." (And by the way, *esoteric* was also on my list, and for good reason.) There are now about 10 vocab questions, out of the 96 questions that comprise the two "verbal" sections of the new test, and esoteric and arcane words need not apply. These "vocab" words have multiple definitions, as do so many words in our glorious language, and now your job is to figure out which one works in the context of the sentence (More on this later).

2) **No Penalty for a Wrong Answer:** The "old" test offered five possible answers to a question: a correct answer earned one point, an incorrect answer *cost* a 1/4-of-a-point penalty. Now, just like the ACT, there are four possible answers to a question and no penalty for a wrong answer. So if you have 15 seconds left for a section and five unanswered questions, **GUESS!**
THERE ARE NO PENALTIES FOR WRONG ANSWERS
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!ANSWER EVERY QUESTION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

3) **How's Tricks?** The Critical Reading section of the "old" test included several demanding questions that were designed to trick you – or at the very least, to confuse you – as a test of your reasoning abilities. The Reading section questions in the new test certainly include many difficult questions, but they are more straightforward, as they are in the ACT.

4) **Explaining the Answers:** The College Board's official prep book for the old test offered no explanations for the answers. Its new test prep book does, just like the ACT's official test prep book. The new SAT book includes four practice tests; there were 10 in the old one.

5) **Name Game:** The old test's verbal sections were **Critical Reading** (vocab, reading comprehension) and **Writing** (grammar, usage). Now? **Reading and Writing and Language.**

5) **Essay:** This is the second-biggest change. Here are the bare bones facts:

- The essay is now optional. ~~With the ACT~~, some colleges will insist you take it, some will not. You'll have to check with the colleges you apply to and see if it's required.
- The essay comes last in the test, ~~used to come first~~.
- The time allotment is 50 minutes, not 25. So, yes, you'll have to write a *lot* more.
- You no longer take a side on an issue, as if you were a defense attorney defending virtuous corporations accused of being polluters, or a plaintiff's attorney suing those evil polluters. This essay is akin to what you might see on an AP Language test, in which you have to break down a speech or an essay and explain why it works and how it works.

Reading

Big Picture

1) **Time is of the essence:** You must be **RUTHLESS** with it! **Never** obsess over any one answer. This section is 52 questions in 65 minutes, or 75 seconds per question. So you *must* be methodical. For the toughest questions, *literally* cross off the possible answers that you're certain are wrong so if you have to go back to them, you're not starting from scratch. Take a split second to draw a line through a letter. It's a smart investment. Same goes for Writing and Language.

2) **Basic Training:** This sounds obvious, but it's basic: You must understand *exactly* what a question is asking, and *exactly* what each possible answer is saying. If you don't "get" the question, you have almost no chance of finding the right answer. If you don't carefully (but **ruthlessly**) examine *each* word of a possible answer, you're going to be in trouble. Sometimes one word in a possible answer is the reason it's wrong. **Be methodical! Don't be careless!**

3) **Guess What:** Like we said before, if you have 15 seconds left for a section and five unanswered questions, **GUESS!** It's your only alternative and you have nothing to lose.

4) **Best Doesn't Mean Perfect:** As with the ACT and the old SAT, there are going to be occasional imperfect answers. Don't obsess over an imperfect answer. **DON'T** take it personally, for heavens sakes. You're after the **BEST** answer, just like it says at the beginning of every section of every test, ACT or SAT. Think of it this way: there should be no questions in which the vote could reasonably be 51 votes for answer A and 49 for answer B; the vote is always going to be 100-0. So that means . . . **The right answer is always the ONLY possible answer!**

5) **Process of Elimination:** For some difficult questions, your only hope is your old friend, the Process of Elimination. You might even end up with an answer that you don't quite understand. Whatever you do, **don't** waste time trying to figure out why that answer is right, as long as you're sure the other three are not. Fill in the circle and move on. You know, **ruthlessly**.

The Passages

1) **Breakdown:** There are five passages, each with 10 or 11 questions. The first passage is always Fiction, from a novel or a short story. The other four passages will deal with Social Science (economics, sociology, urban planning, etc.), Natural Science (dinosaurs, evolution, DNA, etc.) and Humanities (essays, speech excerpts, book excerpts, etc.). There will be either two passages on the social sciences or two on the natural sciences, and one on the other three.

