



美国名校入学考试指导系列

SAT

阅读分析及训练

李晓霞
|编著|

SAT
Critical Reading
Analyses
and Practice

清华大学出版社

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丛书序

SAT,又称学术能力评估测试,是1901年以来美国普遍使用的大学入学考试,也是国际学生申请美国本科必须参加的考试之一。经过多年不断地修改和完善,目前的SAT版本不仅测试考生的知识水平,而且注重考查他们运用知识和独立思考的能力。

考生要在SAT考试中取得高分并不容易,对母语不是英语的中国学生来说尤其如此,所以平时持之以恒的努力和考前全力以赴的冲刺都是必要的。为了提高考生平时练习的效率,有目标地进行考前突击复习,我们特意编写了这套美国名校入学考试指导系列。

在编写过程中,常春藤100教育的资深顾问团队将其多年丰富的入学申请成就和咨询经验进行了总结,同时,SAT教学专家仔细研究了历年的SAT考题,并收集了大量美国历史、文化、新闻及教育方面的素材,以求我们的这套书更贴近真题,更有指导性、针对性和时代性。

这套丛书包括:

- SAT 数学宝典
- 美国大学入学申请文章写作及例文欣赏
- SAT 词汇宝典
- SAT 作文:你也可以拿满分
- SAT 阅读分析及训练
- SAT 语法攻略

其内容包揽了常春藤100教育10年来对美国著名大学录取标准的分析,东西方教育体制的比较,以及指导考生成功进入美国名校的经验和个案。在英语和数学方面,这套丛书从词汇、语法、阅读、写作,到几何、代数、统计、概率以及基础数论的计算和分析都做了详尽地解释和深刻地剖析,并给予考生以学习方法上的指导和考试技巧上的提示。此外,该丛书还收入了大量由常春藤100教育SAT专家撰写的相关练习和仿真限时考题。

在使用这套丛书的过程中,考生对SAT会从知之甚少到驾轻就熟,从茫然不知所措到坦然从容应对。本套丛书帮助考生丰富科学知识、接触美国文化、提高英语技能、熟悉考试模式、充分认识自我、增强应试能力。

从准备参加SAT考试,到如愿以偿进入理想的美国大学,是一个短至数月,长至几

年的过程。这个过程犹如在崎岖不平的小道上攀登,是对毅力的磨练和恒心的考验。对正处于个性形成期的中学生而言,这个过程对他们将来的人生轨迹和成功有着重要的作用。SAT 是一项有相当难度的考试,考生在准备考试的过程中,需有坚强的毅力克服重重困难,需有持久的恒心面对种种挑战。从这个意义上来说,准备 SAT 考试就是为将来锲而不舍勇往直前的人生铺路,以达到自信自强的目的。

参加 SAT 考试,进入理想的美国大学,需要考生的勤奋和努力,也需要家长的支持和培育。家长希望孩子受到良好的教育,更希望孩子敢于面对挫折,经得住生活的考验,有百折不挠的精神。当孩子复习考试遇到困难时,理解并帮助会给孩子温暖,鼓励并鞭策会给孩子动力。敢于参加 SAT 考试并为之付出努力本身就是积极向上的态度和行动。不管结果如何,通过这一过程,孩子会逐渐积累知识,培养毅力。这是不可多得的经历,是现代教育的理念,也是考生家长的期盼。

SAT 不仅寄托着家长的希望,更孕育着考生的成功!

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Analyses

本章介绍了 SAT 阅读部分,对如何完句填空、阅读文章、回答问题及选择答案作了详尽的分析和解释。

A. About the SAT Test

Formerly known as The Scholastic Aptitude Test or The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), the SAT is now commonly known as The SAT Reasoning Test. It is a standardized test for college admissions in the United States. Introduced in 1901, it has changed several times in its scoring system and name. The current test, updated in 2005, takes three hours and forty-five minutes. Possible scores range from 600 to 2400, combining test results from three 800-point sections (math, critical reading, and writing).

B. About the SAT Critical Reading Section

As an important skill not only essential to college success, but also difficult to command, critical reading can never be overemphasized. It is one of the three major parts in the SAT test, making up of three scored sections, two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section. This part asks multiple choice questions, each with five answers. The questions are weighted equally. For each correct answer, one raw point is added. For each incorrect answer one-fourth of a point is deducted. Questions usually go in the order of the difficulty of the passage, and the number of questions about each passage is proportional to the length of the passage. Overall, questions set towards the beginning of this part are easier, and questions set towards the end are harder. This

may not always be true, but it is the rule of thumb in the SAT test.

