

Book One

Reading

Introduction

This book will take you through three sections regarding SAT reading: Simplifying Structure, Order of Operations, and Success in Strategies. This order is intentional.

We begin this book with Simplifying Structure to give you a clear idea of what “SAT reading” entails. This section can be broken down into the following components: time, problem types, tone, answers, and how the relationship of these aspects work together.

Once you understand WHAT the test is, you will learn HOW to excel in the test. Order of Operations shows you exactly how to approach the reading section. These steps combined with a clear understanding of WHAT SAT reading is, create a powerful duo that will guide you through the passages. However, it is missing some vital information.

Success in Strategies aims to fill the holes that the other two sections do not address. It will discuss rephrasing questions, inferring answers, optimizing improvement, and refining efficiency throughout the section.

At the end of the book, you will receive a checklist of tangible steps you can implement to improve your score. Let’s get started!

Simplifying Structure

Time and Text

The reading section consists of 52 different questions spread across 5 different reading passages. This gives you approximately 13 minutes per passage. Every passage will include three parts: a title, the body paragraph, and the questions.

The title might include information on the Author, context on the body paragraph, dates, speakers, or citations. Additionally, the title may hint on the tone of the passage: “Money can’t buy love”, “How Scientific Innovation, Increased Efficiency, and Good Intentions Can Make Our Energy and Climate Problems Worse”, “How Technology is Destroying Jobs”.

These titles either hint at the point of the passage or show the author’s possible bias toward a subject. A quick but careful examination of the title before reading the passage is very beneficial.

The body paragraph has a range of different possible topics. However, the College Board narrows the topics down to 4 main groups: literature, history, science, and social science. It is important to note that every one of these topics will occur once throughout the test, and there are some important consistencies to consider. Firstly, literature will always be the first passage on the test. Secondly, you might have noticed that there are 5 passages and only 4 topics, this means that there will be one literature passage, two science passages, and two History/social studies passages. Students often struggle more with one topic than another, so be familiar with your strong areas and your weak areas so you are ready for whatever the SAT throws at you. If you struggle with science passages, focus on mastering those passages first.

When reading through the passages you might be tempted to treat it like any normal book. Instead, treat it like a treasure hunt. You want to read the passage actively not passively. What does reading actively mean? Remember this: it is Evidence-Based Reading. All the answers are supported by a text in the passage. The College Board will try to trick you with questions that sound like they are asking your opinion. They are not. Reading actively simply means answering questions with direct evidence from the passage.

Tone

You might be asking yourself: How do I know what to look for? This is where the tone of the topics come into play.

- Tone: The feeling, bias, direction, or emotion omitted in the passage

Literature: make sure you are paying attention to the emotion that is being shown and who is showing that emotion. Is it the Author? How did they feel? What was X’s reaction to Y? Additionally, you want to understand who the narrator is and what their role is in the story (If they have one at all).

History and Social Science: make sure you note what the author/speaker is trying to address, how they are addressing it (rhetorical questions, creating analogies, etc.), and the conclusion that the author/speaker is suggesting.

Science: Note the direction of the passage (does it start with a hypothesis and finish with a conclusion? etc.). Also note small details asked in questions (often the questions will have small but important differences that will change the answer). Lastly, pay close attention to the graph and make sure you read it correctly.

Keeping these general concepts in mind while reading through the passage will make a drastic difference in your text comprehension as well as your ability to answer questions correctly.

Problem Types

Throughout the reading section there are 3 main types of questions that you will encounter: vocabulary questions, line reference questions, and general passage questions.

Vocabulary questions are any type of question that asks you to substitute in a word. An Example would be:

“As used in line 1 and line 55, “directly” most nearly means”.

- A. Frankly
- B. Confidently
- C. Without mediation
- D. Without precision

An example of something that is not a vocabulary question (but is often confused as one) would be:

“the authors’ use the words, “exact,” “specific,” and “complement” in lines 39-41 in the final paragraph functions mainly to:”

- A. Confirm that the nucleotide sequences are known for most molecules of DNA.
- B. Counter the claim that sequences of bases along a chain can occur in any order.
- C. Support the claim that the phosphate-sugar backbone of the authors’ model is completely regular.
- D. Emphasize how one chain of DNA may serve as a template to be copied during DNA replication.