2) **Question "Chronology":** The questions generally follow the passage, unlike the ACT, in which the answer to the last question of a Reading passage might be found in the second paragraph, and the answer to Question 2 might be found in the second-to-last paragraph. Here, as you move down the questions, you almost always move down the passage to find the answer.

3) **Paired Questions:** This is something new to the SAT, and something not found in the ACT. There will be between 8-10 sets of paired questions in which the second half of the pair will ask, “*What choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?*”

4) **Visuals:** One or two passages will include some *visuals* – charts, graphs, tables, etc. – but there will be only two or three questions in the passage that will involve the visuals.

5) **The New 1-2:** One passage will be split in two, which did occur in the old SAT, but doesn’t in the ACT. These passages may take opposite views of the subject matter (most often in Humanities), or explore different angles of the subject matter. There will be Passage 1 questions followed by Passage 2 questions followed by questions on both passages

Strategies

1) **Passage Big Picture Questions:** Expect two of the five passages to begin with a question that might say, *The main purpose of the passage is . . .* If you’re not sure after your first read-through, hold off answering *until* you finish answering the rest of the questions. By then you should/might know the answer. Certainly, **do not** obsess over this question. A first question like that in the fiction passage might be something very basic: *What happens in this passage?* Occasionally, the second question of a passage will have Big Picture overtones.

2) **Topic Sentences and Last Sentences:** All of the passages are extremely well-written, and as with any good writing, topic sentences are **VERY** important. There’s a reason your English teachers have always stressed them. It’s a good idea to circle them as a visual aid. What the Hecht, **that’s an order!** Ignore this advice if you have a 181 IQ. Otherwise . . . **CIRCLE!**

What if the topic sentence ends with a question mark? Then pay close attention to the paragraph’s second sentence. Why? Because it’s really the second half of the topic sentence. After all, a sentence with a question mark cannot make a definitive statement, which topic sentences almost always do. The last sentence of a paragraph is also important, just not as much as that first one. It sums up the paragraph and/or provides the transition to the next paragraph.

3) **First Paragraphs and Last Paragraphs:** They’re generally not as important as topic sentences, but you should pay attention to the first paragraph of a passage as well as the last paragraph. The first paragraph often “sets up” the passage, the last one often sums it up.

4) **Paired Questions:** For the “evidence” question, well, the key word is *evidence*. Now here’s the (sometimes) tricky part of these questions. We almost always think of evidence as testimony given in court about DNA test results, or the facts that have been uncovered by a scientific study of, say, climate warming. But sometimes in the paired questions, the “evidence” is nothing more than the opinion/assertion of the author of the passage. Don’t get upset with the SAT people and mutter to yourself something like, I know A and C and D are definitely wrong, but B isn’t *really* evidence. Stop muttering. Don’t fight it. Pardon my cliché from the 60’s, but you have to go with the flow. You don’t have an alternative. Hey, it’s their test, their rules.

When you search for the lines in the passage that give you the answer to the first question, make sure to mark them. If you’re right about *that* question, those same lines may well be the “evidence” you need to answer the second question. Occasionally, there may be two sets of lines in the passage that can provide the answer to the first half of the paired questions. But only one will be listed as a possible answer to the “evidence” question. Getting a handle on these questions is important: They will account for a *minimum* of 30 percent of the section’s questions.

5) **The New 1-2:** For the passages that are split in two, which will happen just once in the section, read Passage 1 and answer the questions that apply, read Passage 2 and answer the questions that apply, and *then*, and only then, answer the questions about both passages.

6) **But Words:** These words are *crucial*. That's in any writing, not just in SAT and ACT World. They tell you that the passage – fact or fiction – is about to go in a different direction. They often lead to answers, so *circle them*, just like the topic sentences Remember: that's an **order!** You **must** circle them! An investment of a few seconds will be remarkably cost efficient.

