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Sat practice essay

A solid vocabulary is essential to getting a high SAT score. But what methods can give you the quality SAT vocab practice you'll need to succeed on test day? After all, just reading a lengthy list of vocab words doesn't necessarily mean you'll know how to use them in a sentence or be able to remember what they mean on during the exam. We explain how important vocab is on the SAT and how it's tested. More importantly, we give you our top four vocab study methods as well as our picks for the five best resources to use for quality SAT vocabulary practice. Read on to learn what these are! How Important Is SAT Vocab Practice? Although it's important to know some vocabulary, the truth is that vocabulary doesn't play a very big part on the SAT. So if you're not a fan of memorizing hundreds of words, this is great news! However, if you're aiming for a high or even perfect SAT score, you'll definitely need to memorize some of the vocab words most likely to appear on the test. But what exactly does vocabulary look like on the SAT? For starters, all vocab questions (in both the Reading and Writing and Language sections) are based on reading passages, so you'll always have context to help you figure out the meaning of a word or phrase. On the old (pre-2016) SAT, you had Sentence Completion questions, for which you had to choose the correct vocab word for an isolated sentence. Basically, you had zero context! Thankfully, these questions are no longer on the SAT. Secondly, all vocab words are about medium difficulty, so don't expect to see hard words such as pugnacious and obstreperous. Instead, the SAT will test you on more common words, usually ones with multiple meanings. On SAT Reading, vocab questions are called Words in Context questions; these ask you to match a word with the correct meaning. On the Writing section, vocab questions that ask you to replace (or leave as is) a certain word in a passage are called Precision questions. Here's an example of a Words in Context SAT Reading question (with the relevant line from the passage): Source: Official SAT Practice Test #1 And here's an example of an SAT Writing Precision question (again, with the relevant line from the passage): Source: Official SAT Practice Test #2 As you can see, you'll need to be especially adept at using context clues to figure out which word best fits the tone and meaning of the sentence in the passage. That said, remember that vocab doesn't make up a particularly large part of the SAT. Based on our analysis of official SAT practice tests, we've found that you'll get around seven Words in Context questions (~13%) on Reading, and about three Precision questions (~7%) on Writing. Next up, we look at the four best methods you can use for your SAT vocabulary practice sessions. The 4 Best Methods for Quality SAT Vocab Practice Now that you understand how vocab is tested on the SAT and how important it is, how can you study effectively for it? Here are some of the best methods you can use to get quality SAT vocab practice. Method 1: Use Flashcards and the Waterfall Method By far the best way to study SAT vocab is to make flashcards and use the waterfall method. The waterfall method is a way of going through a deck of flashcards so that you learn all the words in it—even the hardest ones! Here's how to use this method: start with a deck of about 30-50 cards. This will be your Starting Stack: Go through the entire stack. Put the cards you know in a Know It pile, and the cards you don't know in a Struggled pile as so: Now, pick up your Struggled pile and go through all the cards in it again. For the words you know, put them in a second Know It pile. For the words you don't know, put them in a Struggled pile. This will give you two Know It piles and one Struggled pile: Repeat these steps until you have one to five cards left in your Struggled pile: At this point, you'll have gone through your entire deck and should have multiple Know It piles and one Struggled pile. It's now time to work back up your "waterfall" of flashcards. To do this, combine your Struggled pile with your most recent Know It pile (i.e., the one closest to your Struggled pile). This will be your Working pile: Go through all the words in your Working pile until you've memorized all the meanings in it. If you forget any, go through the entire deck again. This might sound annoying, but it's a crucial step that'll ultimately help you memorize all the words and their meanings. Repeat this process by combining the pile in your hands with the next Know It pile and then going through it in full until you've gotten down all the words' meanings in it. By the time you finish, you should be back at your Starting Stack. You now know all the words in your deck! If you have more vocab words you'd like to study, repeat this entire process (again, using decks of about 30-50 cards) until you've memorized all the SAT words you want to know. Method 2: Take an Online SAT Vocabulary Practice Test Another great way to get in some SAT vocab practice is to take online vocab tests or quizzes. Quizzes are great for putting your SAT vocab knowledge to the test. You can find (or make) an SAT