

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAT Critical Reading Prep Guidelines

## About the SAT Critical Reading Test

Some key information you should know about the SAT Critical Reading test section is summarized below.

- Students are provided 70 minutes to complete this portion of the test, which consists of two 25-minute parts and one 20-minute section.
- There are 48 questions on the passage-based reading portion of the test. Passages range in length from 100-850 words and cover a variety of topics including natural science, social science, humanities, narratives, and paired passages.
- Students are tested on their comprehension of what is stated or implied in the passages, not their prior knowledge of the passage content.
- Questions are arranged in order of the passage, so you can read small portions, answer a question or two, and read on from there.
- There are lots of different types of questions on the test including main ideas, inferences, vocabulary in context, tone, detail-related questions, and questions about why an author says or does something.
- The sentence completion portion of the test consists of 19 questions designed to test your knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure.
- The difficulty of the sentence completion questions increases as you answer the questions in order.
- All of the questions on the test are worth the same number of points, regardless of the type of difficulty of the question.
- Collegeboard.com also provides an SAT Preparation Center at [http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep\\_one/prep\\_one.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html)

## Critical Reading Test Strategies

Practice is the key to success on the SAT Critical Reading section. Having a strategy in place for using the test time wisely will help you answer all of the questions. The following strategies will be useful as you practice for and complete the SAT Critical Reading test.

- Passage-based reading questions do not increase in difficulty throughout the test; they follow the logic of the passage.
- All of the information you need to answer the passage-based reading questions is within the passages; they can be found by reading carefully.
- Passage-based reading questions often include line numbers to help direct you to the relevant portions within the passage.
- Read carefully throughout the test.
- Before reading the passage, take time to review the questions associated with the passage so you know what you should be looking for as you read.
- When you come across a question that is difficult to understand, restate it in your own words so you can identify precisely what is being asked in the question.

- Answer as many questions as you can for each passage before moving on to the next passage.
- In your test booklet, clearly mark the questions you do not answer so you can go back to them easily if you have time at the end of the test.
- If you do not know the meaning of a word within this section of the test, utilize clues to help you increase your understanding of the word.
  - Look at the roots, prefixes and suffixes that make up the word
  - Use context clues within the sentence to help you decipher meaning
  - Think about related words

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### SAT Critical Reading Practice Activity

**Excerpted from: Student Experience Journals: “Fighting Hunger and Malnutrition in Honduras” by Kelly Lawrence**

**NOTE:** Project Pericles is a national, not-for-profit organization of colleges and universities committed to making social responsibility and participatory citizenship an essential part of their education programs. Periclean Scholars are students participating in this program.

“The first week in Honduras was eye-opening for me. It was impossible to overlook the poverty and the cultural differences that exist. Honduras is the second poorest nation in Central America—most houses look run-down and shabby, trash covers the ground, and people's appearances don't take a top priority. Crime rates are high and security guards are everywhere. The nicer houses are hidden behind huge walls lined with barbed wire. It is common for both men and women to be visibly armed with a weapon. At first I was taken aback when I saw a mother walking along the street with her children, carrying a rifle. By the end of the trip, it didn't faze me.

I quickly learned that hospital conditions in Honduras were far worse than any I'd ever seen. The emergency room was one large, open room, over-crowded with hospital beds and people. The patients were fed a mere two meals per day and often had to ward off their appetites for up to 12 hours. The volunteer program at the university raises its own money to feed the patients snacks so that the patients and families don't starve.

When I heard how rampant malnutrition is in Honduras, I was surprised to see so many adults who looked healthy or even overweight. I saw some children who looked rail thin sitting beside parents who looked like they hadn't gone hungry a day in their lives. During the presentation at the university, I found out that one of the main causes of malnutrition is not eating a healthy diet. Many Hondurans don't receive the proper nutrients they need because they only consume soda and junk food. From failure to eat a healthy, balanced diet, many of the people are literally dying. Malnutrition is also the reason children looked so much younger than they actually were. Predicting a child's age was impossible—most four-year-olds were equivalent to the size of a toddler in the United States. This helped me to understand a little better why so many people are malnourished, but not everyone looks **emaciated**.