The most frequently used **But Words** are *but, however, nevertheless, yet, and still*. But there are many others: *despite, although (though), while, on the other hand, conversely, alternatively* are some of them. In the right *context* – there's that word again – even “*even so*” can qualify. And if the second sentence of a paragraph starts with a **But Word**, or there's one in the first few words of the sentence, pay *very close* attention. After all, that sentence will probably contradict the paragraph's topic sentence. Don't you think that's likely to be, uh, significant?

7) **Vocab:** OK, *arcane* and *esoteric* are history. The vocab questions here (and also in Writing and Language) are very often about *context*, or the *big picture*. Take the word *form*. In its, ta da, noun form. Mr. Merriam and Mr. Webster offer **12**, count 'em **12**, different definitions! The noun *turn*? Try **15** different definitions!! Context, context, and more context. Occasionally, the vocab question is a classic “vocab” word. If you don't know the definition, don't despair, try to figure out what it means in the *context* of the *entire* sentence. Sometimes all four possible answers to a one-word vocab question may be four phrases of as many as five words. And some “vocab” questions ask for the meaning of a phrase. Should I mention *context* again?

8) **Vocab Shortcut:** Vocab questions are *only* about the sentence they're in; they're self-contained, so to speak. So any context outside of the specified sentence needs not apply. Vocab questions in Reading are written this way: *As used in line 50, _____ most nearly means . . .* It's a very good – and time efficient – idea to quickly scan the 10 or 11 questions in the passage to identify the “vocab” and answer them before you start reading the entire passage.

9) **More Context:** Let's say you're asked what a word or a phrase in a passage “most nearly implies.” Of course, you *must* read the entire sentence that contains the word or phrase. Sometimes you have to examine the sentence before and/or the sentence after. And if the next sentence begins with a “But Word,” or has one in the sentence's first few words, it's a must.

10) **Focus!** Some passages are bor-ing. Some, often in Natural Science, can be quite intimidating. Tough noogies! Don't *ever* take these passages personally. I can't tell you how many ACT and SAT students of mine have confessed they did poorly on a passage because it was bor-ing, or because they let themselves get flummoxed. Fight your boredom. Keep your cool and concentrate. **Concentrate! Be methodical! Don't obsess over any one question!**

11) **Fiction Passages:** Fiction is about feelings, emotions, memories, etc., and there is no logical development of an idea as there is in the non-fiction passages. Sometimes they drip with irony/sarcasm. Sometimes they can be satiric. So don't focus on first and last sentences and first and last paragraphs; focus on the *subtext*, on what's implied and hinted at. Fiction is filled with subtext: In other words, what you “see,” what you read, is often *not* what you get; it's not what it “seems” on the surface. Take a step beyond the printed page. Dig *under* that surface.

Some Fiction passages come from the late 19th or the early 20th century, so the language and style might be unfamiliar. Again, don't let yourself be intimidated, don't get flummoxed:

Please excuse this pun: But the “But Words” are still worth circling.

12) **Ignore at Your Own Risk:** Read the information that precedes the passage. These “precedes” provide useful information that at the very least will provide context for the passage.

13) **Read Between the Lines:** When the questions include *infer*, *suggest*, or *imply*, the answer will *not* be in black and white. You must put on your thinking caps, just like your teacher told you to do in third grade, and take your thoughts on the passage a step or two further.

14) **Here and There:** Occasionally, an answer might come from two different spots in the passage. For example, the first set of lines might provide geographical information and the second set might provide the correct time frame. But this happens infrequently.

15) **Tricky:** A warning for the passages with the charts, graphs, etc.: A question might ask about two sets of numbers that go left to right in the “visual,” but are reversed as a possible answer (which is the right answer). Make sure they don’t have to be listed in their original order.

16) **And Now . . . :** If a sentence includes two nouns or two adjectives separated by *and*, and you don’t know one of the words, fear not. Assume it is a first or second cousin to the word you know: *accusations* and *denunciations*, or *loyal* and *steadfast*, or *ambition* and *drive*.

17) **Balancing Act:** Sometimes in the “split” passages, questions will involve an opinion or belief that the author doesn’t believe in or subscribe to; instead it’s something that is believed by or subscribed to by others who disagree with the author. So you have to make sure you realize that this is what’s happening, and *then* separate the author’s view and those of the “disagree-ers.”

