

APPENDIX A:**Instructional Strategies and Keys to the SAT****General Instructional Strategies for Reading:**

- » Require students to practice reading and analyzing extended passages of text at varied levels of text complexity. The Reading Test passages span a range of difficulty from the early high school to early postsecondary (college-entry, credit bearing) levels of reading.
- » Use multiple reading passages to explore ideas in both fiction and nonfiction, giving students the opportunity to practice analysis and synthesis of texts.
- » Include graphs, tables, and charts in reading assignments. The Reading Test includes two passages accompanied by one or two related informational graphics. Students will be asked to interpret graphics and make connections between graphics and passages. (They will not need to use mathematical computation to answer the questions.)
- » Ask students to investigate the way authors use word choice, structure, and other techniques to create a desired effect in both fiction and nonfiction passages.
- » Direct students to analyze history and social studies passages from the U.S. Founding Documents and texts in the great global conversation. Reading selections from such texts helps prepare students for the rigors of making meaning from challenging, often abstract texts on serious topics such as rights, duties, and freedoms. The goal here is not to prepare students for specific test passages—the Reading Test does not follow a prescribed list of texts—but instead to acquaint students with the nature and challenges of reading such works and to engage them in the “conversations” these texts inspire. All of the information needed to answer the associated Reading Test questions is found in the passages themselves—the test does not assume that students will have read these passages previously. When useful, a historical note will be provided to contextualize the reading for students.

Keys to the SAT:

- » On the redesigned SAT, reading passages are selected with both quantitative and qualitative measures of text complexity in mind

and represent a range of difficulties consistent with effectively measuring students' college and career readiness.

- » The redesigned SAT offers only four choices for each question, rather than five.

Skill-Building Strategies:

- » Students may be unaccustomed to the length and challenge of Reading Test passages. Assign a range of reading passages that includes some longer and more difficult selections, and provide students with needed scaffolding and support so that they can develop the needed independence in reading such pieces.
- » To help students recognize how an author's selection of words and phrases shapes meaning, style, and tone, ask them to select a particularly meaningful or powerful word or phrase from a reading selection and substitute for it another word or phrase of similar meaning. Discuss how it is uncommon for two words or phrases to have exactly the same impact, nuance, or connotation even when they have similar dictionary definitions.
- » When reading literature passages, primary sources, or current event publications, ask students to use the SOAPSTone method to analyze the text. Ask students to identify the Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, and Tone. Students can deepen their understanding of both content and meaning by comparing these elements across several documents focused on a similar theme or topic.
- » Ask students to write questions that investigate understanding of a lesson or unit. Questions should be at various levels: literal, interpretive, and universal questions that prompt deeper thinking. Students will practice identifying meaningful and relevant information in order to create high-quality questions for their peers to answer. When students answer their peers' questions, require them to provide the evidence that supports their selection.
- » Ask students to identify similarities and differences in multiple passages. Have them create a Venn diagram or develop their own graphic organizers to organize their thoughts and facilitate synthesis and analysis of multiple texts. Visual representations can also be used to trace other kinds of relationships, such as sequence and cause-effect.
- » Ask students to locate and present additional texts that support an author's conclusion and to defend their choices by citing textual evidence (e.g., quotations) from the additional texts. This allows students to practice both synthesizing and supporting their ideas with evidence.

General Instructional Strategies for Writing and Language:

- » Instruct students to provide quotations from passages, data from graphs, tables or charts, or other relevant text as evidence to support conclusions in class discussions and on assignments. The redesigned SAT requires students to analyze passages using relevant evidence in reading and writing.
- » Teach students in all classes to practice writing and language analysis skills—effective language use, expression of ideas, and properly utilizing standard English conventions—to develop their analyses of social studies, science, and career-related passages.
- » Practice revising and editing during class by asking students to refine their own work, as well as the work of their peers, to build analysis skills related to grammatical conventions, word choice, and sentence structure in extended contexts.
- » Give students the opportunity to correct mistakes, both in carefully constructed errors you provide and in their own work. They will be asked to make corrections in word choice, conventions of usage and punctuation, organization, sentence structure, and analysis of graphical data on the redesigned SAT.

Keys to the SAT:

The redesigned SAT frequently refers to informational graphics in Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Test questions. When passages and/or questions are accompanied by graphs, tables, or charts on the Writing and Language Test, students will be asked to draw connections between the text and graphics—for example, they may be asked to correct a writer’s inaccurate interpretation of data presented in a table. Answers to all questions are anchored in the context of the passage.

Skill-Building Strategies:

- » Teach students to use OPTIC to interpret informational graphics:
 - O – write **O**verview notes about the graphic;
 - P – zoom in on the **P**arts of the visual and describe important details;
 - T – highlight the words of the **T**itle;
 - I – identify **I**nterrelationships among elements of the graphic;
 - C – draw **C**onclusions about the graphic as a whole.

- » Peer editing can be an important part of the writing process and a useful teaching and learning activity for both the writer and the editor. Ensure that students attend to both rhetorical aspects of texts (development, organization, language use) and mechanics (sentence structure, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling) as they comment on their classmates' writing. Use rubrics and checklists to remind students of important writing criteria.
- » Provide students with a reading passage containing several sentences in need of correction. Ask students to improve the sentences, focusing their attention on the context of the error, its effect on the sentence, and the meaning of the sentence within the passage. You might introduce such issues as dangling and other misplaced modifiers, inappropriate shifts in verb tense, lack of agreement between pronouns and antecedents, and illogical comparisons between unlike terms. After students make corrections, ask them to explain their reasoning. Students are thus simultaneously practicing using language conventions and supporting their answers with evidence. Learn more about **standard English conventions** assessed at **SAT Suite of Assessments**.
- » Encourage students to attend to errors in the application of **standard English conventions**. Use released student essay samples from the College Board to practice analyzing text for strength of proposition, support, focus, and effective language use.
- » Ask students to review text messages and then correct grammatically incomplete sentences, problems with end-of-sentence punctuation and punctuation within sentences, and cases of nonstandard expression (when words and phrases are used in a way not typical of standard written English) according to standard English conventions. Discuss how these changes influence the tone and meaning of the messages.
- » Familiarize students with the analysis of data, graphs, and charts in conjunction with text. Using the informational graphics in a textbook or periodical, provide students with inaccurate interpretations of data and ask them to correct the error(s). Have them explicitly describe the data they used to make each correction.

