

A New York Times Newspaper in Education Curriculum Guide

SAT* SUCCESS

With The New York Times
Critical Reading and Writing
Test-Prep Activities

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The New York Times
inEDUCATION

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All activities in this educator’s guide were created by Katherine Schulten and Georgia Scurletis for The New York Times Newspaper in Education program. This guide did not involve the reporting or editing staff of The New York Times.

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INTRODUCTION

■ Why use The New York Times to prepare for the SAT?

If you were to skim the front page of any New York Times, you would find a list of “hot” vocabulary words that your students will need to know to do well on the new SAT.

Reading these words in the context of articles that interest them can help your students internalize their meanings. Not only will they improve their reading comprehension, but your students may even begin to experiment with these new words in their own writing.

Reading The New York Times regularly is one of the best ways students can prepare for the SAT — or for any other standardized language arts test.

The reading level of Times writing is comparable to that of the reading passages found on the SAT. And like the SAT, Times articles span a range of subjects, from politics to sports to technology to the arts to science and health. Every student will be able to find an article on a subject that interests him or her on any day — stimulating thought that leads to quality writing.

■ How to use this guide to help students prepare for the SAT

This is not a traditional “test-prep” book — there are already many of those on the market. Instead, this is a resource full of imaginative and fun activities that will help your students use The Times to strategically address each section of the new SAT. Chock full of games and cooperative learning activities, SAT Success With The New York Times can be used with any day’s paper.

And though it is geared specifically to the SAT, this guide does more than just help students “prep” for a test. Reading The Times regularly and doing some of the activities we suggest will help them develop lifelong literacy habits that will enrich their academic and personal lives.

Each reproducible sheet is written directly to the student with step-by-step instructions for how to complete an activity. You might have your students do each activity in order, or you might choose to skip around and assign those activities that target areas in which your students need particular help.

■ What is on the SAT?

The SAT I Reasoning Test (what we refer to as “the SAT”) is a 3-hour, 45-minute test that is made up of Math, Critical Reading and Writing sections and is produced by the College Board*.

To find out more about the College Board and the SAT, you can visit the College Board’s Web site, Collegeboard.com, which has information for teachers, students and parents.

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INTRODUCTION

■ What types of questions are found on the Writing and Critical Reading sections of the SAT?

The Writing Section of the SAT contains a 25-minute essay-writing task and an hour's worth of multiple choice questions on grammatical errors and on improving writing. The Critical Reading section is made up of multiple choice sentence completion and passage-based reading sections, which students will have 70 minutes to complete. Here is how the College Board presents the various types of questions on the test:

Critical Reading Questions:

- Sentence Completion (19 questions)
- Passage-based Reading (48 questions)

Writing Tasks and Questions:

- Essay Writing (1 question)
- Identifying Sentence Errors (18 questions)
- Improving Sentences (25 questions)
- Improving Paragraphs (6 questions)

■ How is this guide organized?

In the upper left-hand corner of each activity sheet, there are headings that help you see at a glance which section and task of the SAT The Times activity addresses. For example:

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Essay Writing
- Times Activity: Supporting a Point of View

This means that this activity targets the general Writing section of the SAT but is specifically about the Essay Writing task of that section. The title of the activity your students will use The New York Times to complete is: "Supporting A Prompt."

Sometimes an activity requires supporting pages of information or a blank game board. In those cases, the title of the activity remains the same on each page so that your students can see that they all go together.

Here are the general components of the guide:

SAT General Practice Section: This section features activities such as keeping a reading log, learning to make inferences when reading and understanding root words to

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INTRODUCTION

increase vocabulary. These activities can be used daily with The Times to help students generally improve their literacy skills.

Task, Tip and Times Introductory Worksheets: These are quick and easy interactive reference sheets for each of the Critical Reading and Writing sections of the SAT. Each one introduces a new SAT task and comes just before the activities that help students practice for that task. Each of these introductory worksheets provides sample SAT-style questions and asks students to think about the skills they need for this task as well as how The Times can build those skills. Use the *Task, Tip and Times Introductory Worksheets* to introduce each section of activities.

Critical Reading Section: These activities address the two types of critical reading questions that students will encounter on the SAT: Sentence Completion and Passage-Based Reading questions. You will find activities such as “Passage Painting” and “Staging Opposing Points of View.”

Writing Section: These activities address the much-publicized new SAT Essay Writing task as well as the new sections of multiple choice questions on improving writing and preventing error in writing. You will find activities such as “Sentence Races” and “The Ad-Lib Essay.”

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THE NEW YORK TIMES LEARNING NETWORK

learning.blogs.nytimes.com

The New York Times Learning Network offers interactive classroom activities based on the Monday – Friday editions of The Times. The wealth of features on the site includes lesson plans linked to specific Times articles, a lesson plan archive and search, an interactive daily news quiz, “Word of the Day,” “On This Day in History” feature that links to historical Times articles, “6 Q’s About the News” activity linked to a Times article, “Times Fill-Ins” sentence completion feature, Student Crossword and Student Opinion (for students age 13 and older).

TIMES TOPICS

nytimes.com/topics

Times topics is an excellent starting point for research, providing quality information on thousands of topics. Each topic page contains featured Times articles, graphics, audio and video files, with additional links to other good sources.

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nytimes.com/archive

You can use the “Search” function on nytimes.com for access to the complete backfile of The New York Times from 1851 to the present.

THE NEW YORK TIMES IN COLLEGE

nytimes.com/edu

Our Web site for college faculty offers services for higher education, including course-specific instructional strategies using The New York Times.

SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

GETTING TO KNOW THE NEW YORK TIMES

NAME _____

- **Getting started:** On the SAT, reading carefully, following directions exactly and being able to think under time pressure are critical skills. Use a copy of today's New York Times to play this game, which will help you hone these skills while getting to know the different sections of the paper.
- Compete against a timer or your classmates to see how fast you can answer the following questions. You have no more than 15 minutes. Put your start time here: _____. On your mark, get set, GO!

According to The Times, the high temperature for today will be _____. If today's Times has fewer than three sections, skip the next question. A preview of what will be in tomorrow's Times appears today on page _____. One section of today's paper that does **not** appear every day is _____. One topic written about on the Op-Ed and/or Editorials pages today is _____. Did you know that The Times's motto is "All the news that's fit to print"? If so, put a star in the box . Where does this motto appear? _____. If you wrote a letter to the editors of The Times recently, you might look on page _____ to see if it appeared today. Write the headline of an article that interests you from anywhere in the paper today: _____. What is on the History Channel tonight at 8 p.m.? _____. Write one word from somewhere on the front page that is unfamiliar to you: _____. Now, guess from the context what it might mean: _____.

_____. If you get your news from any of the following sources, circle them: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, Internet or other. If you circled "other," describe that source or sources: _____. One famous person whose photograph appears in the paper today is _____. If you think this person's photo appeared in the paper at least one other time this month, put a check mark in the box . Write the headline of an international news story here: _____.