Writing and Language

Big Picture

1) **It’s Worth Repeating:** Times is still of the essence. There will be four passages, dealing with random subjects, and each passage contains 11 questions. You will have 35 minutes to complete 44 questions, or 47.8 seconds per question. So you must remain **ruthless** in your use of time, never obsess over any one question, and be methodical. **Ruthless, ruthless, ruthless!!!**

2) **More Worth Repeating:** A) Not every answer will be a “good” answer, but it will always be the **best** answer. B) You must understand *exactly* what a question is asking, and *exactly* what each possible answer is saying. C) Sometimes your only choice is the Process of Elimination, even if you’re left with an answer you don’t really understand. Don’t try to figure out why it’s right. All that matters is that you’re convinced the other three answers are wrong.

3) **Calling ACT:** Most questions will look similar to the questions in the ACT English section. A word, a phrase, or a sentence will be underlined. Is the underlined portion correct? Then the answer is *A, no change*. Wrong? The answer is *B, C, or D*. Of the 44 questions in this section, approximately 37 will offer the *no change* option. Figure about 20 percent will be A’s.

4) **Language Skills:** This section tests how much you know about the correct use of the English language, involving both *grammar* – rules – and *usage*. In most usage questions your first task will be to **LISTEN!** Does the sentence *sound* right? Does it sound “off”?

5) **Punctuation:** It was not an important issue in the old SAT. Now it is.

6) **“Visuals”:** One or two passages will include graphs or charts, etc., just as in Reading.

Strategies

1) **The Ears Have It:** Like the ACT English section and the old SAT Writing section, you have to *listen*. **Hearing** the sentence through your inner voice is crucial. It’s beyond crucial. Why? You might not know *why* something is right or wrong, but you will know – you will *hear* – that it’s right or that it’s wrong. Knowing that something is wrong is far more important than

knowing *why* it's wrong. Another way to spot a "bad" phrase or "bad" sentence is to say this to yourself: "Would I write this?" If the answer is no, then the sentence is probably wrong.

2) **Our Old Friend, Context:** There will be nine or 10 questions in which **context** is crucial. Should you move a sentence, and where, or keep it where it is? Should you move a paragraph, and where, or let it stay put? Should you add a sentence, or not, with two reasons why you should, and two why not. Does a sentence add useful information without ruining the "flow" of the passage? Or is the information extraneous and harmful to the sentence and also damaging to the passage's "flow"? Does the tone of the proposed addition fit with the rest of the passage, or not? Should two sentences be combined into one? Should one sentence be broken up into two?

Should you move that sentence to this or that spot? Examine the sentence before and the sentence after the new location. Do the three "work?" Move a paragraph? Does it "work" in its new spot with the paragraph before and the one after? That's **context** in all its glory.

There will be other *context* questions. For example, there will be many questions centered on transition, *especially* sentence-to-sentence transition. And *yes, for example* is an appropriate transition word to begin the second sentence of this paragraph. *For instance* is another. There are many words that can be used, in *context*, for sentence-to-sentence transition (and paragraph-to-paragraph transition). Consider these: *consequently, in other words, therefore, but, however, still, nevertheless, as such, yet, in contrast, moreover, by the way, indeed, perhaps, and similarly*. Did you notice the "But Words"? They can be important in these passages as well.

3) **Less is More:** This is the most important rule of writing: the fewer words you use, the better off you are because too many words can blunt the impact of what you want to say. And this is an important issue here. Sometimes a question's fourth (D) option will be, *Delete the underlined portion*. You know what? That's usually the right answer. Sometimes – in fact, most of the time – the right answer will be the one with the fewest words. Sometimes there will be a trick question involving a redundancy. Let's say the sentence contains *annually* and *yearly*. They mean the same thing, so one has to go. Only one of those words will be a possible answer.

4) **Vocab:** These are less "obvious" vocab questions than those in the Reading section. Instead of *As used in line 50, _____ most nearly means . . .* one word will be underlined and you'll have to determine if it is being used correctly, or if one of the other options is the right answer, in context. In the very first question in the Writing section of the Practice Test 1 in the SAT prep book *outdo* is underlined and the other choices are *defeat, outperform, and outweigh*. They're not necessarily synonyms, but you can see they're all related. Say, first cousins instead of siblings? Your job is to decide, in the context of the sentence, which of the four is best.

