



Contents at left – click to preview chapters.

If contents are not visible use your toolbar above and click on the indicated button (to open table of contents):



SAT Essay Writing Skills

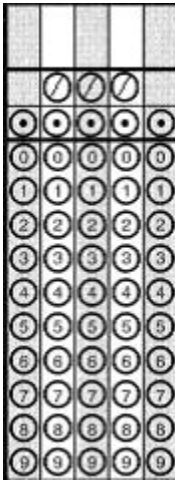
- This preview book contains sample chapters only.
- Review materials organized by curriculum standard.
- Instruction, not fill in the blanks.
- Basic skills practice.
- Internet resources.

An SAT Mentor Production

Copyright 2004, all rights reserved. This online document is encrypted to prevent printing.



Next Page - use page number arrows below to navigate.



How to Use This Book

The first section of this book describes skills you will need to write the new SAT essay and gives you a thorough understanding of how the essay portion of the SAT is scored. You will learn to create scoring rubrics or charts that define how well you must respond to an essay prompt on the test to score the maximum number of points. You will learn about writing a point of view essay. The SAT assumes that students can perform at a twelfth grade level in their written work.

This book will also explore writing conventions in some detail; the new test has questions related to improving sentences and paragraphs.

The SAT subject test in writing measures your ability to:

- express ideas effectively in standard written English
- recognize faults in usage and structure
- use language with sensitivity to meaning

Your total score will be reported on the 200-800 scale. Multiple choice and writing sample subscores will be scored on the 20-80 scale.

Writing Skills for the College-Bound Student

Writing skills needed for success on the SAT can be organized in three components, **writing process**, **applications** and **conventions**. The composition that is presented for students is a “point of view” essay. Time is short on the exam, so an essay of draft quality is expected. We will spend some time on prewriting skills so you can prepare a draft that looks like a final copy in a short period of time. The more like a final essay as opposed to a draft your essay can look, the more likely you will have a high score on this part of the exam.

The Process of Writing

***Pre-writing;
...students
should be
able to:***

1. Generate writing ideas, and document the ideas for development into a larger piece.
 2. Determine the usefulness of and apply appropriate pre-writing tasks.
 3. Establish and develop a clear thesis statement and a clear plan or outline for expressing point of view.
 4. Determine a purpose and audience; plan strategies (e.g., adapting focus, content structure, and point of view) to address purpose and audience.
 5. Use organizational strategies (e.g., notes, outlines) to plan writing.
 6. Organize writing to create a coherent whole with an effective and engaging introduction, body and conclusion, and a closing sentence that summarizes, extends or elaborates on points or ideas in the writing.
- Drafting,
Revising and
Editing***
7. Use a variety of sentence structures and lengths (e.g., simple, compound and complex sentences; parallel or repetitive sentence structure).
 8. Use paragraph form in writing, including topic sentences that arrange paragraphs in a logical sequence.

Publishing

9. Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details and modifiers, and style as appropriate to audience and purpose, and use techniques to convey a personal style and voice.
10. Reread and analyze clarity of writing, consistency of point of view and effectiveness of organizational structure.
11. Add and delete information and details to better elaborate on stated central idea and more effectively accomplish purpose.
12. Rearrange words, sentences and paragraphs and add transitional words and phrases to clarify meaning and maintain consistent style, tone and voice.
13. Proofread writing, edit to improve conventions (e.g., grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization), identify and correct fragments and run-ons and eliminate inappropriate slang or informal language.
14. Apply tools (e.g., rubric, checklist) to judge the quality of writing.

Writing Applications

1. Write an essay that:
 - a. sustains reader interest by pacing supporting ideas and developing an engaging and persuasive point of view;
 - b. use a range of strategies and devices including figurative language and specific narration when appropriate; and
 - c. include an organized, well-developed structure.
2. Write essays that:
 - a. address audience needs, stated purpose and context in a clear and efficient manner;
 - b. include appropriate facts and details;
 - c. exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies; and
 - d. provide a sense of closure to the writing.

3. Write a persuasive point of view that:
 - a. supports arguments with detailed evidence;
 - b. excludes irrelevant information; and
 - c. cites sources of information where appropriate.

Writing Conventions

Spelling

1. Use correct spelling conventions.

Punctuation

2. Use correct capitalization and punctuation.

and

Capitalization

3. Use clauses (e.g., main, subordinate) and phrases (e.g., gerund, infinitive, participial).

Grammar and

Usage

4. Use parallel structure to present items in a series and items juxtaposed for emphasis.

5. Use proper placement of modifiers.



In this book you will learn to evaluate your own writing skills by looking at other students' work. You will be able to create scoring guides for your own responses based on the three writing components. We'll provide some checklists along the way to help you learn to score your own compositions. We want your expectations to be high for your own writing. As you progress through the book, and see how students have responded to writing prompts in other test situations, you'll learn the difference between a good composition and one that needs improvement.

Description of the SAT Essay

To demonstrate mastery of the competencies for the essay, you are asked to produce one piece of extended writing that demonstrates twelfth grade writing capability. You are given one prompt, asking that you express your point of view on a particular subject.

The Point of View Essay: Students attempt to convince, inspire, or persuade readers to think as they do. Students develop their point of view with facts, reasons, anecdotes, and other supporting material. A strong persuasive tone should appear within the student’s writing. The rubric for the essay we provided earlier in this book outlines how the scorers look at student work.

Here’s are samples of a point of view prompts:

Writing Situation: Since schools have seen a rise in gang violence, stealing, and discipline problems, many schools and school districts are considering requiring students to wear uniforms.

Think about how you would feel if you were required to wear a school uniform. Are there benefits or drawbacks to requiring students to wear school uniforms?

Directions for Writing: Now write an essay in which you persuade the reader that school uniforms should or should not be required. Defend your point of view with specific reasons supported by several detailed examples.



Writing Situation: Many schools require all students to perform some type of community service such as working in nursing homes or hospital.

Think about how you would feel if you were required to perform a community service.

Directions for Writing: Now write an essay in which you persuade the reader that students should or should not be required to perform community service. Defend your point of view with several detailed reasons. Develop those reasons with supporting examples.



Writing Situation: Imagine that your school district has proposed saving money by eliminating extracurricular sports (football, basketball and baseball) from the high school program.

Think about the possible effects of cutting sports from the school program. Decide whether you are for or against this proposal.

Directions for Writing: Now write an essay in which you persuade the reader why this is or is not a good idea. Defend your position with specific reasons supported by several detailed examples.



Writing Situation: A school board is considering keeping school in session all year. Instead of a long summer vacation, there will be many shorter breaks throughout the year.

Think about the effects of a twelve-month school year. Do you agree or disagree that schools should be in session all year?

Directions for Writing: Now, write an essay in which you persuade the reader why this is or is not a good idea. Defend your position with specific reasons supported by several detailed examples.