Serving at the hospital was an enjoyable experience, despite the sadness that filled my soul. All the children, patients, and families were so pleasant to be around. Regardless of their poor health, they were smiling and happy. They were also grateful and appreciative of everything. Most families had camped out around the outskirts of the hospital, since hotel rooms are not an option, and were living homeless. Regardless, everyone we encountered was polite and friendly. It was really uplifting to see such positive faces amidst such depressing circumstances.

The Periclean Scholars had worked for three long years to raise the money and furnish the kitchen with proper tools and appliances. It was such a success! I was proud of what they had accomplished and it gave me inspiration. A handful of students from the U.S. had the capability of building a

kitchen that would feed thousands of needy people in Honduras. Although there were surely a lot of struggles along the way and fear that it wouldn't be completed, it all came together in the end. The kitchen was a huge accomplishment, but one truth that this trip reinforced is that it doesn't take money, donations, or manual labor to change someone's life—a simple grin will do the trick.”

1. In lines 7-8 the author says, “By the end of the trip, it didn’t faze me.” Why did the author say this?

2. In line 23 what does the term emaciated mean?

3. What conclusion can you draw from reading paragraph 3?

4. According to the author, how can someone be malnourished and still look healthy or even overweight?

5. Reread the last sentence of the passage. What message do you think the author is trying to convey?

6. How would you summarize the main idea of this passage?

7. Describe the author’s tone in this passage.

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### Create Your Own Critical Reading Quiz

Follow the steps below for creating your own critical reading quiz.

1. Select an article/transcript such as the ones listed below for an in-class SAT Critical Reading practice activity. Be sure to print two copies of the article/transcript.

“Campaigning to End Child Labor”

[http://www.pbs.org/now/enterprisingideas/blog/2007/06/campaigning\\_to\\_end\\_child\\_labor.html](http://www.pbs.org/now/enterprisingideas/blog/2007/06/campaigning_to_end_child_labor.html)

“Lance Armstrong on the HPV Debate”

<http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/308/lance-armstrong.html>

“Bill Moyers on Paying for War”

<http://www.pbs.org/now/commentary/moyers18.html>

“Reporter’s Notebook: A Trip to Ain Shams”

<http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/314/ain-shams.html>

“Producer’s Notebook: NOW’s Brian Epstein from New Orleans”

<http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/247/schools-documentary.html>

“Orville Schell on Responsible Press”

<http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/231/index.html>

“Perspectives: Doctors Speak Out”

<http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/228/lethal-injection.html>

Teacher’s Choice

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2. Carefully read the transcript or article you have chosen.

3. Your job will be to create a 5-10 question critical reading quiz based on the content of the transcript/article. Questions should be in short answer format. Remember to include questions that address the following:

- vocabulary in context
- main idea or author’s purpose
- making inferences/drawing conclusions
- analyzing author’s tone
- questions about details explicitly mentioned in the text
- questions that ask why the author does or says something specific

4. Read your article/transcript again, carefully marking information that could be used as you develop your quiz questions.
5. Write your 5-10 question critical reading quiz based on the content and what you have marked in the transcript/article. Questions should be in short answer format. Include questions that address the following:
  - vocabulary in context
  - main idea or author's purpose
  - making inferences/drawing conclusions
  - analyzing author's tone
  - questions about details explicitly mentioned in the text
  - questions that ask why the author does or says something specific
6. Create a key for your quiz on a separate sheet of paper. On the key, indicate the type of skill you are testing with each question (i.e. vocabulary, main idea, making inferences, etc.) and write the correct answer to the question.
7. When directed by your teacher, provide your partner with a copy of your article/transcript and the quiz. Be prepared to discuss the correct answers to the quiz with your partner. You should also be prepared to explain why the answers you selected are correct based on your article/transcript.