5) **Two for One:** If you find a sentence that includes two questions, they must work in tandem, in *context*. Don't do the first one in a vacuum, and *then* answer the second one as if they're not connected. Instead, think of the two questions as one question with two parts.

Punctuation

1) **Commas:** Some questions will test your knowledge of comma placement. When it comes to commas think *natural pause*. Imagine giving a presentation in class, and not in the sing-song monotone you used in third grade. A comma will come when you instinctively stop for a split second, as you would after *class* in the previous sentence, and after *split second* and *previous sentence* in this sentence. If the question is about punctuation (natural pause, comma), your natural inclination is to assume that the right answer will include at least one comma or some other punctuation. Not necessarily. Yes, it's counterintuitive, and yes, it's a fact that you won't accept at first, but you'll learn (some faster than others).

2) **Before and After:** Certain words and phrases in mid-sentence are almost always preceded and followed by commas. The most common is *however*. Others are *nevertheless*, *though*, *therefore*, *of course*, *in comparison*, *on the other hand*, *alternately*. There can be an exception: the original sentence contains a “*however word*” in mid-sentence, but that sentence is grammatically incorrect, and the correct answer will turn it into two sentences.

3) **SAT World vs. the Real World:** In the real world, we occasionally, for a rhetorical effect, write a sentence made up of two sentences/independent clauses separated by a comma. For example, “*Some people think cats are great pets, others think they’re creepy.*” In SAT and ACT World that is a no-no, a never, an automatic cross-off! Never!! Hear it? Cross it off!!!

This is the mantra to memorize: ***Sentence, Comma, Sentence Is NEVER Right.***

2) **Semicolons:** In SAT and ACT World, *and* the real world, they are almost always used to turn two sentences (or independent clauses) into one, separated by the semicolon. Make sure you can “hear” that each *side* of the sentence can stand by itself as a sentence.

Another mantra to memorize: ***Sentence, Semicolon, Sentence Is Right.***

4) **Colons:** What follows a colon is an explanation of what comes before it. Earlier I wrote, *Fiction is filled with subtext: In other words, what you “see,” what you read, is often not what you get; it’s not what it “seems” on the surface.* This offers an example of the correct use of both the colon and semicolon. Colons also precede lists (natural pause, comma), but that’s relatively rare in both SAT and ACT World. Unlike the *Sentence, Semicolon, Sentence* mantra, what follows a colon does not have to be a grammatically correct sentence.

3) **Long Dash:** Some answers are sentences that include phrases set off by long dashes. *After I got the \$4000 bill – an amount that shocked me – I tried to figure out how to pay it by the end of the month.* Think of the long dashes as super commas which create a visual effect and are used for emphasis. A sentence can also include a long dash near its end (enough with the natural pause, comma), followed by a few words. This also creates a visual effect for emphasis.

Grammar/Usage/Etc.

1) **Match Game:** You will need to find subject/verb and verb tense mismatches.

2) **Pros and Cons:** You will need to find pronoun mismatches.

3) **You’re It:** You will need to choose between the possessive pronoun *its* and the contraction *it’s* (it is). The two are counterintuitive: the possessive is the one *without* the apostrophe. **And *its’* is ALWAYS WRONG.** The word does **NOT** exist. You will also need to choose between the singular possessive *its* and the plural *their*.

4) **Their/They’re/There:** Watch for a question or two in which you will choose between the possessive *their*, the contraction *they’re* (*they are*), and the noun/adjective/adverb *there*.