Writing Situation: In some countries, students are responsible for the basic daily cleaning of their school buildings. Fifteen minutes are set aside each day for all students to sweep, dust, and clean their classrooms and corridors.

Think about how you would feel if students were responsible for cleaning your school. Do you agree or disagree that American schools should adopt this policy?

Directions for Writing: Now, write an essay in which you persuade the reader why this is or is not a good idea. Defend your position with specific reasons supported by several detailed examples.



See if you can make the following paragraph better. The following exercise illustrates how you can practice for the paragraph improvement part of the new SAT.

Green house effect is one of the phenomena caused by industrial pollution. From the data taken by scientists, our earth has been warming up since the Industrial Revolution. Why does it happen? The factories' emissions have created smog on the atmosphere. The earth's atmosphere becomes like a green house, and the earth and everything inside of it have become like the plants in the green house. The sunlight can pass trough the ozone layer but the heat transferred by the sunlight can not escape easily from the layer of smog and is deflected to earth's surface again.

Can you understand the paragraph? Is it clear and well organized? Are there any mistakes in it? Let's look at the writing more closely. Can you find any spelling errors?

Green house effect is one of the phenomena caused by industrial pollution. From the data taken by scientists, our earth has been warming up since the Industrial Revolution. Why does it happen? The factories' emissions have created smog on the atmosphere. The earth's atmosphere becomes like a green house, and the earth and everything inside of it have become like the plants in the green house. The sunlight can pass trough the ozone layer but the heat transferred by the sunlight can not escape easily from the layer of smog and is deflected to earth's surface again.

There are two small spelling errors in the section above. Did you find them?

Green house effect is one of the phenomena caused by industrial pollution. From the data taken by scientists, our earth has been warming up since the Industrial Revolution. Why does it happen? The factories' emissions have created smog on the atmosphere. The earth's atmosphere becomes like a green house, and the earth and everything inside of it have become like the plants in the green house. The sunlight can pass trough the ozone layer but the heat transferred by the sunlight can not escape easily from the layer of smog and is deflected to earth's surface again.

If you look at the paragraph again, you will see the mis-spelled words.

~~Green-house~~ effect is one of the phenomena caused by industrial pollution. From the data taken by scientists, our earth has been warming up since the Industrial Revolution. Why does it happen? The factories' emissions have created smog on the atmosphere. The earth's atmosphere becomes like a ~~green-house~~, and the earth and everything inside of it have become like the plants in the green house. The sunlight can pass ~~trough~~ the ozone layer but the heat transferred by the sunlight can not escape easily from the layer of smog and is deflected to earth's surface again.

What is wrong with the words green and house? There is nothing wrong with the words themselves, but the writer is not discussing a house that happens to be green. He is referring to a special kind of building in which plants are grown, and that building is called a greenhouse. It is one word.

There are 3 problems with articles in the paragraph. Can you find them? Look for definite articles that have been omitted or used in place of indefinite articles.

Greenhouse effect is one of the phenomena caused by industrial pollution. From the data taken by scientists, our earth has been warming up since the Industrial Revolution. Why does it happen? The factories' emissions have created smog on the atmosphere. The earth's atmosphere becomes like a greenhouse, and the earth and everything inside of it have become like the plants in the green house. The sunlight can pass through the ozone layer but the heat transferred by the sunlight can not escape easily from the layer of smog and is deflected to earth's surface again.

The 2 missing articles are shown in bold italics below.

The greenhouse effect is one of the phenomena caused by industrial pollution. From the data taken by scientists, our earth has been warming up since the Industrial Revolution. Why does it happen? The factories' emissions have created smog on the atmosphere. The earth's atmosphere becomes like a green house, and the earth and everything inside of it have become like the plants in the greenhouse. The sunlight can pass through the ozone layer but the heat transferred by the sunlight can not escape easily from the layer of smog and is deflected to ***the*** earth's surface again.

The responses to the writing prompts for the SAT essay are scored by trained readers. We will show you how to make your own scoring rubrics to evaluate your own work.

Each student's written response to each writing prompt is scored independently by two readers. A paper that receives the same score from both readers receives that score (e.g., if each reader rates the paper as a 3, the score is a 3). If the two readers give different but adjacent scores, the two scores are averaged (e.g., a 2 and a 3 are scored as a 2.5). If more than one number separates the two scores (e.g., a 1 and a 3), the paper goes to a third reader, a highly experienced scorer, who makes the final decision on the score for the paper.

Each paper is scored with a rubric, which is used for the graduation exam in writing. This rubric is based on the SAT writing components and reflects expectations for high school writing. Since students are writing their essays on demand in a short (2 ½ hour) time frame, all papers are scored as rough drafts.

While all subscales are important, **content and organization** are key areas.

On the next pages you will see the basic scoring rubric used by test makers to evaluate student responses to writing prompts on the SAT and you will learn about expectations for excellence.



The Competencies for Writing

The competencies for writing are listed below. Each is followed by a paragraph describing what is expected of students who demonstrate achievement in that competency.

In response to prompts reflecting a student's ability to defend a point of view on an issue, the student will produce an essay reflecting twelfth grade work.

In particular, each piece of writing will:



1. develop a clear, focused main idea.

This competency assesses your ability to develop a clearly identifiable main idea in response to a prompt. The response must be clearly related to the prompt, the main idea should represent a specific response to the essential direction or question contained in the prompt. Whether stated or implied, the main idea should unify the response and provide a consistent focus. Each part of the response should explain or support the main idea.

This competency assesses your ability to write or print legibly enough so that the other competencies can be evaluated. Responses that are legible can be scored based on the six-point rubric.

Some Internet resources on developing scoring rubrics and good writing habits.

Rubistar: Commercial rubric creating product; SAT Mentor 5 stars.



<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.shtml>

Rubric templates

<http://www.sitesbysheridan.com/rubrics.html>

Articles on rubric development

<http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-4521.html>

How to write a five paragraph essay

<http://www.chci.org/chciyouth/scholarship/howtowriteessay.htm>

Four secrets of successful writing:

<http://virtual.parkland.cc.il.us/walker102/secrets.htm>

Guide to grammar and writing: SAT Mentor five star site:



http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/quiz_list.htm

Online Writing Lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Pre-Persuasive Essay Skills

In this section you'll learn some basic writing skills and see student responses to narrative writing prompts. Some of the compositions you will see are excellent, some are in need of improvement. You will learn to tell the difference and describe why some responses need to be improved.

The Paragraph and Topic Sentences



Writing Tip One: Develop a Dynamite Topic Sentence for each paragraph in your written response.

A well-organized paragraph supports or develops a single controlling idea, which is expressed in a sentence called the **topic sentence**. A topic sentence has several important functions; it substantiates or supports an essay's **thesis statement**; it unifies the content of a paragraph and directs the order of the sentences; and it advises the reader of the subject to be discussed.