_____. Name something — a book, play, film, restaurant or anything else — that is reviewed in today's paper: _____.

Circle the word in the following list that you think would most closely describe what the reviewer thought of this thing: good, bad, O.K. If you have reached this point in this test, raise your right hand in the air. Name one person whose obituary appears in today's Times: _____. Find and copy a direct quotation that a reporter included in the Business Day section of The Times today: _____.

_____. Copy one score from any game reported in the Sports section today: _____. If you are finished, write what time it is now: _____. Finally, go back up to the space where you wrote your name and write an exclamation point after it. You're done!

NAME _____

- **Getting started:** Nothing helps you practice for the SAT better than simply reading — as much and as widely as possible. The New York Times is the perfect source for SAT-level reading because the articles are written on a sophisticated level and cover a wide range of topics. Copy this log and use it to keep track of Times articles you have read and enjoyed; as you read, make sure to choose articles from a variety of sections and places in the newspaper.

Article headline: _____

Section: _____

Why I chose this article: _____

One interesting thing I learned from this article: _____

One connection I can make between this article and anything else I know about (whether from personal experience, something I learned in school, a book I've read, a movie I've seen or anything else) _____

SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

OBSERVATIONS, INFERENCES AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

NAME _____

■ **Getting started:** The Critical Reading sections of the SAT require that you read a passage and infer the writer’s message based on his or her words. Use this log to practice reading carefully by taking the writer’s words, interpreting them and then drawing your own conclusions.

■ Choose a feature article or an opinion piece, such as an editorial or a review (rather than a news article), and fill in the log below with your observations and inferences.

The Times Headline: _____

Date of Article: _____

OBSERVATIONS
(direct quotations from the article)

INFERENCES
(conclusions you draw based on each observation)

SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

THE NEW YORK TIMES VOCABULARY LOG: SAMPLE

NAME _____

ARTICLE'S HEADLINE: The Show-Biz Pharaoh of Egypt's Antiquities (The Arts section: June 13, 2005)

1. Unfamiliar word in context of its paragraph (in this case, *trove*):

Dr. Hawass, who controls Egypt's vast archaeological trove as secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, is part Indiana Jones, part P.T. Barnum — intent on dusting off Egypt's holdings through a mix of entertainment, commerce and archaeology.

2. Are there any contextual clues in the paragraph that could help you figure out the word's definition? Go back to the paragraph and circle those clues.

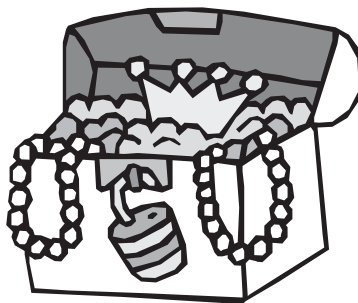
3. I think the word trove means old stuff since I know archaeology has to do with digging up ancient things and "stuff" could be another word for "holdings."

4. Now write the dictionary definition that most closely fits the word as it was presented in the paragraph:
trove: *A collection of valuable items discovered or found.*

5. How did you do? How did your definition compare to the dictionary's definition? Now that you have seen the dictionary's definition, are there contextual clues that you should have considered more closely?

I guessed "old stuff," but now I know that a trove is a collection of valuable stuff. A clue that could have helped me was that Egypt has appointed a "secretary general" to control the "trove," so it must be made up of valuable things.

6. Finally, in the box below, draw a simple illustration that you think will help you remember this word. (Stick figures are fine!)



SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

THE NEW YORK TIMES VOCABULARY LOG

NAME _____

■ **Directions:** Every Critical Reading section of the new SAT poses questions about difficult vocabulary words — and each of these questions demands that you make sense of the word by understanding it in context. To practice for these sections, read articles from The New York Times that interest you and keep a vocabulary log as you go. Underline any unfamiliar words that are not proper nouns, then complete a log entry for each of them.

ARTICLE'S HEADLINE: _____

1. Unfamiliar word in context of its paragraph:

2. Are there any contextual clues in the paragraph that could help you figure out the word's definition? Go back to the paragraph and circle those clues.

3. I think the word _____ means _____
since _____
_____4. Now write the dictionary definition that most closely fits the word as it was presented in the paragraph: _____

_____5. How did you do? How did your definition compare to the dictionary's definition? Now that you have seen the dictionary's definition, are there contextual clues that you should have considered more closely? _____

Why? _____

6. Finally, in the space below, draw a simple illustration that you think will help you remember this word. (Stick figures are fine!)

SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

VOCABULARY AND THE NEW YORK TIMES:
ROOTING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE SAT

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** When contextual clues fail you on SAT vocabulary questions, look within the words themselves. If you are familiar with part of the word or with one of its “roots,” then you may be able to figure out enough of the word’s definition to guide you to the right answer.
- This exercise gives you a list of Ancient Greek and Latin roots that are commonly found in English words and then sends you and your group to The New York Times to find them “at work” within SAT-level vocabulary words related to the roots.

STUDENT DIRECTIONS:

- A.** Join two or three other students to form your team.
- B.** Read through the Greek and Latin roots, their meanings and related SAT-level words (see following handouts).
- C.** Divide today’s Times among your team members so every member has at least one section of the paper.
- D.** You will have 20 minutes to search for as many Greek- and Latin-based words (from the handouts) as you can.
- E.** When you find a word containing one or more Greek or Latin roots from the handout, circle it in context in the Times article and enter it on your team’s root log along with your definition for the word. If you finish your entries with time left, make sure to do the fun “extra credit” activity.
- F.** When the teacher says, “STOP,” your team must turn in its log. Points will be tallied for each team according to the system outlined in your roots log.

TEACHER DIRECTIONS:

- A.** Time students as they complete student steps A through E. After 20 minutes, say, “Stop!”
- B.** Tally each team’s points according to the system outlined in the roots log.
- C.** Use an unabridged dictionary when tallying points to ensure that the words students selected from The Times are indeed formed from the roots on the Greek and Latin root charts.
- D.** Announce the winner of the “root search”!

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SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

VOCABULARY AND THE NEW YORK TIMES:
ROOTING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE SAT

NAME _____

Times Words Containing Greek or Latin Roots (one point for words with one root, two points for words with two roots, and so on)	POINTS	Greek or Latin Root and Meaning (one point per root)	POINTS	Your Team's Definition of Times Words (correct definitions worth three points each)	POINTS
EX. unique	1	unus=one	1	one of a kind	3
EX. megalopolis	2	megas=large; polis=city	2	large city	3

FOR 3 EXTRA BONUS POINTS: Invent your own word and its definition by combining roots. For example, a “pyrocorpus” could be “a body on fire.”