vocabulary practice test through free websites such as Quizlet and Cram. On Quizlet, you can study with flashcards and then use the Test function to take a randomized quiz that includes only the words in your deck. Feel free to skip the question formats that aren't relevant to the SAT. For example, you won't need to write in vocab words on the SAT, so don't bother doing the write-in questions. Cram is similar to Quizlet: with this site, you can study SAT words using digital flashcards and then take an SAT vocabulary practice test using the Test function. Again, some question types aren't particularly helpful, so try to focus on the questions that are most similar to those on the SAT, particularly the multiple-choice ones. A word of caution, though: if you're studying with a pre-made flashcard deck, be sure to choose one that contains relevant SAT vocab. The difficulty and type of vocab have changed a lot since 2016. Therefore, the easiest way to ensure you're studying appropriate words is to look for decks created in 2016 or later. You should also check that the definitions and parts of speech are correct so that you're actually learning the right information! Method 3: Read in Context Since the SAT is all about context, it's a good idea to study SAT vocab by simply reading more in general. This method can help you make more accurate educated guesses on the SAT, and also teaches you to more quickly identify the tone and purpose of a passage. Here's how to use it: Find a paragraph or passage to read (see the next section for tips on what resources you can use). Begin reading it. Whenever you come across a word you don't know in the text, try to use the context of the sentence it's in to guess its meaning. Look up the definition of the word (it also helps to see what its synonyms are since the SAT loves to ask for these). If you didn't know the correct meaning, write down the word and its actual definition on your vocab list or in your flashcard deck so you can study it later. If you'd prefer a more convenient way to read in context, try using the free browser application ProfessorWord. This application identifies potential SAT/ACT vocab words in online articles and provides definitions for them, too. Here's an example of the application in action (using an article taken from The Atlantic): Method 4: Take Official SAT Practice Tests The final way you can get SAT vocabulary practice is to take official SAT practice tests. This method is a great one to try after you've used most or all of the ones above and want to test out your vocab skills in the context of a full-length SAT. Moreover, you'll get to see how questions are worded, what kinds of words you should know, and how much time it takes you to answer them. There are currently eight full-length tests available. I suggest taking one official practice test before you begin any SAT vocab practice. This way you'll be able to get a feel for what questions and vocab words are most challenging for you. When taking a practice test, make sure to emulate real testing conditions as closely as possible: take the test in a quiet room and abide by official SAT time limits. Once done, check your answers and calculate your score. Take care to look closely at the vocab questions you answered on both the Reading and Writing sections. Here's how to proceed depending on how many vocab questions you answered correctly in your first practice test: If you got most vocab questions right, congratulations! You're doing pretty well with your SAT vocab practice. Continue reviewing any difficult words using, ideally, a combination of the resources above (such as flashcards, websites, etc.). If you got most vocab questions wrong, take this as an opportunity to figure out what tripped you up. Were there too many vocab words you didn't know? Did you run out of time? Look for patterns in your mistakes. Once you've determined your specific weakness, use SAT Reading and Writing practice questions, as well as official and unofficial full-length SAT practice tests, to track your progress. Top 5 Free Resources for SAT Vocab Practice So far we've given you our four best methods for studying SAT vocabulary. In this section, we give you the five best free resources you can use for top-notch SAT vocabulary practice. #1: The College Board We've already talked about the importance of using full-length SAT practice tests, but this isn't everything. Through the College Board website, you can access tons of official SAT practice questions, some of which center on vocab. In total, you'll get 24 SAT Reading and 22 Writing questions, complete with in-depth answer explanations. Though most of these questions aren't vocab questions, you can still use them to practice reading in context and to get a better feel for the types of words you'll be expected to know on these two sections. #2: Khan Academy A partner of the College Board, Khan Academy is a free website offering tons of official SAT practice questions, which you can use to get even more quality SAT vocab practice. With this website, you can not only practice vocab in the context of realistic SAT questions, but you can also get tips on how to answer Reading and Writing questions and how to read