Readers look to the first few sentences in a paragraph to determine the subject and perspective of the paragraph. That's why it's often best to put the topic sentence at the very beginning of the paragraph. In some cases, however, it's more effective to place another sentence before the topic sentence. For example, a sentence linking the current paragraph to the previous one might precede the topic sentence in an essay.

Although most paragraphs should have a topic sentence, there are a few situations when a paragraph might not need a topic sentence. For example, you might be able to omit a topic sentence in a paragraph that narrates a series of events, if a paragraph continues developing an idea that you introduced (with a topic sentence) in the previous paragraph, or if all the sentences and details in a paragraph clearly refer to a main point. The majority of your paragraphs, however, should have a topic sentence.

Student Responses to a Narrative Writing Prompt

Before we learn to write a persuasive or point of view essay, let's take a look at some basic student narrative essays to establish some writing and self-evaluation skills.

The Prompt:

The local newspaper is sponsoring a composition contest, and you decide to enter. In your composition, you should explain your response to the following; "If you could be granted one wish, what would that wish be?" Before you begin to write, think about one wish you would like to come true. It can be a wish for yourself or someone else. What is that wish? **Tell the reader** why you would like to have that wish granted.

Now write a multi-paragraph composition for the newspaper **telling** what you would wish for if you could be granted one wish.

- ❖ **Give specific details**, and explain why you think the way you do so that your readers will understand what you mean.
- ❖ Be sure to **write clearly**, and check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

A student who scores 6 on this narrative:

Have you ever tried out for something and didn't make it? Or have you ever said the wrong words at the wrong time? Sometimes you might even wish for a "geni" to make things better. Well, what would you wish for if you had one wish? I know exactly what I would wish for. I would turn back time to February 1, 2001. That was the day of color guard tryouts for my school. I could have done better.

Thursday, February 1, 2001. That was supposed to be the day when everything was to go my way. That afternoon I was going to try out for color guard at my school. I rushed the very end of my routine and didn't make it. My heart was like shattered glass, and I couldn't pull it back together again. If I had one wish it would be to turn back time. I would make it February 1, 2001 again. this time I would be more focused and smile more. My eyes would lock on to one item and not move. the end of my routine would be picture perfect. Even if I don't make it the second time around at least I could say I did better. Maybe if I could just say I tried harder I would feel better. Then again, what good will telling myself what I should have done do?

Basically I wish I would have done better for tryouts. I wish that I could turn back time but what's done is done. I could have smiled more and been more focused. Sitting around and telling myself what I should have done won't change a thing. Maybe a "geni" and one wish could.

This essay demonstrates advanced writing at an 8th grade level. Remember that you will need to write at a twelfth grade level to score well on the SAT. We are starting out with shorter, easier responses to make some basic points about narrative writing, scoring rubrics and basic writing skills and techniques.

In this essay, the writer sustains **control** in the writing process by establishing the purpose ("I would turn back the time to February 1, 2001") and supporting it with innovative elaboration in an organized and unified essay. After stating the wish, the writer takes the reader back in time using vivid and precise details such as "I rushed the end of my routine and didn't make it. My heart was like shattered glass, and cannot put it back together." The writer mentions using a genie to make a wish come true at the beginning and at the end of the response, an effective organizational strategy that creates a memorable strategy.

Strong control is evident in the style and control of the audience. The writer's **voice** comes through clearly, as shown in the passage, "This time I would be more focused and smile more. My eyes would lock onto one item and not move. The end of my routine would be picture perfect." By taking us back in time for an imaginary second chance at the color guard tryout, the writer effectively creates the sense of frustration he or she still feels from not making the tryouts. **Vocabulary is varied** and relevant.

All of the **conventions**; sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling, show acceptable **control** of skills. Maintaining a consistent verb tense is tricky in a narrative like this, but the author manages it well. The writer has successfully attempted various sentence structures, and usage is correct.

2

Writing Tip Two: Be sure each of your sentences begins with a different word. Vary the part of speech of the introductory word.

A score of **four** was earned by this narrative response:

I have had many wish and dreams before, but I never really though about them. I did not think about them, because I knew many of them would never come true. The one wish I have had for as long as I can remember is to become a Major League Baseball player.

I have always wanted to be a Major League Baseball player, because I really no not like desk work. I want a career that I can enjoy. Another reason is the I am really good a baseball. I can hit farther, throw faster, and run better than anybody I have ever played with. I really like the amount it pays. Around seventy-five-million over a ten year period sounds just fine to me.

The one wish I have had since I was a little boy is to be the best baseball I can be. I practice as much as I can and as best as I can. I play the hardest I can in every game I play; weather it is with my friends in the backyard or with my team on the field.

This essay demonstrates proficiency at a score of 4 on the rubric for an eighth grade narrative writing prompt. Reasonable **control** is evident in the writing process (writing component one). The central idea of being a major league baseball player is presented clearly and organized logically. Each idea that is introduced is developed with relevant supporting details. For example, "I really like the amount it pays. Around seventy-five million over a ten year period sounds just fine to me."

There is also reasonable **control** in writing applications (writing component two). The vocabulary is adequate ("I can hit farther, throw faster, and run better than anybody I have ever played with"). The writer's tone is convincing and effective.

A student who **scores 2** on this narrative writing prompt, exhibits basic skills.

If I had one wish it would be money. The key to live a component life is to be very weathly. The reason I choose money is because you can buy many things with money.

First, I would go and get a house on the ocean. Go buy a very enormous boat. Then try to sail around the world in less than 10 days. It would be an adventure. Then after I arrived back I would increase in management towards my new restraurant. and I would call it "Monster Madness Delux".

Thirdly, I would spend my money helping the poor and towards my education. I think my education is so important that I would spend lots of money just to get me in a wonderful college.

If I had that wish it would be wonderful and blessing to me. I wouldn't have to worry about a thing.

This essay is an example of basic writing at the eighth grade level. The writer's wish for "money" is developed with three reasons why he or she would want money. the organization is sustained throughout with each idea elaborated although unevenly. The second reason provided is unclear ("I would increase in management towards my new restaurant, and I would call it 'Monster Madness Delux'"). Transitional devices such as "First", "Then," and "Thirdly" strengthen the unity of the response.

On the writing applications component, the vocabulary is basic. ("you can buy many thing with money" and "Thirdly I would spend my money helping the poor and towards my education"). There is some sentence variety, and, although the writer attempts to express a voice, the lack of details and the choice of ordinary words prevent one from emerging.

While this response contains several errors in usage and spelling, the writer maintains acceptable **control** in conventions (sentence formation, usage, mechanics and spelling.)

The following earned a 0 on the narrative prompt.

OF I HAD ONE WISH WILL WISH FOR A CAR AND FAR A DOG AND FOR A CAT AND A FISH
AND FOR A GOOD HAPP AND FOR A GOOD EDUCATIONU AND TO REDD GOOD AND
TOW HAPP THE PEST

This essay is an example of unsatisfactory writing at the 8th grade level. Lack of organization and a random list of undeveloped ideas indicates that the writer does not have **control** in the first writing component (writing processes.)