The SAT Critical Reading includes sentence completions and questions about short and long passages. In the sentence completion part, there are several incomplete sentences with one or two blanks. From the five given answers, you are required to complete each sentence with the best choice. A good foundation in syntax and a rich vocabulary will greatly facilitate the completion of these sentences. In the passage part, there are short and long passages, each followed by a few questions. In terms of vocabulary, it is not as intense as the sentence completion part, but the questions may also test your understanding of certain words in the passages and your interpretation of the meaning of the complex sentences. Since some passages may be as long as over 800 words and reading them takes a considerable of time, skimming and scanning skills are crucial for the successful performance in this part. Now let's take a look at sentence completion and questions about passages separately.

a. Sentence Completion

The sentence-completion part is a measurement of your vocabulary and ability to identify the logical relationships between words and sentences. You are required to demonstrate your understanding of a large vocabulary extending far beyond everyday English. Moreover, you should be able to employ the second, third, or even the fourth sense of a word, which is often neglected by careless readers. In addition, you must have the ability to use the grammar knowledge, analyze the sentence structure and perceive the logic development of complicated sentences. Therefore, you should read each sentence very carefully because every word or part of the sentence is there for a reason. Only in this way can you select one or two words that best complete a given sentence.

About one-blank and two-blank sentences, some students may think the former are easier to complete than the latter. It might be true in some cases, but generally speaking, two-blank sentences give more clues and turn out to be less challenging. For one thing, in one-blank sentences, you need to know all the five choices, or your guessing is just hit-or-miss, while in two-blank sentences there are ten words given and there is bound to be some less difficult words. When you complete two-blank sentences, take one-blank at a time, whichever is easier for you and whichever you have more information for. If you identify one word doesn't fit into the sentence, you can dismiss both of the words in that choice. For another, two-blank sentences are normally longer than one-blank ones. Consequently, from the context there are more clues which in turn help you spot the best choice. Logically the two words in one choice can either rein-

force each other or contradict with each other. The setback is that the logic development in long sentences may not be straightforward and it may take longer time to figure out.

In sentence completion part, try to fill in the blanks with your own words first, so that when you are looking at the answer choices, you are basically looking for something that you are already thinking about. If you can't find the word that you are looking for, you should aggressively get rid of bad answer choices, the ones that are obviously wrong. I would suggest if you can get rid of at least one or two incorrect answer choices, you should take a guess and move on to the next question. Also, when you read the sentences through, you should pick up on words like *although*, *rather* or *however*; words that are going to shift the logic of the sentence usually set up some kind of contrast. The following are the examples of one-blank and two-blank sentences.

One-blank Sentences

Example 1

The military coup is planning a _____ scheme to overthrow and replace the incumbent government.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| A. <i>subversive</i> | B. <i>eclectic</i> |
| C. <i>cacophonous</i> | D. <i>defunct</i> |
| E. <i>impromptu</i> | |

- First and foremost, you need to know the meanings and, better still, the parts of speech of these five choices. Before you try to make your choice, look at the sentence to have the general idea and get as many clues as possible from the words and structure given. Then come up with a word of your own. Here is one approach you may employ to tackle this sentence: When you plan something, it can't be E (*impromptu*). It can't be D (*defunct*) either unless it is proven by the fact. Choice C (*cacophonous*) is about sound, noise or voice while Choice B (*eclectic*) is about components/elements from different sources. Besides, the words *overthrow* and *replace* imply what kind of scheme is being planned. The answer is A (*subversive*).

Example 2

There are general _____ against the president after the company suffered financial losses on the market.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| A. <i>obituaries</i> | B. <i>epitaphs</i> |
| C. <i>obloquies</i> | D. <i>epitomes</i> |
| E. <i>equinoxes</i> | |

- From the incomplete sentence, we can know that the missing word is a noun with a de-

rogatory sense, similar to *blame*, *reproach*, or *reprimand* in meaning. Of all the five choices, only Choice C is close to these words in meaning, and it is the right choice. Of course, unless you are familiar with these five SAT words, it is quite hard for you to get the right answer.

Two-blank Sentences

Example 3

After attending his lectures and listening to his _____ speeches, Susan decided to change her preconceived notion that he was _____ and hard to fathom.