New word: _____

Definition: _____

TOTAL POINTS: 15

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SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

VOCABULARY AND THE NEW YORK TIMES:
ROOTING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE SAT

NAME _____

GREEK AND LATIN ROOTS REFERENCE

■ The following list is made up of 25 ancient Greek roots, their meanings and sample SAT-level vocabulary words related to the roots:

Greek Word Root	What It Means	Related SAT-level Vocabulary Words
anti	against	antipathy, antithesis, antiseptic
autos	self	autocratic, autonomy, autobiography
bios	life	biology, bionic, antibiotic
chronos	time	chronological, anachronism, synchronize
demos	people	demographics, epidemic, democratic, demotic
dia	across, through	diabolical, diadem, diaphanous
geo	earth	geologist, geographer, geometry
graph	to write or draw	graphic, lithograph, hologram
logos	word, study	anthropology, psychology, monologue
meegas	great; large	megalomania, megalopolis, megaphone
metron	measure	optometry, symmetry, metronome
mikros	small	microcosm, microbe, micrometer
neo	new	neologism, neophyte, neonatal
para	beside	parallel, parable, parenthesis
pathos	feeling, suffering	empathy, pathological, antipathy
philia	love	bibliophile, philanthropist, philologist
phobos	fear	phobia, hydrophobia, claustrophobia
phone	sound	megaphone, phonics, phonetics
photos	light	phototropic, photosynthesis, telephoto
polis	city	metropolis, politician, apolitical
pyro	fire	pyromaniac, pyrotechnics, pyre
skopeo	look at	periscope, microscopic, telescopic
syn/sym	with, together	synchronize, synonym, symphony
techne	art, skill	technology, architecture, technical
tele	far away	telepathy, telekinesis, telescopic

SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

**VOCABULARY AND THE NEW YORK TIMES:
ROOTING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE SAT**

NAME _____

GREEK AND LATIN ROOTS REFERENCE

■ The following list is made up of 25 ancient Latin roots, their meanings and sample SAT-level vocabulary words related to the roots:

Latin Word Root	What It Means	Related SAT-level Vocabulary Words
ad	to, toward	adhere, admonish, adjacent
aqua	water	aquatic, aqueduct, aquifer
bene	good, well	benefactor, benevolent, benediction
capitis	head	capitalism, recapitulate, capitol
centum	hundred	centennial, centigrade, century
circ/circum	around	circumnavigate, circumlocution, circumvent, circumscribe
corpus	body	corporeal, incorporate, corpulence
duo	two	duality, duplicity, dubious
ex/ec	out, out of, beyond, from	extemporaneous, external, excretion
fixum	fix, fasten, attach	transfix, affix, suffix
ignis	fire	ignite, ignition, igneous
inter	between, among, amid	interject, intervene, interlude
mal	bad, ill	maladjusted, malady, malcontent, malfeasance
manus	hand	manuscript, manifest, manual
mille	thousand	millennium, millipede, millimeter
nomen/nominis	name	nomenclature, nominal, denomination
pedis	feet	pedestrian, pedigree, pedometer
positum	lay, put, place	repose, depose, imposition
prae/pre	before	preamble, precursor, prefix
pro	for, before	prologue, projectile, pronoun
sol	sun	solar, solarium, solstice
tempus	time	temporal, extemporaneous, contemporary
terra	land	terrestrial, extraterrestrial, terrain
trans	across, over, beyond	intransigent, transparent, transcription
unus	one	unison, unique, unilateral

SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

PRACTICE: VOCABULARY BINGO WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES

NAME _____

■ **Getting Started:** Now that you have compiled a New York Times Vocabulary Log, you can share some of your favorite new words with your classmates by contributing to the following Vocabulary Bingo game.

STUDENT DIRECTIONS:

- A.** Choose two of your favorite words from your Times Vocabulary Log and write them on the chalkboard. All the words contributed by the class will make up the Word Bank for the Vocabulary Bingo game.
- B.** Write one of the two words on a small slip of paper along with its definition. Repeat this task with your second word. Fold the papers in half so that your writing is hidden and hand them to your teacher.
- C.** Randomly select 24 of the words on the chalkboard and write each word in a different box on your Bingo chart. You can create a “free space” wherever you like.
- D.** The teacher is going to randomly select words from the slips of paper submitted by each student. The teacher will only read the *definition* of the word aloud, *not* the word itself.
- E.** If you think you have a word on your bingo chart that matches the definition being read, lightly make an “X” over the square on your bingo chart that contains that word.
- F.** When you have five X’s in a row (down, across or diagonally), call out “Bingo!” In order to win the game, you must read the words in your winning row and have them verified by the words’ contributors.
- G.** Start over with the same Word Bank and play until the class feels they have “mastered” the vocabulary words from The Times.

TEACHER DIRECTIONS:

- A.** Randomly select words from the slips of paper submitted by each student and read each definition aloud, pausing while students search for the words that match them on their bingo charts.
- B.** When someone calls out “Bingo,” have the student read aloud the words in his or her winning row. Have the students who contributed those words to the Word Bank verify that they match the definitions.

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SAT GENERAL PRACTICE

SECTION I

CHART: VOCABULARY BINGO WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES

NAME _____

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Sentence Completion

SECTION II**TASK, TIP AND TIMES INTRODUCTORY WORKSHEET**

NAME _____

TASK:

In the Sentence Completion exercises on the SAT, you must read a sentence that has one or more words missing. Then, you must choose from a list and insert the word or words that are the best fit to complete the sentence. Practice this task with the example below.

Of all the planets in the sun's family, the most _____ seen from afar is Saturn, a sphere of ethereal pastels encircled by shimmering rings of light. (The New York Times: 7/5/05)

- A.** *humane*
- B.** *scary*
- C.** *spectacular*
- D.** *puzzling*
- E.** *malignant*

Based on the description that follows (“ethereal pastels” and “shimmering rings of light”) the best answer is C — “spectacular.” “Ethereal pastels” and “shimmering rings” do not describe something puzzling or scary, and certainly not malignant (another word for evil). There is nothing else in the sentence to make you think “humane” would even make sense.

TIP:

To save time while you take the test, follow this sequence:

1. First, *read* the complete sentence while you try to *think* of the word(s) that would best complete the sentence.
2. Then look at the word choices and try to find the ones that most closely match your initial ideas as to which will fit best.

TIMES:

Answer the following questions on the lines provided.

What skills does this section seem to test? _____

How might you practice for this section through reading The New York Times? _____

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Sentence Completion

SECTION II

TIMES ACTIVITY: SIGNAL WORDS

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** Signal words, the words that help make a transition from one thought to the next, are key to understanding the logic of a sentence:
 - Words such as “*but*,” “*although*,” “*however*,” “*yet*” and “*even though*” tell you that **contrary** information will follow.
 - Words such as “*in addition*,” “*moreover*” and “*further*” tell you that information that **adds to** the same idea will follow.
 - Words such as “*thus*,” “*therefore*” and “*so*” tell you that **a conclusion or summing up** will follow.

- Follow the directions below with a copy of today’s New York Times to practice observing how signal words are used to change sentences.