In writing applications, the vocabulary is of primary level and does not reflect 8th grade capabilities. The **voice is weak**, and the writer seems unaware of the **audience**.

There are serious errors in all of the **conventions**, which is characteristic of unacceptable **control**. Random capitalizations, word omissions, lack of punctuation, and misspellings of basic words all contribute to this response being scored unsatisfactory.

As you learn to become a good writer and develop a story for a narrative prompt, the word control will help. Scorers are looking to see if you have control of your topic, your paragraphs, your overall idea thread, and writing conventions.

Internet sites to help you develop control in your writing:

The Essay:

<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/EssaysToc.html>

Dave's ESL Café – not just for English language learners:

<http://www.eslcafe.com/bookstore/writing.html>



The Writesite, online writing tutorials:

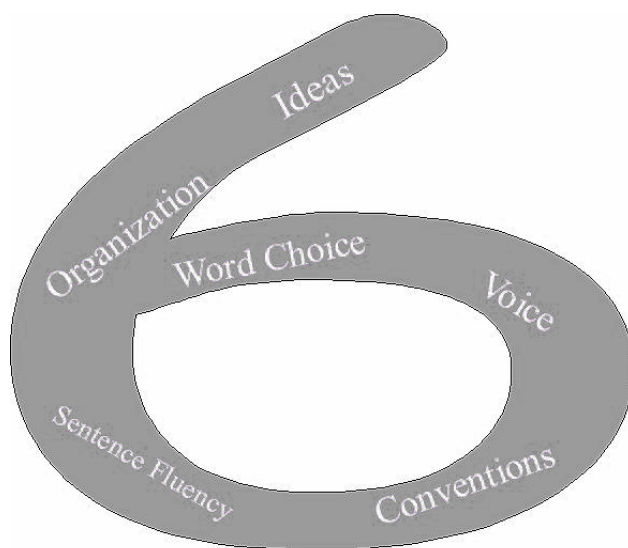
<http://writesite.cuny.edu/introduction/index.html>

Learn to score writing samples (Oregon):

<http://www.open.k12.or.us/scoring/workset.html?-referer=;grade=10;-content=Writing>

Six Traits of Writing:

Learn the six main characteristics of good writing.



Teachers sometimes describe **six traits** of good writing. They are; **content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions.**

1. Content / Ideas

This is the heart of the paper--what the writer has to say. It should be a topic that is important to the writer and should be small enough to handle in the paper. It should express the ideas clearly so every reader can understand and it should provide the reader with interesting insights. A solid, well-defined theme holds the paper together, giving a meaningful, focused, and detailed exploration of the topic.

2. Organization

This is the road map which directs the reader through the paper. It begins with a strong lead or hook and catches the reader's interest right from the beginning. The details along the way should add to that lead and should help build toward the conclusion, pulling the reader along right to the very end. It should use good transitions to move smoothly from one idea to the next, helping things fit together easily for the reader. Organization gives writing a sense of purpose and structure.

3. Voice

Voice is the personality of the writer coming through on the page. It is what gives the writing a sense of flavor, and give the reader the feeling that the writer is talking directly to her. A strong sense of voice demands that the writer make a commitment to the writing and write honestly with conviction. In a paper with strong voice, the reader will get a sense that someone real is there.

4. Word Choice

Good word choice involves being able to look critically at verbs and select the ones that are active, powerful and energetic. It means being able to choose just the right words to make the writing sound natural and precise. Word choice gives precision to details and helps the writer paint memorable pictures in the reader's mind.

5. Sentence Fluency

In any piece of writing, there are many possible ways to write any sentence correctly, but usually, of those correct versions, one or two will sound better than others. A writer who can pick out those versions and can use them frequently will have a strong sense of sentence fluency. This does not mean creating longer sentences, but means using long sentences when they would be best and short sentences when they would suit better. It means creating a sense of rhythm with the sentences and a flow that the reader finds enjoyable to follow along. Good sentence fluency stands out when a piece of writing is read aloud.

6. Conventions

Conventions are the rules of a language. They are the common patterns of grammar, spelling, punctuation, paragraphing and capitalization that readers come to expect in good writing. They make writing easy to read and understand. A reader may not even notice when conventions are well done, but might be distracted from the good ideas that were so carefully planned if the conventions are poorly handled. This is the most mechanical of the six traits and requires writers to learn editing and proofreading skills.

Ideas

- Makes sense
- Gets and holds my attention
- Has a main idea, thesis, center, sense of purpose
- Writer draws on experience
- Says something new, or says it in a fresh way
- Full of ideas that add: Interest & Important information.

Organization

- The opening makes me want to keep reading
- Has a logical order or pattern (definition, proposal, problem solution, comparison-contrast, story unfolding over time, etc.)
- I can follow the story or main points
- Sometimes I can predict-sometimes the writer surprises me!
- Ends well. Ties up loose ends. Doesn't stop abruptly.
- Doesn't end with, "Then I woke up and it was all a dream!"
- Doesn't repeat with, "Now you know the three reasons we should fight pollution"

Voice

- Sounds like a person wrote it
- Sounds like a *particular* writer
- Writing has style, flavor
- Reaches out to me, the reader. Makes me respond and *feel*.

Word Choice

- Makes me say, "Yes, that's *just* the right word or phrase."
- Long after reading, some words still tug at my memory
- Words are used correctly
- The writer chooses wisely, but isn't afraid to stretch
- This writer knows the language of the topic--but doesn't try to impress me with phony, bloated, phrases
- Simple language is used when it gets the job done.

Sentence Fluency

- It's smooth going, easy on the ear
- I could easily read this aloud
- Almost every sentence begins in a slightly different way, OR
- Repetition is rhythmic and stylistic, not annoying
- Some sentences are long. Some aren't.
- Sentences aren't choppy. They do not meander aimlessly as if length alone were the goal and there were no particular need to proceed to the end in a purposeful way.

Conventions

- The writing is clean and polished. It looks proofread.
- Most things are done correctly
- Careful, controlled use of conventions, meaning clear and reading easy
- No BIG errors shout at me from the page: Hey!"Pay attention SHUN two me! Fergt IDEAS and VIOCE! think? about, the mistakes!, A lot!!"
- Spelling, punctuation, grammar, capital letters and paragraph indenting: This writer has thoughtfully attended to ALL conventional details

Using all of the evaluation tools we have given you, we will now show you another composition written by an eighth grader. We want you to use the six traits, the scoring rubric used by SAT test scorers (on page 8) and your best judgment to evaluate the student's written response to the "one wish" prompt to come up with a score between 1 and 6.

"If I had one wish I will that I can pass the Math test for graduation. So I can say that I finally did something with my life. Most people never graduate from high school. Even college. But this boy right here attend to pass the Math graduation test.