passages effectively. For more advice, check out our article on how to use Khan Academy in your SAT prep. #3: PrepScholar SAT Vocab List If you're not a fan of having to look for SAT vocab words on your own, never fear—we make it easy for you! Our extensive SAT vocab list contains more than 250 of the most common SAT vocab words. We chose these words based on how we found in official SAT practice tests and other high-quality online SAT vocab lists. The best way to use our vocab list is to make your own (paper or digital) flashcards. While you don't need to memorize every single word, being familiar with them will definitely give you a leg up on test day. By studying our list, you'll waste less time trying to figure out the meaning of a word and will have a better chance of choosing the correct answer. #4: Anki Not into the idea of making paper flashcards for your SAT vocab practice? Then consider using Anki as an alternative. Unlike Quizlet and Cram—those free flashcard-making websites we mentioned above—Anki is a free software you can download directly onto your computer. So, no, you don't need to have an internet connection in order to use it when you study SAT vocab! With this program, you can download flashcard decks submitted by other users or make your own. Its special spaced-repetition software (SRS) makes it so that you'll study difficult cards more often than cards you already know (similar to how the waterfall method works). #5: Newspapers and Publications If you're studying vocab by reading in context, you'll need to find relevant articles in order to get high-quality SAT vocab practice. Studying for the SAT involves reading articles on a wide variety of topics. According to the College Board, you'll get the following quantities and types of reading passages on SAT Reading: One passage from a classic or contemporary piece of US or world literature One passage (or pair of passages) based on a US founding document or text in the Great Global Conversation One social science passage Two science passages In addition, here are the types of passages you'll see on SAT Writing: History Social studies Science It's crucial to regularly read a variety of articles as you study vocab for the SAT. For example, it won't help you to read only science articles since these will likely use the same types of terms and won't teach you anything new after a while. Here are some of the best online (and free) publications to use for your SAT vocabulary practice: US and World Literature: The New Yorker, The Paris Review, The New York Review of Books, The Los Angeles Review of Books History/Social Science/Social Studies: The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Atlantic, Time, The Economist Science: Psychology Today, Wired, Discover, Popular Science Conclusion: The Best SAT Vocab Practice Although vocab doesn't play a large role on the SAT, it's important to know what kinds of words and questions you should expect on the SAT Reading and Writing sections. Most SAT vocab words are about medium difficulty and will have multiple meanings. By far the four best methods to use for your SAT vocab practice are as follows: Make flashcards and use the waterfall method to study all the words in your deck Take online vocab tests and quizzes on free websites such as Quizlet and Cram Read in context using high-quality resources such as online newspapers and literary magazines Take official SAT practice tests In terms of SAT vocab resources, we recommend starting with the College Board and Khan Academy to get as many official SAT vocab practice questions as you can. Other solid options include the following: Our PrepScholar SAT vocab list, which contains more than 250 high-frequency vocab words Anki, a free downloadable software with which you can make and download flashcards Online newspapers and publications that cover a wide range of topics and genres, such as The New York Times, Psychology Today, and The Paris Review You're now equipped with all the most important info you need to start studying SAT vocab! What's Next? Not sure which vocabulary words to study for the SAT? Check out our comprehensive list of 250+ SAT vocab words. Our ultimate SAT Reading guide explains how to read passages effectively and how to find the correct answer choice for Reading questions. Likewise, our Writing guide offers expert advice on the most important things you need to know, from grammar rules to passage-reading strategies. Got more questions about the SAT's Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section? Our guide tells you what's tested on the Reading and Writing sections, goes over how each section is scored, and provides you with key tips for doing well on the SAT. Want to improve your SAT score by 160 points? Check out our best-in-class online SAT prep program. We guarantee your money back if you don't improve your SAT score by 160 points or more. Our program is entirely online, and it customizes your prep program to your strengths and weaknesses. We also feature thousands of practice questions, 6 official SAT practice tests, and personal feedback on your essays from an expert instructor. Check out our 5-day free trial:

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