A. Read any article from the front section of today’s Times. As you read, circle the signal words you find.

B. Copy three sentences with signal words: _____

C. Now erase or cross out the signal words above. Discuss how the meaning changes.

D. Choose one signal word used above and describe its meaning and use in sentences.

Word: _____ Meaning and use: _____

E. Finally, challenge yourself (or work with a partner) to write a paragraph in which you use your signal word correctly as many times as you possibly can. (Don’t worry if your paragraph becomes a bit ridiculous in the process; just make sure it’s grammatically correct.) _____

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Sentence Completion

SECTION II

TIMES ACTIVITY:
CREATE YOUR OWN SENTENCE COMPLETIONS

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** Play test-maker and create sentence completion problems for your classmates by following the directions below. This exercise can be completed individually, with a partner or in a small group.

A. Select five sentences from various sections of today's Times — sentences where you can leave out a word or two to create sentence completion problems and stump the class. Choose sentences that give enough context and logic clues for a reader to insert words that make sense. On your copy of The Times, circle the sentences you used as your Answer Key. Save the pages.

B. Write your sentences below, leaving blanks for the missing words:

1. From the International pages of The New York Times in the main news section: _____

2. From the National news pages of The New York Times in the main news section: _____

3. From the Business Day section of The New York Times: _____

4. From the Arts section of The New York Times: _____

5. Choose another section of The New York Times (Sports, Science Times, etc.): _____

C. Exchange your sentences with those of another person or group, and fill in possible answers.

D. Let the original group that gave you the sentences “grade” your answers. How close were your words to The Times’s originals? Share your results with each other.

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Passage-Based Reading

SECTION II**TASK, TIP AND TIMES INTRODUCTORY WORKSHEET**

NAME _____

TASK:

The reading passages on the Passage-Based Reading sections of the SAT come in a variety of shapes and sizes (i.e., long, short or paired), but they all require the same essential tasks: read a selection and answer questions about its content. Some of the passage-based questions might ask students to locate supporting details or to define vocabulary words in context, but the majority of the questions require students to *make inferences based on what a writer has stated*.

For example, here is an excerpt from a Times review on the Bolshoi Ballet:

For legions of admirers, the Bolshoi Ballet has never been simply first-rate. With dancing that exudes power and passion, it has always been a company distinct from any other. (Weekend section: 7/15/05)

And here is an example of a question based on the excerpt. Which do you think is the right answer?

The passage suggests that the term “first-rate” is

- A.** *a term that overrates the status of the Bolshoi*
- B.** *an inadequate term to express the unique qualities of the Bolshoi*
- C.** *an accurate term to describe the qualities of the Bolshoi*
- D.** *a term that is reserved for the admirers of the Bolshoi*
- E.** *a term that exaggerates the power and passion of the Bolshoi*

Based on the writer’s use of the word “simply” before the term “first-rate” and based on the description of the Bolshoi as “distinct from any other,” the writer seems to be ironically suggesting that the term “first-rate” is perhaps too common and weak to describe the Bolshoi. Therefore, the best answer is “B.” “B” is the only choice that expresses the writer’s opinion that the Bolshoi deserves a stronger or more original term than “simply first-rate.”

TIP:

Students often run out of time during the Passage-Based Reading sections of the SAT. To make sure you save enough time for answering all the Passage-Based Reading questions, spend the majority of your time on the questions and finding their answers — not on studying the passage in isolation. Follow this sequence when you approach passage-based questions:

1. Read through the passage quickly, to gain a general idea of what the passage is about.
2. Answer each question one at a time, referring back to the passage to find your answers.

TIMES:

Answer the following questions:

- What skills does this section seem to test?
- How might you practice for this section through reading The New York Times?

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Passage-Based Reading: Long Passages

SECTION II**TIMES ACTIVITY: PASSAGE PAINTING**

NAME _____

■ **Getting Started:** This exercise will help you practice the key reading comprehension skill of identifying the main idea and its supporting details in an informational article. It will also help you practice understanding difficult, SAT-level passages. Choose an article from today's New York Times and form a small group with others who will be reading the same article. Using three colors of pen, crayon or marker (red, green and blue), "paint" the passages you read according to the directions below.

A. Read the entire article quietly to yourself.

B. When you have finished, go back with your green pen and mark the sentence (or, sometimes, sentences) that you believe state the **main idea** of the article.

C. Now take your blue pen and underline those sentences, phrases or even individual words that you believe provide **supporting details** for the main idea.

D. Finally, use your red pen to highlight or bracket sections of the article that seem **confusing, difficult or unclear** for any reason, whether because the vocabulary is new, a reference is made to something with which you aren't familiar or simply because it is densely written.

E. Meet in small groups to share the colors you used in the various parts of the article. Did you "paint" your passage the same way? If not, why not? Answer the following questions on this sheet together with your group.

1. In your own words, what was the main idea of this article? _____

2. In your own words, list some of the details the author used to support this main idea. _____

3. Discuss sentences that your group colored red to show they were difficult to understand. As a group, write your interpretation of the passage as a whole here. _____

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Passage-Based Reading: Long Passages

SECTION II**TIMES ACTIVITY: QUOTATION OF THE DAY**

NAME _____

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Passage-Based Reading: Long Passages

■ **Getting Started:** Every day The New York Times chooses a “quotation of the day” to feature on the second page of the main section. Practice passage-based reading by looking at the relationship between this quote and the Times article from which it came, then thinking about its relevance to other issues in the paper today.

1. What is the Quotation of the Day today? _____

2. In your own words, what does this mean? _____

3. Now locate the article from which it was drawn. What does the quotation mean in the context of the article as a whole? _____

4. Why do you think this quotation was chosen today? _____

5. To what other news items or articles today or in recent days might this quotation apply? How? _____

6. Try finding a “quotation of the day” for your own life. Consider everything — what you read, what you learn in school, conversations with family and friends, song lyrics you hear or anything else — to find a line that somehow encapsulates something important or profound and that can be widely applied. At the end of today, write this “quotation of the day” below: _____

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Passage-Based Reading: Short Passages

SECTION II

TIMES ACTIVITY: WRITE-AROUND

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** The short passages on the SAT tend to be 100 to 150 words in length and focus on a range of topics, from the social sciences to the natural sciences. Don't be shy about marking up any SAT reading passage as you take the test; making marks and notes on or around a text passage helps you become a more focused and active reader. Practice "writing around" a New York Times article with the exercise below, then begin to have a "conversation on paper" with your classmates as they do the same.
- A.** Choose a short column from the "Observatory" column of the Science Times section, published on Tuesday.
- B.** Cut out the article and tape it or paste it on to the middle of a large sheet of blank paper (at least 8 1/2" by 14" in size).
- C.** Write a response to the article in the margins of the sheet of paper that surround the article. You can respond to a specific word, phrase or sentence in the article that you think is important. Or you could write a more general opinion about the writer's point or purpose. You could also pose a question about an aspect of the passage that confuses you, or even create a question that you think would appear on the SAT.
- D.** After you have written your response to the article, join two or three other classmates to form a small group. Group members should arrange their chairs or desks so that they are facing one another in a circle.
- E.** Pass your article and your comments to the student sitting to your immediate right, and your fellow group members will do the same.
- F.** Read the new article and comments that your classmate passed to you and write a response to your classmate's comments. Feel free to include your own perceptions of your classmate's article or anything else that comes to mind as you write. Think of this as a "conversation on paper," where you can "talk" to the previous writer, to the article itself or to the next reader in your group.
- G.** Repeat the passing and commenting process until your own article has traveled "full circle" and returns to you with each of your group members' responses.
- H.** Read through all the new comments on your original article. What did you learn? Did anyone point out something about your article that you didn't originally see? Did anyone agree or disagree with a point you made? Did anyone answer a question you might have had? Spend a few minutes discussing each article that was presented in your group.