General Instructional Strategies for the Optional Essay:

- » Use the SAT Essay prompt as a foundation for frequent writing assignments in all content-area classes. Students strengthen their learning by writing in science, social studies, math, health, and career-related courses.

- » Practice evaluating evidence for consistent and legitimate supporting arguments. Students must discern whether the evidence they use actually strengthens their argument.
- » Revisit previous writing assignments periodically, and allow students to alter their evidence, their word choices, or otherwise edit their work to strengthen their skills.

Keys to the SAT

- » The **prompt** used for the SAT Essay will be consistent for all administrations. The passage will differ.

Skill-Building Strategies

- » Use the SAT Essay prompt with passages relevant to your curriculum (science, social studies, health, career), giving students the opportunity to analyze quality pieces of writing in the content area and to practice with the prompt.
- » To ensure that your students understand the difference between opinion, argument, and analysis, assign all three types of writing. Require students to use evidence to support their analyses of nonfiction documents. Remind them that the SAT Essay is interested in evidence-based claims, not their personal opinions.
- » Students benefit from using a rubric to analyze their writing—rubrics provide a clear description of the skills, knowledge, and understandings they must demonstrate. Give students the opportunity to compare the rubric to their work, and to the writing of their peers, evaluating areas in which they met the standards of the rubric and areas in which they need improvement. See **Appendix C** for the SAT Essay rubric.
- » Use the sample student essays in **Appendix C** of this guide to extend understanding of the SAT Essay prompt. Immerse students in the samples and get them to notice components and characteristics common to all, in addition to analyzing and identifying areas for improvement.

General Instructional Strategies for Math:

- » Ensure that students practice solving multistep problems. The redesigned SAT often asks them to solve more than one problem to arrive at the correct answer.
- » Organize students into small working groups. Ask them to discuss how to arrive at solutions. When their solutions are incorrect, ask them to discuss how to make corrections. Encourage them to express quantitative relationships in meaningful words and sentences to support their arguments and conjectures.

- » Vary the types of problems in homework assignments so that students are not always using the same strategy to solve every problem. Students benefit from the practice of choosing the right mathematical strategy in addition to solving the problems correctly.
- » Assign students math problems or create classroom-based assessments that do not allow the use of a calculator. This practice encourages greater number sense, probes students' understanding of content on a conceptual level, and aligns to the testing format of the redesigned SAT.
- » Develop interest and facility in math by practicing in science and social studies. Use tables, expressions, and graphs that students encounter in other content areas to present math as a tool that may be applied to many areas of study rather than being relegated to math classes. Provide frequent opportunities for students to interpret and apply mathematical skills and concepts in real-worlds contexts, particularly in the sciences and social studies.

Keys to the SAT:

- » On the redesigned SAT, students will be asked to answer multiple questions pertaining to the same prompt.
- » The redesigned SAT Math Test emphasizes students' ability to apply math to solve problems in rich and varied contexts, and it features questions that require problem solving and data analysis to solve problems in science, social studies, and career-related contexts. Students must see how the math problems they solve are generated from questions in science, social studies, economics, psychology, health, and other career content areas. Give them many opportunities to practice in all of their classes.
- » Although most of the questions on the Math Test are multiple choice, a portion of the questions are student-produced response questions, also known as grid-ins. Instead of choosing a correct answer from a list of options, students are required to solve problems and enter their answers in the grids provided on the answer sheet. Visit [SAT Suite of Assessments](#) for more information about student-produced response questions.

Skill-Building Strategies:

- » Provide students with explanations and/or equations that incorrectly describe a graph. Ask students to identify the errors and provide corrections, citing the reasoning behind the change.
- » Students can organize information to present data and answer a question or show a problem solution using multiple tools. Ask students to create pictures, tables, graphs, lists, models, and/or

verbal expressions to interpret text and/or data to help them arrive at a solution.

- » Ask students to solve problems that require multiple steps to arrive at the solution.
- » As students work in small groups to solve problems, facilitate discussions in which they communicate their own thinking and critique the reasoning of others as they work toward a solution. Ask open-ended questions. Direct their attention to real-world situations to provide context for the problem.
- » Help students strengthen their skills in problem solving and data analysis by reading and understanding graphs in many contexts. Ask them to find a chart/graph/table from a periodical and write a series of questions about the graphic to be discussed in class. Challenge them to dig deep into the data and the purpose of the graphic and then ask meaningful questions about it. Ask them to present purposefully incorrect interpretations and ask the class to correct their analyses.
- » Use “Guess and Check” to explore different ways to solve a problem when other strategies for solving are not obvious. Students first guess the solution to a problem and then check that the guess fits the information in the problem and is an accurate solution. They can then work backward to identify proper steps to arrive at the solution.
- » Assign math problems for students to solve without the use of a calculator. Assign problems for which the calculator is actually a deterrent to expedience, and give students the choice whether to utilize the calculator. Discuss how to solve both ways and which method is more advantageous.