- A. *incomprehensible* . . . *ambiguous* B. *equivocal* . . . *misleading*
 C. *garrulous* . . . *loquacious* D. *laconic* . . . *succinct*
 E. *voluble* . . . *iniquitous*

- In the previous example, you need to take two blanks into consideration. Apart from the meaning of the sentence, you have to think about its logic. The words *change* and *preconceived* indicate that the word in the second blank is contrary to that in the first in meaning. To make things even clearer, the phrase *hard to fathom* implies that the word for the second blank has some negative meaning. Only Choice E has two words with totally different meanings, so it is the right answer.

Example 4

His book on the history of this topic is admittedly conventional or even _____; nonetheless, it is _____ work that covers a considerable amount of ground.

- A. *exclusive* . . . *an inclusive* B. *meticulous* . . . *a comprehensible*
 C. *rapacious* . . . *an analogous* D. *dubious* . . . *a comprehensive*
 E. *contingent* . . . *an indisputable*

- Here are the three steps to analyze the above sentence.
 - The word *even* implies that the word for the first blank goes down further in meaning from the neutral word *conventional*, so it should be a negative word and, like *conventional*, about quality.
 - The word *nonetheless* goes to the opposite and switches from the negative to positive direction. Therefore, the second blank must have a positive word about quantity related to *amount*.
 - The words for both blanks should be qualified to modify *book/work*. In other words, they should form the right collocations with *book/work*.

Of all the five choices, only Choice D matches the analysis.

The four preceding sentences are presented to show that vocabulary plays a key role

in correctly completing sentences with blanks in the SAT. If you know none of the words in the choices, you are at the mercy of guessing. Nevertheless, finding clues from the words and structure given is equally important. If you know the logic development of the ideas and what the writer/author of the sentence wants to say, the chances of making the right choice are high.

b. Passage-based questions

In the passage part, topics may vary from social sciences, humanities to natural sciences and personal narratives. Quite often you are required to compare two related passages of opposing views on one topic. The length of the passages chosen ranges from 100 words to 850 words. In addition to vocabulary, this part tests your ability to skim, scan, analyze, synthesize, and summarize the information in a passage. You should also be able to make inferences by perceiving the author's tone, diction, attitude, and purpose. Though challenging or even formidable for many high school students, the SAT Critical Reading is not at all impenetrable or inscrutable. Let us start with passages.

What kinds of prose are chosen in the SAT critical reading section?

Even though the passages in the SAT critical reading section cover a great variety of topics, they generally fall into three categories: narratives (to tell), arguments (to persuade) and exposition (to explain). When you skim a passage, ask yourself what the purpose of the passage is: Is it to tell a story with a conflict, to persuade you to accept an opinion, or to analyze a concept with facts?

Narratives center upon conflicts which present problems for protagonists to solve. This kind of prose usually starts with the introduction of a conflict followed by the conflict development before it is solved. When you read, pay special attention to when, where, who, what and how. But don't go too much into detail at the first reading, or you may waste time on the details that are irrelevant to any of the questions.

Unlike narratives, argumentative prose focuses on a thesis. It tries to persuade readers to believe in the author's argument. When you read an argumentative passage, it is equally important to understand what the author argues for as well as what he/she argues against. Remember to answer questions based on the author's arguments and logic, not what you think is right or wrong.

Different from the two categories above, expository prose is meant to provide readers with factual information. It is written in the third person from a neutral point of view and without emotion, so it is objective supported by what has happened or what exists. Im-

portant information is obtained from causes and effects which explain what brings out the final result.

What types of questions are asked in the SAT critical reading section?

Reading passages is only part of the critical reading process. To gauge your comprehension, different types of questions are asked in the SAT. How these questions are answered directly affects your score for this part and your overall score. You may find the critical reading part more time-consuming, more challenging and harder to excel in than any other parts in the test, but once you know what to expect, answering these questions becomes much easier.

First, unlike classroom questions from your teachers, these questions are objective, namely, they have answers every good English teacher will agree upon and the answers are cut-and-dried. As you work on this part, there is no need to stretch beyond the passage or combine your personal experience with the information presented. All you are required to do is to focus on what is conveyed or implied in the reading materials.