5) **Possessive apostrophes:** If the word “**of**” precedes the underlined words, that might help you identify the question as one about a possessive, but “**of**” is not always present. If not, try to figure out what the sentence would be if “**of**” were present. For example, “**the girls’ faces**” is the same as “**the faces of the girls.**”

5) **Independence Day:** An *independent clause* can stand by itself as a sentence. A *dependent clause* can’t stand by itself as a sentence. A grammatically correct sentence *must* contain an independent clause. Sometimes an underlined sentence will sound right, but won’t be. It will start with a dependent clause and be followed by a comma and a noun or pronoun that is the sentence’s subject (in an independent clause). For example, this might *sound* ok: *Writing in 1908, Upton Sinclair’s **The Jungle** aroused public opinion and prompted Congress to act.*

But it isn't ok, because *The Jungle* was not doing the writing in 1908. In other words, the noun/subject following the dependent clause and comma does not refer back correctly to the dependent clause. By the way, *Upton Sinclair's* is not the noun/subject, it's a possessive modifier of the subject, the title. In fact, a possessive can *never* be a subject. The same applies to an article – *a, the* – and any adjective(s) that modifies the subject/noun. And this is how the *correct* sentence should start: *Writing in 1908, Upton Sinclair. . .*

6) **No Human Being:** If *being* is underlined as part of a question, it means the answer will not be *No change*; the sentence must be corrected (notice the use of the semicolon here). And if *being* is in a possible answer, that answer is a throw-out. In other words, ***being = bad!***

7) **Be Active:** Good writing is almost always about using active verbs, and very few answers will include passive verbs: for example, *I took it* rather than *It was taken by me*.

8) **I Have a Preposition for You:** A preposition explains the relationship between two adjacent nouns: for example, *water (n.) under (prep.) the bridge (n.) or a bridge (n.) over (prep.) troubled water (n.)*. There will be two or three questions in which you will have to choose the right preposition. This is about the colloquial use of the language, or the way the use of the language has developed over the years. For example: *I went to the store* and *I went for a haircut*. Some other prepositions are *with, of, on, from, by, in to, through, behind, on top of* and *above*.

9) **Gerunds:** Very few right answers will include the *ing* form of a verb, which is a gerund. Gerunds are, in fact, nouns. In *Jogging is one of my favorite things, after raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens*, *Jogging* is the subject; it is a *thing* (as in a *person, place, or thing*).

10) **'S/S':** 'S is a singular possessive. S' is a plural possessive.

11) **AVEN:** This is an acronym for the use of *affect* and *effect* (Affect Verb/Effect Noun). In the real world, *affect* is almost always used as a verb and rarely used as a noun, and *effect* is almost always used as a noun, and rarely used as a verb. In questions from SAT and ACT World, however, *affect* is *always* used as a verb and *effect* is *always* used as a noun.

12) **Did You Know?** An adjective can't describe an adjective. You need an adverb. For example, *John is an exceedingly cool kid*, or, *The restaurant has a curiously exotic atmosphere*

13) **Inging:** A correct answer can include consecutive words ending in *ing*.

14) **Than/Then:** Don't be careless and confuse *than* (comparison) and *then* (time).

15) **Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda:** *Could of, would of, should of* (and *might of*) are **ALWAYS WRONG!** It should be *could have, would have, should have and might have*.

16) **You Bet:** You've been taught not to use the pronoun *you*. But in an informal passage, when the author talks directly to the reader, *you* or *your* are fine. In *context*, of course.

17) **Tricky:** Beware of sentences that begin with a singular subject, followed by a prepositional phrase that ends with a plural noun, followed by a plural verb (or vice versa). In *Mastery of CPR techniques are mandatory for firemen*, the subject is *mastery*, not *techniques*, which is part of the three-word prepositional phrase that begins with *of*. So *are*, a plural verb, is incorrect. The sentence is meant to trick you. It should be *Mastery of CPR techniques is mandatory for firemen*. Similarly, beware of sentences that begin with a singular subject, followed by a modifying phrase that is set off by commas and ends in a plural noun, followed by a plural verb (or vice versa). In this case, the vice versa should be: *The sharp fangs of the snake, each one filled with poison, is its only defense*. The subject is *fangs*, not *poison*, so the verb must be plural, *are* not *is*. *Poison* and *is* may be right next to each other, but they don't "match up."

18) **Y Not:** Most singular nouns that end in *y* will end in *ies* as plural nouns.

19) **Back to Back.** Two consecutive sentences will **not** begin with *However*. That would be clumsy writing. Try writing two sentences that begin with *however* and then *listen*.