>>>

CRITICAL READING

- SAT Test Section: Critical Reading
- SAT Task: Passage-Based Reading: Paired Passages

SECTION II**TIMES ACTIVITY: OPPOSING POINTS OF VIEW**

NAME _____

■ **Getting Started:** On the SAT, you will encounter paired passages, where a single topic is addressed from two different points of view. Check out the New York Times Letters to the Editor page to practice reading and interpreting a variety of opinions on one topic. The following activity will familiarize you with a specific topic and the Letters to the Editor written in response to that topic.

A. With a partner, read through a group of Letters to the Editor that were all written in response to a particular topic or article. Write down the topic or article addressed by the letters here: _____

B. Choose two of the letters that state opposing points of view on the topic. Label your first letter “Letter X” and the second letter “Letter Y.”

C. Answer the following questions in reference to **Letter X:**

What is the overall point of this letter? _____

How did the writer of Letter X make his or her main point using supporting details, anecdotes, logical argument, rhetorical devices or a combination of these techniques? _____

D. Answer the following questions in reference to **Letter Y:**

What is the overall point of this letter? _____

How did the writer of Letter Y make his or her main point using supporting details, anecdotes, logical argument, rhetorical devices or a combination of these techniques? _____

E. Locate a news article from The New York Times that was originally published on the topic of the opposing letters. The article may have been mentioned in one or both of the opposing letters you chose or it may be another article on the same topic. Read the article and underline its main ideas.

F. What more do you know after reading the news article on the topic? Do you agree or disagree with the letter writer? Write your own letter to the editor on the same topic.

>>>

WRITING: THE ESSAY

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Essay Writing

SECTION III**TASK, TIP AND TIMES INTRODUCTORY WORKSHEET**

NAME _____

TASK:

In 2005, the College Board added an essay to the SAT. Now, students are required to write rather than simply fill in multiple choice bubbles. This new Essay section of the test has gotten by far the most attention of any section on the new test. We encourage you to consult an official SAT practice book or the College Board Web site (www.collegeboard.com) to look at sample prompts and student writing examples and plan your own writing strategy. In a nutshell, however, here is what you need to know:

- You will have 25 minutes to respond to a topic or “prompt.”
- The topic will be open-ended so that it can be applied to anything from your own life to literature, sports, history, the arts, technology, politics or almost any other field.
- You must first state an opinion on the topic, then support that opinion with details, reasons and examples.
- Those marking the test will grade on the basis of how well you develop your point of view, how well you provide evidence for that point of view and how well you organize your thoughts and use language.
- Your essay is not expected to be a polished work but rather a “first draft.” An occasional error in grammar or punctuation will not count heavily against you, but several errors will. Make sure to save time to read over your work at the end and correct it.

TIP:

Practice! The best way to do this is to write often and in a variety of forms. But even if you do not have the time to practice writing complete essays under timed conditions, there are many relatively painless ways to rehearse for this section:

- Read widely, both fiction and nonfiction. Reading *The Times* regularly will supply you with current events examples that you can use to support any writing topic given. (And it will painlessly increase your vocabulary in the process!)
- Think about how what you read connects to other things you are learning or reading. For example, does the *Times* article you read about Hurricane Katrina connect in some way with the Dust Bowl history you are learning as you read “*The Grapes of Wrath*”?
- You might practice doing a kind of “oral rough draft” of an essay with a partner. This is quicker than writing, but requires you to think under pressure, and shows you how flexible your ideas can be. On the actual test, this is the kind of thinking you’ll need for the crucial minutes you’ll spend planning your essay. The following exercises are designed to help you with this task.

TIMES:

Discuss the following questions.

- What skills does this section seem to test?
- How might you practice for this section through reading *The New York Times*?

WRITING: THE ESSAY

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Essay Writing

SECTION III**TIMES ACTIVITY: SUPPORTING A POINT OF VIEW**

NAME _____

■ **Getting Started:** On the new SAT, you will have 25 minutes to write an essay about a general topic. You will be asked for your opinion, and you must take a stance and defend your point of view. Do the following two exercises to practice honing an argument and finding evidence to support it, using stories from recent issues of The New York Times for inspiration.

A. Read the following statement by anthropologist Margaret Mead:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

B. Tell what you think it means in your own words: _____

C. Do you agree or disagree with the idea expressed in the statement? Describe your opinion on the topic:

D. List evidence from your own life, books you have read, films you have seen, current events or anything else that comes to mind that could be used to bolster your argument:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

E. Now, turn to a recent issue of The New York Times to find even more support for your position. Find at least three articles that apply to this topic in some way, and explain how these articles apply and how they help your argument. (Be creative: The articles you find may not seem to others to apply, but if you can make a good case for their connection, you are practicing a necessary skill for the SAT essay.)

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WRITING: THE ESSAY

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Essay Writing

SECTION III

TIMES ACTIVITY: SUPPORTING A POINT OF VIEW

NAME _____

ARTICLE HEADLINE: _____

Brief description of how you could use this article to support your stance:

ARTICLE HEADLINE: _____

Brief description of how you could use this article to support your stance:

ARTICLE HEADLINE: _____

Brief description of how you could use this article to support your stance:

E. Finally, share with your classmates what articles you chose and why. Which of you was able to use The Times to build the strongest case? How? _____

WRITING: THE ESSAY

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: The Essay

SECTION III

TIMES ACTIVITY: AD LIB ESSAY

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** With a partner, use this quick and easy exercise to prepare for the essay section of the new SAT. Instead of writing the essay, you “ad lib” it, or talk it through, timing yourself to see how quickly you can read the prompt, state an opinion and build an argument for it.

Materials: The topics listed on pages 31 and 32; scissors; pen and paper; timer or watch with a second hand.

PART 1

- A.** Cut up the bulleted topics listed on pages 31 and 32 and put them in an envelope or face down on your desk.
- B.** With a partner, follow the directions below. One of you will be the Speaker and the other will be the Listener in each round. Go through two rounds each.
1. Decide who will be the first Speaker. That person should turn a topic sheet over or pull one from the envelope, then read it aloud.
 2. The Listener uses a watch to time the Speaker who has two minutes to talk about this topic.
 3. The Speaker first states an opinion about the topic. Then the Speaker should begin to “ad-lib” on the topic by supporting the opinion with as many examples as come to mind. These examples can come from experience, reading, lessons learned in school, current events or anywhere else. (For example, if you pick a quotation that concerns creativity, you can mention your own experiences in a photography class; the example of your cousin who is a gifted dancer; what you recently read in English class about how a particular writer gets her inspiration, etc.)
 4. The Listener takes notes as the Speaker talks.
- C.** When two minutes is up, the Listener reports back to the Speaker.. Together, spend a minute or two discussing how well the Speaker supported this topic. The Listener can contribute other ideas that the Speaker might have used to support the opinion. How could you have supported your opinion? If a question on this topic was given on the SAT, how do you think you would do?
- D.** Switch roles and now let the Listener from Round 1 become the Speaker in Round 2. Repeat steps C and D so that each of you has been speaker and listener two times.
- E.** When you are finished, answer the following questions.