Second, though of large quantity and great variety, the SAT passage-based reading questions can be classified into questions of purpose, central idea and general structure. From a different perspective, they can also be divided into literal, inferential and analytical questions, which overlap with the previous classification, i. e., all the questions of purpose, general idea, and structure can be literal, inferential or analytical. Literal questions are usually easier. They are about the information directly presented in the passage. Sometimes they can be about the meaning of a certain word or phrase in the passage, or about a pronoun and its antecedent or reference. Answers to inferential questions are harder to get. You are to make inferences or draw certain conclusions based on a sentence and/or the context around it. With analytical questions, you have to analyze, synthesize or summarize, quite often, the whole text to get the right answer.

The following are a few examples of the SAT critical reading questions:

Example 1

The primary purpose of the passage is to _____.

- This question of purpose is inferential or analytical. You can't get the right answer by reading only one phrase or one sentence. You need to read the whole passage, and analyze it to make inferences or draw conclusions.

Example 2

In line 9, “pine” most nearly means _____.

- This is a literal question regarding a word. It may test your understanding of its second, third, or even fourth sense. To identify which sense is used, you need to comprehend the context in which this word is used. The word *pine* usually means a coniferous tree, but do you know it is also a verb, meaning to long painfully, to yearn deeply? From the context, you must judge which meaning is employed here.

Example 3

The “paradox” in line 34 and 43 refers to _____.

- This is another literal question concerning a word, but it asks for its reference. To answer this kind of question, you need to go back to the sentences before or read the sentences after this word to find the reference.

Example 4

The author’s strategy in the first paragraph of Passage 1 is best described as one that uses _____.

- This question is about the author’s style or tone. Only by analyzing the first paragraph of Passage 1 can you be sure which answer to choose.

Example 5

The author would most probably agree that _____.

- The answer to the question is not explicitly expressed, but implied in the reading material, so you must get the general attitude of the author in the reading material to understand the implication and make inferences.

While most reading comprehension questions are straightforward, some questions can be tricky with negative words. Be aware of these small but critical words. Here are two examples.

Example 6

The narrator mentions all of the following as problems EXCEPT _____.

Example 7

Which of the following arguments will the author disagree with?

- In this kind of questions, pay special attention to the negative words EXCEPT, DISAGREE, or sometimes NOT. Bear these negative words in mind when you make choices. Find the answer that is NOT mentioned, supported, or is contrary to the author’s opinion, attitude, etc.

When you read passages in the SAT test, you should read quickly, especially in the first skimming. When you answer the question, however, I would suggest that you take your time. It doesn't mean that you take no notice of time, but that you need to understand what the question asks about and where to find the right answer. Many students read extremely slowly at first reading, and then rush through the questions with many wrong answers. Some don't read the question carefully, and they are likely to miss words like *except*, *the least* or *not*. In other words, the answer choice is going to be what is not mentioned or what contradicts the content of the passage. Therefore, reading the question carefully is really important. Don't spend too much time reading the passage. Instead, spend more of your time locating the right answer and answering the question. Remember: you don't get points for reading the passage; you only get points for successfully answering questions.

I believe the preceding elaborate explanations have given you some ideas about the SAT critical reading section. It is challenging, and you can't expect yourself to make great progress in this area overnight, but with assiduous work and commitment, you are sure to overcome the difficulty and succeed in what you are striving for.

Chapter 2

Preparation

为了考出好成绩,务必要有充分的准备。这一章从词汇、语法、阅读技巧等方面给考生建议和忠告,为他们在备考过程中助一臂之力。

As the proverb says opportunities only favor those who are prepared, your success lies in your persistence and perseverance in getting yourself ready for challenges ahead. The SAT is not a test you can excel without effort. If, by any chance, you breeze through it, the chances are that other students can do it well too.

As the SAT is a norm-referenced test—Norm-referenced tests (NRTs) compare a person's score against the scores of a group of people who have already taken the same exam, your performance in the test is compared with those of the other test-takers, most of whom are native speakers of the English language in the United States. The critical reading part is difficult for American high school students, let alone for our Chinese students to whom English is a second or foreign language. To get 95 percentile in the SAT (2000 or higher out of 2400), you must do all you can to improve your reading skill and comprehension. You must read all the time to enlarge your vocabulary and consolidate your grammar knowledge.

A. Build Up Vocabulary Bank

The SAT critical reading section questions the student's understanding of the vocabulary, content and style of specific reading passages. This section is the most time demanding, with some passages taking up to 15 minutes. Vocabulary plays a key role in both sentence completion and passage comprehension, so it is necessary to boost your knowledge of SAT-level words.