For one I belive in myself. Other people at this school belive in me. I have dream to become a successful lawer on day and do other academic and career. To be known in this world for all my hard work. I did and, for people to say. that a young man that made it.

That why I plan to work hard in this life so, I can success. In being the best that I can be for my slef. For my mother, my teacher, and my father and, Last but not least my fellow friends and, all the other people who say they belive in me. That why I say if I had one wish I wish that I can pass the Math test. So I can wlak across that stage my head up high with that smile on my face. So I can say I pass at last I pass at last think God almighty I pass at last."

Using the scoring rubric on page 8 and the other examples we have given, apply a score to this composition. Use this space for your notes.

The prompt: "Think about a time of year you really like. It could be a season of the year, a special day of the year, or a holiday." Write to your teacher **telling why you** like this time of year. Be sure to explain why this time is so important to you. **Use details** to describe your favorite time.

A score of 6 on the rubric (page 8):

My Favorite Season

The best season of all is definitely summer. Though each season offers certain joys, the pleasures of summer are off the charts! With its many treats for the senses, summer is also the most memorable and delightful season.

It's hard to put a finger on exactly what it is about the warmer months of the year. Many things come to mind. Sights and sounds of things such as the beach in the day and city at night, are delightful. Also, the way people act seems different. It's almost as if summer sets them free.

In the city it gets hot. Sticky almost, and the sweet smell of flowers and freshly cut grass floats in the air. In the afternoons and evenings, you can often smell a barbeque down the block. It gives the world a sense of community and happiness.

Many sounds also contribute to this feeling. Birds chirp high in the trees, and insects buzz at night. But one of the best sounds of all is the icecream truck coming through town. There is a race to figure out where it is and to catch it, and the air is filled with the shrieks of children trying to do just that!

Another wonderful place we frequent in the summer besides the city, is the beach. This is where the true magic exists. When you arrive at the beach in the summer, it's in the air. there's some kind of special energy that fills you up. It's electrifying!

Part of it must be the warm air, cool sea breezes and hot sand. These are accompanied by the smells of french fries, pizza and suntan lotion. There are people everywhere, all different kinds, all looking like summer.

Then you beating down on your shoulders and it hits home: "It's summer, I'm free!" It is hard to describe this feeling. It's pure joy and magic, to begin with. It's just great and you couldn't feel better.

For example, children are building sandcastles, and people are tanning, swimming and eating dripping icecream cones. All of them are happy. All of a sudden, so are you, it's contagious.

All of these wonderful things contribute to the general feeling of summer. However short, it always leaves a lasting impression. Summer is the best!

This narrative response shows control of language, control of paragraph organization and conventions. There are a couple of spelling errors, but overall, the control and wonderful descriptive expressions let your hear this author's voice. For the six traits of writing, add a few comments of your own about each trait based on what you read in the 6 point response above;

1. Ideas

2. Organization
3. Voice
4. Word choice
5. Sentence Fluency
6. Conventions (grammar, spelling)

Read another response to the same prompt. This time, using the rubric on page 8 and the six traits, score the response yourself.

My Favorite Holiday

My favorite holiday would definitely have to be Christmas. Christmas brings my family together in such a magical way. I get to see my relatives that live far away. I love being filled in on what has been happening in their lives and where they live. A lot of the time, they will sit down and talk about how they remember when I was so little. It is actually kind of sweet.

My family really gets in to the spirit of things on Christmas, we all decorate the house, hang up lights, set out our traditional manger, and we might even gosinging but no matter what we are doing we are all happy. My mom, my sister and I, all like to get together and do some baking. First we start off with cookies, all kinds of cookies then we send them to people we care about, but of course not before stealing some of the batter for ourselves. Then we do pies, my favorite is homemade pie, my mother likes to make pecan pie, so that pretty much leaves the pumpkin pie with my sister. My dad is a cook so we call him in for some help when it is time to start making our big dinner, and when I say big, I mean it. Its as big as Thanksgiving if not longer. For example, we have ham, turkey, all kinds of potatoes, corn, green beans, rolls, fruit and home made macaroni and cheese. We all sit down to eat, and do we ever eat!.

Everyone gets so stuffed that no one moves from the table until about a hour later. Then its time for the dreaded job of dishes, however on this particular day, the job doesn't seem that bad though.

Opening our presents is a lot of fun but my family knows Christmas is not all about presents but on the other hand, we really like the presents too. My favorite part of opening presents is when I give a person the present I got for them. I like the way their faces light up because it really makes me feel good about myself, actually my brother's facial expressions are the best, they get so excited. Then we all clean up and reorganize our presents under the pretty tree.

Christmas is my favorite holiday. I always have fun on Christmas, I get to see my family, I bake with my mother and sister, we go and look at all of the lite up houses, I really enjoy myself. If I had to pick the worst thing that happens during Christmas, it would be the clean up, but even that's not that bad on Christmas, in fact nothing really ever is.

Use the rubric on page 8 as your guide and make notes based on the six traits. A guiding thought for the scoring of this composition might include; "did the author stick to the topic?"

Five paragraph writing skills:

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/1437/>

Practice writing prompts:

<http://www.cmi.k12.il.us/Champaign/grdlvl/5/fprompts.html>

General writing modes:

<http://powayusd.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/projects/literacy/WritingwithStyle/03GeneralWritingModes.htm>

Activities for modes of writing

<http://www.angelfire.com/ks/teachme/modesactivities.html>

Annotated writing models:

http://www.glencoe.com/sec/writerschoice/parentsite/index_awm.html

The Persuasive Prompt:

**Self-evaluation Checklist Based on the Components and the
Six Traits.**

In this section, you'll learn to write a persuasive argument to support your ideas and opinions. To start this section, we suggest you visit the school library media center, log in to the Internet and view the slide show on persuasive writing that people at Rice University have prepared:

<http://www.rice.edu/armadillo/Sciacademy/riggins/persuade/>

Elements toward building a good persuasive essay include

- establishing facts to support an argument
- clarifying relevant values (your values or voice) for your audience (perspective)
- prioritizing, editing, or sequencing the facts and values in importance to build the argument
- forming and stating conclusions
- persuading your audience that your conclusions are based upon facts and shared values
- having the confidence to communicate your persuasion in writing (control)

Here are some strategies to complete a persuasive writing prompt:

Rewrite the prompt in your own words.

- Think of the issues posed in the prompt
- List facts; consider their importance:
- prioritize, edit, sequence, discard, etc.
- Ask yourself "What's missing?"
- What are the "hot buttons" of the issue?
- List possible emotions/emotional reactions
- Use a graphical organizer to evaluate your thoughts and arguments.

Write a draft. Review the prewriting guidelines:

Writing Processes

Prewriting

1. Generate writing ideas through discussions with others and from printed material, and keep a list of writing ideas.
2. Determine the usefulness of and apply appropriate pre-writing tasks (e.g., background reading, interviews or surveys).
3. Establish and develop a clear thesis statement for informational writing or a clear plan or outline for narrative writing.
4. Determine a purpose and audience and plan strategies (e.g., adapting focus, content structure, and point of view) to address purpose and audience.
5. Use organizational strategies (e.g., notes, outlines) to plan writing.