Vocabulary questions are only questions that need no outside context except for the sentence before and after. You can easily pick them out by looking at the answers and seeing one or two words, instead of whole sentences. Additionally, vocabulary questions are used to substitute singular words, not ask questions about tone or the general passage.

The second type of questions are line reference questions. There are multiple types of line reference questions. It can be simplified like this: Line reference in the question, or line reference in the answers.

Example 1: Line reference in the question

“In the second paragraph (lines 10-16), what do the authors claim to be a feature of biological interest?”

- A. The chemical formula of DNA
- B. The common fiber axis
- C. The X-ray evidence.
- D. DNA consisting of two chains.

Remember: This is “Evidence-based Reading a Writing” so the answer will be in the passage.

Something important to note about these types of questions. There is a pattern to the answers. There are generally 4 types of answers to look for here. One answer will be too broad, one will be too narrow, one will not be related at all to the question, and one will be right. Generally, the options will be narrowed down to two answers (sometimes three if it is a hard question). The narrow answer might seem right but will have one small tweak that will make the answer wrong. Also, you want to select the answer that is the MOST right. You will learn about this idea later in the Success in Strategies chapter.

Example 2: Line reference in the answer

Before you look at the example you must know that the questions that have the line references in the answers are also referred to as two-part questions. The first part will be a normal question, the second part will ask you to give evidence for the answer to the first question.

“Which reaction does Akira most fear from Chie?”

- A. She will consider his proposal inappropriate.
- B. She will mistake his earnestness for immaturity.
- C. She will consider his unscheduled visit an imposition.
- D. She will underestimate the sincerity of his emotions.

“which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?”

- A. Line 33 (His voice . . . refined)
- B. Lines 49-51 (You . . . mind)
- C. Lines 63-64 (Please . . . proposal)
- D. Lines 71-72 (Eager . . . face)

To get the best results for these problems here are the steps I suggest:

1. Read the question (but not the answers) to the first question.
2. Read through the lines until you find the line that talks about the first question.
3. Select the line that talks about the first question as the correct answer.
4. Read and choose the correct answer for the first question.

These steps are fairly bullet proof. It is also imperative that you have sufficient reading comprehension so that you may understand the harder passages and select the correct lines. I will give more details on this idea in the Success in Strategies chapter.

General Passage questions:

General passage questions are everything else. These questions might include questions on the main point of the passage, ask about specific details of the passage, or ask about the tone. They are the most difficult question to answer because you are not given a specific line to reference, you must find the answer. Luckily, there are some tips I can give you to help you hunt for the answers.

1. Have GREAT reading comprehension.

Understanding what is happening in the passage is the most essential part of the reading section. There are no strategies that allow you to bypass reading the passage. Read the passage slowly if you need to. Do not move on until you understand the sentence you just finished reading.

2. The questions are generally in order with the passage.

This allows you to answer the questions as you go. (More information in the order of operations chapter.)

3. If a question is talking about the entire passage, answer it at the end.

Questions of this nature might be framed like, “Which choice best describes what happened in the passage?” This is where understanding the flow of the passage will come in handy.

Now that you have learned what to expect from SAT reading, it is time for you to learn strategies to optimize your time and overall score.

Success in Strategies

Strategies are like the icing on the SAT cake. It is the part that so many people spend forever trying to figure out and what can make or break the test. Throughout this chapter I will give you the strategies that I found to be the most effective. I will further extrapolate on the application of these strategies in order of operations, so if something does not make sense stay with me. These strategies will take some practice to fully understand and master. Without further ado let's hop right into the strategies.

1. Read the title.

We covered this already, but I wanted to hammer it home. Reading the title will help you understand the passage before you read it. It is a useful tool that many students do not use. When reading the title, take note of the Author's name, the title and its possible bias, and the date.