>>>

WRITING: THE ESSAY

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: The Essay

SECTION III

TIMES ACTIVITY: AD LIB ESSAY

NAME _____

PART 2 - QUESTIONS FOLLOWING THE AD LIB ESSAY EXERCISE

1. Choose one of the four topics you previously “ad-libbed” that you’d like to do more work on together. What is that topic? _____

2. Work together to list as much evidence as you can to support a stance related to the topic. Include what the speaker already said, as well as anything new that you can think of, and list each point below.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
 - g. _____

3. Now open today’s Times. Find at least two articles on two different topics from anywhere in the paper that relate to your topic.

ARTICLE HEADLINE: _____

Brief description of how you could use this article to support your stance:

ARTICLE HEADLINE: _____

Brief description of how you could use this article to support your stance:

WRITING: THE ESSAY

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: The Essay

SECTION III**TIMES ACTIVITY: SAMPLE ESSAY TOPICS**

- Use these for the Ad Lib Essay exercise on page 29, or to practice writing on your own. Cut out each of the bulleted topics that follow and put into an envelope to use with the Ad Lib exercise.
 - Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival. (*Rene Dubos*)
 - A person needs at intervals to separate from family and companions and go to new places. One must go without familiars in order to be open to influences, to change. (*Katharine Butler Hathaway*)
 - Individual commitment to a group effort — that’s what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work. (*Vince Lombardi*)
 - As long as the differences and diversities of mankind exist, democracy must allow for compromise, for accommodation, and for the recognition of differences. (*Eugene McCarthy*)
 - Education is essential to change, for education creates both new wants and the ability to satisfy them. (*Henry Steele Commanger*)
 - Creative activity cannot be forced. The creative people of this world have always been the free, unchanneled minds, the non-conformists, the individuals, the uninhibited. (*Charles D. Orth*)
 - Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought. (*Albert Szent-Györgyi*)
 - A stumble may prevent a fall. (*English proverb*)
 - The difficulty in most scientific work lies in framing the questions rather than in finding the answers. (*A.E. Boycott*)
 - It is easier to fight for one’s principles than to live up to them. (*Alfred Adler*)
 - All government — indeed, every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act — is founded on compromise and barter. (*Edmund Burke*)
 - We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. (*Winston Churchill*)
 - All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing. (*Edmund Burke*)

>>>

WRITING: THE ESSAY

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: The Essay

SECTION III**TIMES ACTIVITY: SAMPLE ESSAY TOPICS**

- Without courage, all other virtues lose their meaning. (*Winston Churchill*)
- The true test of character is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we don't know what to do. (*John Holt*)
- They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. (*Historical Review of Pennsylvania, 1759*)

NOTE: Though the new SAT presents essay topics with more elaboration than we have here, the essential task is the same as in our exercises: read a quote, state your point of view about it and support your point of view with examples, reasons and ideas. Students can try the College Board Web site for a few more examples:

[www.http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/essay/pracStart.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/essay/pracStart.html)

WRITING: SENTENCE ERRORS

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Identifying Sentence Errors

SECTION IV

TASK, TIP AND TIMES INTRODUCTORY WORKSHEET

NAME _____

TASK:

In the Identifying Sentence Errors questions on the SAT, you must read a sentence in which four words or phrases have been underlined and labeled “A” through “D.” Your job is to decide which of the four labeled words or phrases (A, B, C or D) in the question sentence contains a grammar or usage error. There will also be a choice “E”—“No Error” following each sentence that will mean the sentence is fine the way it is. For example, circle the letter that represents the error (if you think there is an error below).

Each of the New York Times journalists nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 2004 were known for his powerful writing. No error
 A B C D E

To solve this puzzle, you have to understand subject-verb agreement. The subject of the sentence is “Each,” a singular pronoun that requires a singular verb to agree with it. Now here is the tricky part: spotting the verb that must agree with “Each.” Don’t get thrown off by all the extra information about the subject that lies between the subject and its verb (“of the New York Times journalists nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 2004”); ignore this lengthy string of prepositional phrases and simply inspect the verb “were known.” Does the plural “were known” agree with the singular “Each”? Absolutely not. That’s why “C” is the sentence error and your answer.

TIP:

- Like any good detective on a case, look for clues! **In the case of Identifying Sentence Errors, look for the grammar and usage errors that the SAT likes to sprinkle throughout the Identifying Sentence Errors questions.**

TIMES:

Answer the following questions on the lines provided.

- What skills does this section seem to test? _____

- How might you practice for this section through reading The New York Times? _____

WRITING: SENTENCE ERRORS

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Identifying Sentence Errors

SECTION IV**TIMES ACTIVITY: ERROR MINI LESSONS**

NAME _____

■ **Getting Started:** Form a small group and choose one of the five types of errors, listed below. Your understanding of these errors is most likely to be tested on the SAT.

- verb tense errors
- subject-verb agreement errors
- pronoun case errors
- pronoun agreement errors
- idiomatic phrasing errors

What error type has your group chosen? _____

1. Using any reference books you might need, explain the grammar principle you need to know in order to avoid this type of error in your writing. Also explain why this grammar principle can be tricky to follow under certain circumstances. _____

2. Find a sentence in today's Times that models this grammar principle correctly: _____

3. Now, break the rules and rewrite the original Times sentences in such a way that it violates the grammar principle that you just researched. _____

4. Write your own original sentence (based on the Times sentence, if you like) that models this grammar principle correctly: _____

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Using the information above, create with your group a poster, skit, mini lesson, mnemonic device, illustration, or anything else that will help your classmates understand this error and avoid making it themselves. (Be as creative as you like: make props, have a talk show, "interview" the error, or create a rap. Your goal is to include information your classmates will need to understand the error, to easily locate it in the Identifying Sentence Errors section of the SAT and to avoid making the error on the SAT or in their own writing.) Make sure you use all three of the sentences you wrote above — the original Times sentence, the incorrect version of this sentence, and your own original sentence — in your presentation in some way.

WRITING: SENTENCE ERRORS

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Identifying Sentence Errors

SECTION IV**TIMES ACTIVITY: SENTENCE RACES**

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** The SAT repeatedly tests your knowledge of certain errors. In this game, create a word bank for homework that will help you get to know the different parts of speech. Next, in class create grammatically flawed sentences with a partner. Finally, race against your peers to correct them.