Drafting**Revising and Editing**

6. Organize writing to create a coherent whole with an effective and engaging introduction, body and conclusion, and a closing sentence that summarizes, extends or elaborates on points or ideas in the writing.
7. Use a variety of sentence structures and lengths (e.g., simple, compound and complex sentences; parallel or repetitive sentence structure).

- Write your first paragraph
 - Introduce the topic
 - Inform the reader of your point of view.
 - Entice the reader to continue with the rest of the paper.
 - Focus on three main points.
- Establish flow from paragraph to paragraph
 - Keep your voice active
 - Stay focused on your point of view throughout the essay
 - Focus on logical arguments
 - Don't summarize in the development, wait for the conclusion
 - Conclusion

Summarize, then conclude, your argument

Score this narrative essay yourself: Score points 1-6.

Ever since I was a young boy I have had an undying urge to set my eyes upon the great structures of the world. Gustave Eiffel, the ancient Egyptians, Frank Lloyd Wright, these are just a few of history's greatest architects. These people did not start with instant success though. They started as young children with a special dream. Many courses were required to obtain this skill, and these courses gave them many more skills than simply designing buildings. It gave them outstanding mathematical skills and tested their abilities. I am amazed by different aspects of architecture on a daily basis, therefore I think it is a very valuable skill to know. That is the reason that a class especially for architecture should be included in every school system.

Although I have been fortunate enough to participate in some of the arts, I still feel that something is missing. In art classes the range of options you have is very narrow. You are assigned something and then you do it. But in architecture any number of options are possible. Architecture is a fun way of releasing your creative freedom and sets no restraints. If an architecture program was included in the curriculum at school it would allow kids to creatively go where they never thought was possible. Architecture does not only give you a range of creative freedom, but it also helps you expand your mind in many other topics as well.

Some people think that all that architecture consists of is drawing an object on a blue piece of paper and then building it. This is far from true. In order to build a house dozens of different math equations are necessary to start the design. In this case as you would imagine architectural drafting and design greatly improves your math skills in several different ways. Architecture also takes an immense amount of patience and understanding.

We'd like to give you a scoring rubric that will help you evaluate your own writing and compositions. It's based on the writing components for the SAT, but it also uses the six traits to guide you. This rubric is based on a four-point scoring scale, but you can use it for all writing assignments in school.

4 In my four point composition: (place a checkmark where you think you did well).

Organization and Content Checklist:	How's My Style:
<input type="checkbox"/> I used important details.	<input type="checkbox"/> I used many different and descriptive words.
<input type="checkbox"/> When I added details, I didn't wander from the main idea. I remembered my Topic Sentence and the subject of the Writing Prompt and stayed on course.	<input type="checkbox"/> I used words that helped people see my meaning. They could use all of their senses to feel and even hear my meaning.
<input type="checkbox"/> I organized my ideas in a logical way.	<input type="checkbox"/> I used different kinds of sentences and didn't start each one with the same word.
<input type="checkbox"/> My composition answered the question in the prompt.	<input type="checkbox"/> I made every effort to make my writing legible. My spelling and grammar were the very best.

3 My writing is good but I could improve. Maybe I needed to add more details or add information.

Organization and Content	How's My Style?
<input type="checkbox"/> I tried to explain my main idea, the one in my Topic Sentence, but I could have added more information or supporting detail.	<input type="checkbox"/> My choice of words is good. My vocabulary choices serve a purpose. I didn't use too many extra or unnecessary words.
<input type="checkbox"/> Once in a while my thoughts wandered away from the subject or I didn't totally answer the question in the Writing Prompt.	<input type="checkbox"/> My sentences were pretty good, but they are mostly the same kind of sentence. The sentences could be shorter and more to the point.
<input type="checkbox"/> My story was a little bit disorganized.	<input type="checkbox"/> I could have been a little neater and I know I wasn't watching my spelling and grammar too carefully.
<input type="checkbox"/> My ideas needed to be connected. I don't think every idea I had fit with the topic.	<input type="checkbox"/> The reader can usually see my point.

2 My composition earned only two points: My writing wasn't very clear. My ideas didn't really support the Topic Sentence and some of my information wasn't accurate. I didn't pay attention to my spelling.

Organization and Content	How's My Style?
<input type="checkbox"/> I need to make my points more clearly. I needed to stay on the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/> My words need to be stronger and more effective.
<input type="checkbox"/> There weren't many details or supporting ideas in my composition.	<input type="checkbox"/> I sometimes repeated the same idea and my writing was choppy. My sentences could have been shorter and to the point.
<input type="checkbox"/> My paragraphs didn't have "flow". My ideas were choppy.	<input type="checkbox"/> My handwriting was sloppy and I didn't check over my spelling.

1 My composition scored only one point. I know I need to answer the question, stick to the point. I didn't add any details and my spelling and grammar were not up to par. I know I can do better.

Organization and Content	How's My Style?
<input type="checkbox"/> I didn't pay attention to the question. My story wandered.	<input type="checkbox"/> People couldn't tell what my ideas were about the subject.
<input type="checkbox"/> I need to get organized. I could have outlined my ideas before I started to write.	<input type="checkbox"/> I started all of my sentences the same way and didn't use descriptive words.
<input type="checkbox"/> I need to add details and more information.	<input type="checkbox"/> I had so many spelling and grammar mistakes that people were distracted and couldn't pay attention to what I was saying.

Persuasive Essays might look like these:

The Prompt:

Your school is thinking about holding classes on Saturdays for one month in order to make up for snow days. If Saturday classes were held, school would be over in early June. If there were no Saturday classes, school would not be over until the beginning of July. Write to your principal telling what you think about having Saturday classes. Be sure to **clearly state** your opinion and tell why you think this way.

Score Point Four:

Dear Principal,

I have heard the news that the school is thinking about having school on Saturday to make up for snow days. I for one think this is a bad idea. I think this for a few reasons. One many of us have weekend jobs and Saturday schooling would not allow us to work on the weekend. My other reason is the fact that we need a weekend off.

Our community is based on the teenage work. During the weekend and summer we teenager make up most of the work in the town of Dayton. If we are made to go to school on Saturdays, the stores would have to lessen hours or rely on other workers. I think that most students would go to work, come home do homework, go to sleep and have to wake up to do it again. Then on Friday we all hope for no more homework only to find we have a report due Monday. If school was pushed to Saturdays it would be like having no days off at all. We would undoubtedly have homework ruining our Sundays also. I think that Saturday schooling would create a negative, almost hatred view of the school by the students.

Overall, for the reasons above and probably many more, I think Saturday schooling isn't a good idea. It will create a negative atmosphere in which students wouldn't want to learn. I'd think long and hard before deciding the fate of our students.