2. Change the statements to questions, then look for the answers in the passage.

Example:

"In the passage, Akira addresses Chie with. . ."

Change to:

"What does Akira address Chie with?"

3. Annotate, annotate, annotate.

This is the BEST tip I can give you. Mark important phrases in the text, put line references in brackets, and underline vocabulary. This is going to save you all the time from flipping back and forth from question to answer. It will also allow you to keep track of where questions will be in the passage. This is the focus of the Order of Operations and is ESSENTIAL that you apply these steps. More information will be given in the Order of Operations.

4. Reading comprehension

If you have trouble understanding what passages are saying, or you read something and then immediately forget what you just read, then you need to improve your reading comprehension. Speed is an essential part of this test, and you will benefit from processing information quickly. If you struggle with reading comprehension, all you need to do is practice reading more advanced texts. I suggest reading Shakespeare, any book with old English, KJV version of the Bible, or science studies. Fully understand what a sentence is saying before you move on then summarize every paragraph when you finish. This is a great skill to learn, and you will benefit greatly from it. I suggest doing this for 30 minutes a day until you have sufficiently improved your reading.

5. Never infer anything.

Remember, this is “Evidence-based Reading and Writing” so every answer will be somewhere in the passage. There will be questions that tell you to infer an answer. A common example is comparing two passages. Questions are often phrased, “How would person A, respond to what person B said in their passage?” I promise “College Board” is not asking for your opinion. You need to look for which answer is used in the other passage. If multiple answers are mentioned in the other passage, which one is the MOST right? In other words, which answer matches the tone the most accurately?

6. Choose the MOST right answer.

Often it seems like you are at a crossroads between two or more answers. When this happens, simply ask yourself: Which answer is the MOST right?

7. Apply for accommodation if you can.

If you have dyslexia or ADHD or another type of learning disorder, it is smart to apply for accommodation. Accommodation can include: 1.5x-2.0x time on your test, additional breaks, assistive technology, reading and seeing accommodation and more. If you are taking the test at your school, the school normally administers accommodation, however if you are taking it at a separate testing facility, a form will have to be filled out on the College Board’s website 7-weeks in advance.

8. Circle the answer when you see it.

Applying this strategy hits two birds with one stone. It allows you to be sure of your answer, and it does not allow you to move on until you find the answer in the passage.

9. Fill in the scantron at the end.

Leave 2 minutes at the end to fill in the scantron instead of trying to do it as you go. This will save you time and mental energy.

Now that you have learned about the structure and strategies for the reading portion, I want to show you how to apply what you have learned with tangible steps in the reading portion.

Order of Operations

1. Read the title.

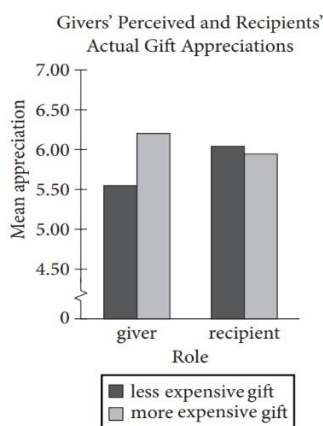
Questions 1-10 are based on the following passage.

This passage is from Lydia Minatoya, *The Strangeness of Beauty*. ©1999 by Lydia Minatoya. The setting is Japan in 1920. Chie and her daughter Naomi are members of the House of Fuji, a noble family.

Just from the title we can see the passage will have something to do with a mother and a daughter from a noble family and, “The Strangeness of Beauty”. It was written 79 years after the event occurred by a

woman named Lydia Minatoya. At this step you should make a mental note of what the topic of the passage is (Literature, History, Social Science, Science) and the different tones that are associated with those passages.

2. Look through the questions and mark line reference questions.



11

The authors most likely use the examples in lines 1-9 of the passage (“Every . . . showers”) to highlight the

- regularity with which people shop for gifts.
- recent increase in the amount of money spent on gifts.
- anxiety gift shopping causes for consumers.
- number of special occasions involving gift-giving.