FOR HOMEWORK:

- A.** Use the sheet on the following page (“Word Bank”) and a copy of today’s New York Times to begin. Keep a grammar reference book handy to look up any terms that are unclear.
- B.** Go through The Times to find five nouns. Try to find offbeat words, including people’s names and the names of places and objects. Write them down on your worksheet.
- C.** Repeat step B for each category of word or phrase.

IN CLASS:

- A.** Form groups of three and share your lists. Your task: to create intentionally bad sentences using the words you found in The Times. To do this, take words from the different categories and mix and match them to write sentences that contain one of the errors you learned about in Error Mini Lessons. You might create sentences that have:
 - subject-verb agreement errors, for example: “The Mets goes to the movies.”
 - pronoun case errors, for example: “George W. Bush and me are watching the History Channel.”
- B.** When your group has compiled several examples of error-ridden sentences that use words found in The Times, write your favorite flawed sentence on a large piece of paper.
- C.** When the other groups are ready with their own flawed sentence, have someone post them all. Then each student should race individually to fix each example and create new sentences that have the same basic words but are without error.
- D.** The Sentence Race winner is the person who can finish first, raise his or her hand, and submit the new, improved sentences to the scrutiny of the teacher and/or class.

WRITING: SENTENCE ERRORS

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Identifying Sentence Errors

SECTION IV

TIMES ACTIVITY: WORD BANK FOR SENTENCE RACES

NAME _____

Find five examples for each of these in today's New York Times:

PLURAL NOUNS: _____

SINGULAR NOUNS: _____

PRESENT TENSE VERBS: _____

VERBS IN SIMPLE PAST: _____

PAST PARTICIPLE VERB FORMS: _____

NOMINATIVE CASE PRONOUNS: _____

OBJECTIVE CASE PRONOUNS: _____

SINGULAR PRONOUNS: _____

PLURAL PRONOUNS: _____

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS: _____

ADVERBS: _____

ADJECTIVES: _____

IDIOMS (could be more than one word): _____

WRITING: IMPROVING SENTENCES

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Sentences

SECTION V**TASK, TIP AND TIMES INTRODUCTORY WORKSHEET**

NAME _____

TASK:

Each Improving Sentences problem will be presented as an underlined sentence or as a sentence with some words underlined. There will be five choices following the sentence. The first choice will repeat the underlined words without changes and the other four choices will offer different options for improving the sentence. And, of course, only one of those five choices will have correct usage.

Here's an example:

Walking down the avenue, a tomato hit the unsuspecting student's head.

- (A) a tomato hit the unsuspecting student's head.
- (B) the unsuspecting student was hit on the head by a tomato.
- (C) a tomato was hitting the unsuspecting student's head.
- (D) the unsuspecting student's head was hit by a tomato.
- (E) a tomato hit a head of a student who was not expecting it.

The original sentence gives the impression that tomatoes are capable of walking down avenues since the modifying phrase "Walking down the avenue" was placed right next to the noun tomato. (B) and (D) are the only two choices that place the unsuspecting student next to the phrase that describes him or her. And (B) is the best choice since (D) makes it seem like the student's head is walking down the avenue.

TIP:

- Instead of rushing to madly plug in the multiple choice options to determine what "sounds right," **take a moment to consider what the sentence's problem might be and how you would solve that problem.** Remember the College Board plays "favorites" as it develops its flawed sentence, so be on the lookout for some of their favorite sentence errors. The question in the previous example featured a misplaced modifier. Other sentence errors you often need to understand are run-on sentences, sentence fragments and faulty parallelism.

TIMES:

Answer the following questions:

- What skills does this section seem to test?
- How might you practice for this section through reading The New York Times?

WRITING: IMPROVING SENTENCES

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Sentences

SECTION V**TIMES ACTIVITY: INTENTIONALLY MISPLACING MODIFIERS**

NAME _____

■ **Getting Started:** This activity will give you practice in identifying modifying phrases and intentionally “misplacing” them in order to stump your classmates.

- A.** Find a partner and together find a sentence in today’s New York Times that contains a phrase that modifies a noun.
- B.** Write it here.
- C.** Underline the modifying phrase and circle the noun it is modifying.
- D.** Now, create an Improving Sentences problem. (1) Rewrite the Times sentence with its modifying phrase intentionally misplaced to modify another noun or pronoun. (2) Write four other flawed alternatives for the multiple-choice answers. (3) Place the original sentence from The Times that is the correct answer choice for your question among the other four incorrect options.

SENTENCE #1: _____

Alternatives

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Copy your sentence #1 and alternatives onto another sheet of paper. Exchange with others. Check and discuss each other’s answers to the questions.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Draw a cartoon of the most visually absurd example of a misplaced modifier. Illustrate its literal meaning. Post all the cartoons around the room and submit the funniest examples to your school newspaper.

- “Grade” your neighbors’ quiz and see if they correctly identified the original Times sentence with its modifier in the right place.
- Choose the most visually absurd example of a misplaced modifier that came up in your quiz or your neighbors’ quiz and draw a cartoon to illustrate a literal interpretation of a sentence with a misplaced modifier. Post all the cartoons around the room and submit the funniest examples to your school newspaper.

SECTION V**WRITING: IMPROVING SENTENCES**

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Sentences

TIMES ACTIVITY: COMPLETE THAT THOUGHT!

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** In the Improving Sentences section of the SAT, you will likely encounter a few questions involving sentence-fragment or run-on errors. This activity will let you practice identifying such errors. First, choose a partner, then work together to follow the directions below. Eventually, you will exchange your sentences with another pair of students.
- A.** Select a section of The Times to search for model complex sentences. (A complex sentence consists of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. For example, here’s a complex sentence that appeared in an article on 9/12/05 about Hurricane Katrina: “Hopeful signs and sobering reminders came in about equal numbers on Sunday, as has been the pattern of many recent days.”)
- B.** Find two sentences that you think are especially well written. Try to find sentences that are complex enough to offer options for subtle changes.
- C.** Write these sentences down on a piece of scrap paper.
- D.** Now, mess each sentence up! In other words, alter each sentence in such a way that it no longer is a complete sentence. For example, you could add punctuation to create sentence fragments. Or you could take punctuation away in order to create a run-on sentence.
- E.** Rewrite the original Times sentences and their fake counterparts on the lines below, not necessarily in that order (remember, you are trying to trick another pair of students).
- F.** Exchange your “quiz” with another partnership and see how they do.

QUIZ QUESTION I.

Sentence version 1: _____

Sentence version 2: _____

Which is a complete sentence and why? _____

QUIZ QUESTION II.

Sentence version 1: _____

Sentence version 2: _____

Which is a complete sentence and why? _____

WRITING: IMPROVING SENTENCES

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Sentences

SECTION V**TIMES ACTIVITY: EXTENDING THE PATTERN**

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** Complex sentences sometimes follow certain patterns, such as parallelism. For example, the following Science Times sentence about barnacles in Cape Perpetua demonstrates parallelism in its repetition of verbs in a series: “the barnacles **have** a lot more food, **are growing** a lot faster and **have** much greater reproduction.” (Science Times 7/12/05)

This activity sends you on a scavenger hunt **to find** an example of parallelism in today’s Times, **to recognize** the specific pattern within the sentence, and **to extend** that pattern in an amusing or clever way. (Hey! That last sentence demonstrated how to find, recognize and extend parallelism!)