Class Discussion: Can we rewrite this to make it a 6 point essay?

What the scorers said about the four point response: "This acceptable response is sufficiently unified with an introduction and a conclusion, although not especially sophisticate ones. There are adequate 'reasons' to meet the audience's (principal's) needs, and there is sufficient elaboration, although perhaps not "full" elaboration. The sentence structure exhibits control of sentence conventions with sufficient variety in sentence structure. The word choices are somewhat general and mildly repetitive."

A three point response to the same prompt:

Dear Principal:

I am writing you to tell you my opeinion about Saturday classes to make up our snow days. I do agree with the idea to go to school on Saturdays for one month, in order to make up the snow days. Saturday classes would be a much better idea than taking away from students summer time.

One reason why I would prefer Saturday classes over extra June classes is because the weather isn't as nice. The snow days can be made up wheyn the weather is still cold, so students won't feel as depressed while their in school. They will also know that no one is at the beach or on the boardwalk while they are stuck in classes.

Saturday classes are more appropriate for high school students because they work hard for nine and a half months out of the year. It wouldn't be fair to take away from students time off after all the work they have done. Students use summer to rest up and regain their thoughts for the next school year.

Your assignment for this section of the SAT Mentor Writing Book is to use this prompt about the Saturday make-up days and write a 6 point essay. For a persuasive essay, you'll need five paragraphs to persuade your audience.

A five paragraph persuasive essay looks like this:

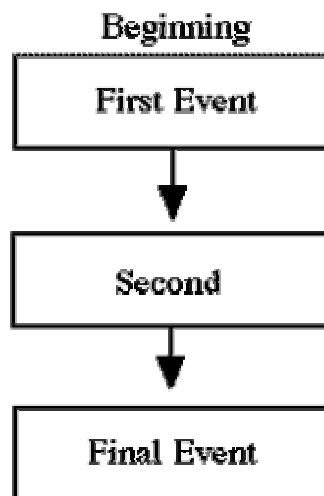
- Introduction: Thesis and three reasons or arguments.
- Body Paragraph One: Discuss reason number one.
- Body Paragraph Two: Discuss reason number two.
- Body Paragraph Three: Discuss reason number three.
- Conclusion: Summarize.

It helps when you need to write an argument or persuasion to use some form of graphical organizer to help you develop your thoughts. We'll give you some organizers that people use when they write a composition:

Chain of Events

Chain of Events is used to describe the stages of an event, the actions of character or the steps in a procedure.

Key questions: What is the first step in the procedure or initiating event? What are the next stages or steps? How does one event lead to one another? What is the final outcome?



Rubrics to guide the development of your writing skills.

Scoring Guide for Component English Conventions

Score	Description
4 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Control of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics (length and complexity of essay provide opportunity for student to show control of component English conventions)
3 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Errors do not interfere with communication and/orFew errors relative to length of essay or complexity of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics
2 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Errors interfere somewhat with communication and/orToo many errors relative to the length of the essay or complexity of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics
1 Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Errors seriously interfere with communication ANDLittle control of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics
Blank	No response.

Now let's look at some responses for a different prompt scored only for **conventions**. You might want to take a red pencil to correct the spelling and punctuation yourself. The prompt is for an expository essay but the purpose is for you to look at grammar and spelling as an important part of what the SAT scorers are looking for

The Prompt: Often in works of literature, there are characters—other than the main character—whose presence in the work is essential. From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character, other than the main character, who plays a key role. In a well-developed composition, identify the character and explain why this character is important.

Score Point Four on Conventions

In some books, there are secondary characters that are just as important as the main characters. Gene Gallagher from "The Catcher in the Rye" is one of these characters. Gene helped the reader understand the author's message within the story.

Throughout "The Catcher in the Rye", the main character, Holden Caulfield, tries to protect innocence in any way that he can. In the end, he realizes that he cannot protect all innocence, and ends up going insane. Gene was one of the main representations of innocence in this story.

In "The Catcher in the Rye", Gene is Holden's childhood friend. They were separated when Holden left for private school. After months apart, Holden finds that Gene had gone on a date with his room mate, Stradlater. Worried, Holden asked Stradlater about what he had done to/with her, but he did not reply. After realizing that Stradlater did not care about her, Holden tried to fight him, and later ran away from school. Throughout his journey home, Holden tried to make contact with Gene but can't. This symbolized Holden's loss of innocence through the story.

In some books, there are supporting characters that are just as important as the main characters. Gene Gallagher was one of these characters.

Score Point Three on Conventions

The work of literature that I choose is Julius Caesar. The character that I choose is Julius Caesar's wife named Calpurnia. She is the one that did not want him to the capitol the day he died.

Calpurnia had a dream the night before Caesar died. It was of caesar's statues bleeding all over the streets of Rome. Caesar told his wife that he would not go but was later convinced that her dream meant Caesar was the blood of Rome.

Caesar told Calpurnia that it was nothing to be concerned about and that he would be fine. Caesar was convinced not be ruled by his wife and the people would crown him later that day. There was a letter that told Caesar all about the conspiracy and who was in it. Caesar did not get a chance to read the letter before he went into the capitol that day.

Caesar was stabbed by the people of the Conspiracy when he was inside the capitol. As soon as Caesar realized that Brutus was part of this he knew he had no chance of survival or to be king.

Once Caesar was dead the people involved in the conspiracy put their hands in his blood. After they ran around with bloody screaming freedom and Justice. In a way but not really calpurnia's dream came true except caesar died not the statues and the blood was on peoples hands not running through town like a river as it was in her dream.

Calpurnia was not a main character but she was very important to the play because she had an idea of what was to become of her husband and that was his death!

Basics of grammar, sentence structure:

Sentence Types

Sentences can be simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

The Simple Sentence

Simple sentences have only one independent clause. There are no dependent clauses, and the sentence must be limited to one subject and one predicate. The sentence may contain modifying words or phrases:

- **Grammar class is boring.**
- **"Bon Jovi" is a sensational progressive rock band.**

The Compound Sentence

Compound sentences are composed of two or more independent clauses, which are joined by a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon. One should always use a comma before any coordinating conjunction that connects two independent clauses:

- **Samantha likes "Bon Jovi," but she thinks grammar class is boring.**
- **Tim likes grammar class, so he does not like "Bon Jovi."**

The Complex Sentence

Complex sentences use one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses:

When Samantha is in grammar class, she often dreams of the next Bon Jovi concert. (*"When Samantha..." is a dependent clause, "she often..." is an independent clause.*)

The Compound-Complex Sentence

The compound-complex sentence joins a compound and a complex sentence together. It should contain two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clause:

Bon Jovi sings in a style they created, and they feel that drugs have no place at their concerts, which are often quite crowded.

Subjects and Predicates

In English, every sentence has two essential parts: a **complete subject** and a **complete predicate**.