20) **Say's Who:** *Whose* is a possessive, *who's* is the contraction for *who is*.

21) **Neverland:** Choosing between *which* and *that* or *this* and *that* is **never** an issue.

22) **Just Because:** You've been taught – **badly** – that you can't begin a sentence with *Because*. Wrong! You can. You can also begin a sentence with *And* or *But*.

23) **Parallelism:** Parallelism can be about comparison: you can't compare *Faulkner's novels* to *Hemingway*. You can't go from active to passive verbs, from second person pronouns to third person, from a series of adjectives to a noun. Consistency is needed in the use of prepositions, articles, pronouns, and conjunctions (*and*, *but*). The correct answer should *sound* balanced. For example, in *Friends of Nan have said that she is at once unreliable because of her fickleness but her personality is still compelling*, you can *hear* the imbalance. What's wrong? In the first half, the adjective *unreliable* modifies the noun *fickleness*; in the second half, the noun *personality* precedes the adjective *compelling*. The sentence should be *Friends of Nan have said that she is once reliable because of her fickleness and compelling because of her personality*.

24) **Verb precedes the subject:** In the English language, the subject almost always precedes the verb. But there might be a sentence in which the verb comes first and won't agree with the subject. In *Only recently has the medication's drawbacks become known*, the subject is *drawbacks*, plural, and the verb, *has*, is singular. So *has* should be *have*.

25) **Appositives:** They're nouns or noun phrases that "re-name" another noun that is right beside it, with a comma before *and* after it. For example, *John, that slob, actually cleaned up his room*. Or, *Richard, the club treasurer, is resigning today*. One way to identify the correct use of an appositive is to remove it and the commas that surround it. The sentence will read OK without them. Don't confuse a modifier(s) with an appositive. In *Rock star and producer Eminem was born in Detroit*, *Rock star* and *producer* modify *Eminem* and need no commas. But in *Eminem, a rock star and producer, was born in Detroit*, there is an appositive that requires commas.

26) **Third person pronouns:** We often misuse them in the real world, so they certainly are fair game in SAT and ACT World. The most common error involves the use of "it" in situations in which we don't know to what *it* refers. The third person subjective pronouns (used as subjects) are *I, he, she, we, they, who*. The third person objective pronouns (used as, you guessed it, objects) are *me, him, her, us, them, whom*. Memorize both sets of pronouns!

27) **Homonyms:** These are words that sound alike but have very different meanings: *eminent* (well-known and respected) and *imminent* (about to happen). Beware! Don't be careless!

28) **Just Because It Is:** *Is because, was because, are because, and were because* are **grammatically incorrect**. *But because* sounds awkward, but is grammatically correct.

29) **Numbers Game:** The phrase *The number of* is singular; *A number of* is plural. In any sentence with either phrase, make sure it matches up with both the subject and verb.

30) **More Numbers Games:** Each and every are singular. Imagine *one* in parentheses, like this: *each (one) of us* and *every (one) of us*. On the other hand, *People* is a plural.

**THERE ARE NO PENALTIES FOR WRONG ANSWERS
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!ANSWER EVERY QUESTION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Essay

JFK's Inaugural Address from 1961, in the middle of Cold War.

As you read the passage below, consider how JFK uses

- 1) *evidence*, such as facts or examples, to support claims.**
- 2) *reasoning* to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.**
- 3) *stylistic or persuasive elements*, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.**

JFK's Inaugural Address:

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom, symbolizing an end as well as a beginning, signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe – the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans – born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage – and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. This much we pledge – and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United, there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do – for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required – not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge--to convert our good words into good deeds – in a new alliance for progress – to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support – to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective – to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak – and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course – both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.

So let us begin anew – remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms – and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah – to "undo the heavy burdens . . . (and) let the oppressed go free."

And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are — but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation" — a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility — I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it — and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

Write an essay in which you explain how JFK builds an argument to persuade his audience that Americans should rise to the challenges of the Cold War era. In your essay, analyze how Kennedy uses one or more of the features listed in the box above (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage. Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Kennedy's argument, but rather explain how he builds an argument to persuade his audience.