- A.** Find an example of a sentence demonstrating parallelism in today’s Times and write it here: _____

- B.** What pattern is being repeated in your sentence? Circle those words that form the pattern in the sentence above.

- C.** What part of speech classifies the words you circled? (Consult a dictionary if you cannot tell.) _____

- D.** Now, extend the parallel structure of the sentence by adding another item in the series that follows the same part of speech pattern in the previous items. This can be a creative or absurd addition; the point is to demonstrate that you understand the pattern. _____

WRITING: IMPROVING SENTENCES

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Sentences

SECTION V

TIMES ACTIVITY: SENTENCE SKELETONS

NAME _____

■ **Getting Started:** A “sentence skeleton” is a simple sentence (such as “The man walked”) that invites elaboration to make it more vivid and interesting. (“The man strode angrily toward the children, a grim look on his face.”) Below are several basic messages or skeletons underlying more developed sentences you’re likely to find in The New York Times; we invite you to find sentences in different sections of the paper that creatively “put flesh” on the bones of those skeletons. Finally, practice for the SAT by trying your hand at writing your own lively sentences using The New York Times as a model.

- A.** Read this **sentence skeleton**: *“The team/player beat another team/player.”*
- B.** Here’s how a sportswriter for The Times wrote it: “It was a ten-round slugfest won by Corrales, who rose from the canvas to knock out Castillo in the tenth round.”
- C.** Find another example from The Times conveying this same idea of victory. _____

- D.** Now write your own sentence that puts “meat” on the simple idea of one team beating another. Use teams you’ve watched or played for or teams mentioned in The Times. _____

- E.** Now try writing a lively sentence based on another **sentence skeleton** — from any review in the Arts section.
Sentence Skeleton: *“The movie/play/book/concert was good/bad/O.K.”*

Times Version: _____

Times Version: _____

Your own original sentence: _____

WRITING: IMPROVING PARAGRAPHS

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Paragraphs

SECTION VI**TASK, TIP AND TIMES INTRODUCTORY WORKSHEET**

NAME _____

TASK:

The new “improving paragraphs” section of the SAT asks you to make sense of how sentences work together to make paragraphs, and how paragraphs flow from one to the next to make a coherent essay.

First the test will present you with a passage that is described as an “early draft” of an essay. Like your own first drafts, it isn’t perfect — parts of it will have to be rewritten. After you have read the entire paragraph, you will be asked questions about the numbered sentences. Some questions will ask you to think about the word choice or sentence structure; others will direct you to look at the organization and development of the passage. Here’s an example, based on an article in *The Times* on 6/22/05 by James Dao headlined “Taught at Home, But Seeking to Join Activities at Public Schools.” The paragraph below is something a high school student might have written as the first draft of a summary of the article. Read it, then answer the two sample questions that follow.

1) Home-schooled teenagers often want to get involved in activities they can’t do at home, like play on teams. 2) Their parents complain that, just like public school parents, they are taxpayers and should receive the same benefits. 3) These parents have introduced bills to their state legislatures that would require different states to make extracurricular activities open to home-schooled students. 4) Some districts are resisting this idea.

1. The best way to improve sentence 4 is to add which of the following words to the beginning of the sentence?

- (A) Moreover,
- (B) However,
- (C) Further,
- (D) Rightly,
- (E) In addition,

Answer? B. This simple change just adds a word that helps make a transition to show contrast: people want this, however, some districts are resisting it. Choices A, C, and E suggest words that would make it seem as if this new sentence is all part of the same idea rather than a whole new bit of information.

TIP:

- When asked about a sentence in an Improving Paragraphs question, read the sentence again in context before considering the possible multiple-choice answers. It seems much easier to look down at each question and then go only to the sentence it directs you to — but that would be a big mistake. Often the error you are asked to correct in one sentence has to be understood in the context of the sentence immediately before or after it. If you don’t know this, you might fall for one of the “trick” answers that assume you’ll take the short cut and not read the whole passage first.

TIMES:

Discuss: What skills does this section seem to test? How might you practice for this section through reading *The New York Times*?

WRITING: IMPROVING SENTENCES

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Paragraphs

SECTION VI

TIMES ACTIVITY: EDITOR FOR A DAY

NAME _____

- **Getting Started:** Imagine that you are a New York Times editor who has accidentally spilled ink on sections of a reporter’s article. This article has to go to press tomorrow, but can’t until you figure out the missing words. Read the paragraph your reporter gave you, and, with help from fellow editors, try to supply the missing words or phrases based on the context around them.
 - A.** Choose an article from today’s Times. As you read, choose various words or phrases to black out that another group will have to supply from context. Choose words or phrases that can be deduced from the context and logic of the sentences and paragraphs.
 - B.** Form small groups and exchange articles. Silently read the altered article individually to yourselves, mentally supplying words and phrases for the blanks as you go. (Keep a running list of ideas for each blank on another sheet of paper.)
 - C.** Now, go back to each blank and share your ideas. Together, try to choose the best word or words that will complete the thought and fill in the blanks.
 - D.** Finally, check the original Times article. What words did the author originally choose? How do they differ from yours? Why? _____

WRITING: IMPROVING SENTENCES

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Paragraphs

SECTION VI

TIMES ACTIVITY: TIMES PUZZLE PIECES

NAME _____

- SAT Test Section: Writing
- SAT Task: Improving Paragraphs

■ **Getting Started:** One way to practice for the Improving Paragraphs section of the SAT is to observe how good writers make sentences flow together to create paragraphs. The following exercise offers a fun way to practice making sense of an article’s flow by working with a partner to make puzzles out of cut-up New York Times articles.

(NOTE: This exercise can be done by cutting up an article by paragraphs OR by sentences.)

- A.** Select a Times article from any section of the paper, and have your partner do the same. (Be careful you don’t show each other what you choose as you follow these directions.)
- B.** Either photocopy your articles or make sure you have two copies of the paper so that at the end of the exercise you can show each other the original articles.
- C.** Now count the first five to seven sentences of your articles. (These might comprise several paragraphs. Judge how many sentences to cut out based on the difficulty of each article and your sense, after reading it, of where a sensible place to stop might be.)
- D.** Cut out each sentence separately. (Tip: Trim each sentence so that it no longer physically fits neatly, as a puzzle piece would, with the sentences before and after it — you don’t want your partner to cheat by simply refitting the sentences where you cut them out!)
- E.** Put your sentences into an envelope, or keep them together with a paper clip.
- F.** Exchange sentences with a partner.
- G.** Lay out the sentences you receive and read them to figure out an order that makes sense and helps the writing flow well.

H. Below, write your reasons for putting the sentences in the order that you chose: _____

J. Now check your sentences with the original Times article. Did you get any wrong? If so, why? _____