Subjects

The **complete subject** is the simple subject (a noun or a pronoun) plus any words or group of words modifying the simple subject that tells who or what the sentence is about:

The fizz from my Pepsi usually lasts about an hour.

To find the complete subject, ask Who? or What? insert the verb, and finish the question. The answer is the complete subject:

What usually lasts about an hour? The fizz from my Pepsi.

The **simple subject** is the essential noun, pronoun, or group of words acting as a noun that cannot be left out of the complete subject. In order to identify it, remove the complements and modifiers and whatever left is the simple subject.

More About Persuasive Essays and
Point of View

In persuasive or argumentative writing, we try to convince others to agree with our facts, share our values, accept our argument and conclusions, and adopt our way of thinking. In a point of view essay, we are describing how we feel about an issue then persuading readers to adopt our opinion.

Elements toward building a good persuasive essay include

- **establishing facts**
to support an argument
- **clarifying relevant values**
for your audience (perspective)
- **prioritizing, editing, and/or sequencing**
the facts and values in importance to build the argument
- **forming and stating conclusions**
- **"persuading" your audience** that your conclusions are based upon the agreed-upon facts and shared values
- **having the confidence**
to communicate your "persuasion" in writing

Here are some strategies to complete a persuasive writing assignment:

Write out the questions in your own words.

- **Think of the questions posed in the assignment**
while you are reading and researching. Determine
 - facts
 - any sources that will help you determine their reliability (as well as for further reference)
 - what prejudices lie in the argument or values that color the facts or the issue
 - what you think of the author's argument
- **List out facts**; consider their importance: prioritize, edit, sequence, discard, etc.
Ask yourself "What's missing?"

- **What are the "hot buttons"** of the issue?

List possible emotions/emotional reactions and recognize them for later use

Start writing a draft:

Do not concern yourself with grammar or spelling at this stage.

- **Write your first paragraph**
 - Introduce the topic
 - Inform the reader of your point of view
 - Entice the reader to continue with the rest of the paper
 - Focus on three main points to develop
- **Establish flow from paragraph to paragraph**
- **Keep your voice active**
- **Quote sources** to establish authority if appropriate
- **Stay focused** on your point of view throughout the essay
- **Focus on logical arguments**
- **Don't lapse into summary**
in the development--wait for the conclusion
- **Conclusion**
 - **Summarize, then conclude, your argument**
 - **Refer** to the first paragraph/opening statement as well as the main points
 - does the conclusion restate the main ideas?
 - reflect the succession and importance of the arguments
 - logically conclude their development?
- **Edit/rewrite the first paragraph**
to better telegraph your development and conclusion.
- **Re-read your paper**
with a fresh mind and a sharp pencil
 - **Ask yourself:**
Does this make sense? Am I convinced?

Will this convince a reader?

Will they understand my values, and agree with my facts?

- **Edit, correct, and re-write** as necessary
- **Check spelling and grammar!**
- **Have a friend read it** and respond to your argument.
Were they convinced?
- **Revise** if necessary
- **Turn in the paper**
- **Celebrate a job well done,**
with the confidence that you have done your best.

How to respond to criticism:

Consider criticism as a test of developing your powers of persuasion.

Try not to take it personally.

If your facts are criticized, double check them, and then cite your sources.

If your values are criticized, sometimes we need agree "to disagree". Remember: your success in persuading others assumes that the other person is open to being persuaded!

Fear: If you are not used to communicating,

especially in writing, you may need to overcome fear on several levels. Writing, unlike unrecorded speech, is a permanent record for all to see, and the "context" is not as important as in speech where context "colors" the words. For example: your readers do not see you, only your words. They do not know what you look like, where you live, who you are.

Hopefully in school, and class, we have a safe place

to practice both the art of writing and of persuasion. Then later, when we are in our communities, whether work, church, neighborhoods, and even families, we can benefit from this practice.

Persuasion also has another dimension:

it is built with facts, which illustrate conclusions. Of course, this means you need to know what you are talking about, and cannot be lazy with your facts, or you will not succeed in convincing anyone.

When you are happy with your essay, **proofread** it to be sure:

Separate when you proofread from when you write

Cultivate a sense of doubt

Take nothing for granted.

If you know you repeat certain errors, double check for them Most errors in written work are made unconsciously.

These are sources of unconscious, repetitive error:

- **Misspellings:**
a word like "accommodate" can be checked through a spellchecker in word processing
- **Keyboarding: "form" for "from"**
A keyboarding error that is common and unthinkingly repeated
- **Usage error "which" for "that"**
Word processors may locate the problem but it is left to you to decide and choose
- **Inattention**
The mind works far faster than the pen or keyboarding

Read out loud, word for word:

- **Take advantage of two senses: hearing and seeing**
It is often possible to hear a mistake, such as an omitted or repeated word that you have not seen
- **Slow down**
Read what is actually on the page, not what you think is there
This is difficult, particularly if you wrote what you are reading

Why slow down?

When you read normally, you often see only the shells of words -- the first and last few letters, perhaps. You "fix your eyes" on the print only three or four times per line, or less. You take in the words between these points, and get less accurate the the more you stray from the point. The average reader can only take in six letters accurately with one fixation. This means you have to fix your eyes on almost every word you have

written and do it twice in longer words, in order to proofread accurately. You have to look at the word, not slide over it.

Work in pairs

- **It is twice as hard to detect mistakes in your own work**
as in someone else's
- **Get a second opinion!**
A fresh set of eyes may not only find errors, but also have suggestions for improvement
- **Professional editors proofread as many as ten times.**
Publishing houses hire teams of readers to work in pairs, reading out loud. And still errors occur.

Some common proofreading symbols used by editors for professional publications can be found on the next page. This is a partial list, but it gives you a way to do it quickly and visually.

Anticipating Test Content – you can, even for the SAT

- Pay particular attention to any study guides
- Take any tutoring classes offered in your school
- Generate a list of possible questions you would ask if you were making the SAT, then see if you can answer the questions
- Review previous tests; there are books on the SAT that show actual old tests, this is the first year for the essay portion, but you can get the rest of them on Amazon.com or your local bookstore.
- Confer with other students to predict what will be on the test.

Dealing with Test Anxiety

Before the test:

- **Be prepared!**

Practice with this book and as many SAT practice books as you can find. A program of exercise is said to sharpen the mind.

- **Get a good night's sleep the night before the exam**
- **Approach the exam with confidence:**

View the exam as an opportunity to show how hard you've worked throughout your school career.

- **Don't go to the exam on an empty stomach**

Fresh fruits and vegetables are often recommended to reduce stress. Stressful foods can include processed foods, artificial sweeteners, carbonated soft drinks, chocolate, eggs, fried foods, junk foods, pork, red meat, sugar, white flour products, chips and similar snack foods, foods containing preservatives or heavy spices.

- **Allow yourself plenty of time,** especially to do things you need to do before the test and still get there a little early
- **Relax just before the exam**