12

In line 10, the word “ambivalent” most nearly means

- unrealistic.
- conflicted.
- apprehensive.
- supportive.

13

The authors indicate that people value gift-giving because they feel it

- functions as a form of self-expression.
- is an inexpensive way to show appreciation.
- requires the gift-recipient to reciprocate.
- can serve to strengthen a relationship.

14

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- Lines 10-13 (“Many . . . peers”)
- Lines 22-23 (“People . . . own”)
- Lines 31-32 (“Research . . . perspectives”)
- Lines 44-47 (“Although . . . unfounded”)

15

The “social psychologists” mentioned in paragraph 2 (lines 17-34) would likely describe the “deadweight loss” phenomenon as

- predictable.
- questionable.
- disturbing.
- unprecedented.

16

The passage indicates that the assumption made by gift-givers in lines 41-44 may be

- insincere.
- unreasonable.
- incorrect.
- substantiated.

Questions 11-21 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Francis J. Flynn and Gabrielle S. Adams, "Money Can't Buy Love: Asymmetric Beliefs about Gift Price and Feelings of Appreciation." ©2008 by Elsevier Inc.

Every day, millions of shoppers hit the stores in full force—both online and on foot—searching frantically for the perfect gift. Last year, Americans spent over \$30 billion at retail stores in the month of December alone. Aside from purchasing holiday gifts, most people regularly buy presents for other occasions throughout the year, including weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and baby showers. This frequent experience of gift-giving can engender ambivalent feelings in gift-givers. Many relish the opportunity to buy presents because gift-giving offers a powerful means to build stronger bonds with one's closest peers. At the same time, many dread the thought of buying gifts; they worry that their purchases will disappoint rather than delight the intended recipients.

Anthropologists describe gift-giving as a positive social process, serving various political, religious, and psychological functions. Economists, however, offer a less favorable view. According to Waldfogel (1993), gift-giving represents an objective waste of resources. People buy gifts that recipients would not choose to buy on their own, or at least not spend as much money to purchase (a phenomenon referred to as "the deadweight loss of Christmas"). To wit, givers are likely to spend \$100 to purchase a gift that receivers would spend only \$80 to buy themselves. This "deadweight loss" suggests that gift-givers are not very good at predicting what gifts others will appreciate. That in itself is not surprising to social psychologists. Research has found that people often struggle to take account of others' perspectives—their insights are subject to egocentrism, social projection, and multiple attribution errors.

What is surprising is that gift-givers have considerable experience acting as both gift-givers and gift-recipients, but nevertheless tend to overspend each time they set out to purchase a meaningful gift. In the present research, we propose a unique psychological explanation for this overspending problem—i.e., that gift-givers equate how much they

spend with how much recipients will appreciate the gift (the more expensive the gift, the stronger a gift-recipient's feelings of appreciation). Although a link between gift price and feelings of appreciation might seem intuitive to gift-givers, such an assumption may be unfounded. Indeed, we propose that gift-recipients will be less inclined to base their feelings of appreciation on the magnitude of a gift than givers assume.

Why do gift-givers assume that gift price is closely linked to gift-recipients' feelings of appreciation? Perhaps givers believe that bigger (i.e., more expensive) gifts convey stronger signals of thoughtfulness and consideration. According to Camerer (1988) and others, gift-giving represents a symbolic ritual, whereby gift-givers attempt to signal their positive attitudes toward the intended recipient and their willingness to invest resources in a future relationship. In this sense, gift-givers may be motivated to spend more money on a gift in order to send a "stronger signal" to their intended recipient. As for gift-recipients, they may not construe smaller and larger gifts as representing smaller and larger signals of thoughtfulness and consideration.

The notion of gift-givers and gift-recipients being unable to account for the other party's perspective seems puzzling because people slip in and out of these roles every day, and, in some cases, multiple times in the course of the same day. Yet, despite the extensive experience that people have as both givers and receivers, they often struggle to transfer information gained from one role (e.g., as a giver) and apply it in another, complementary role (e.g., as a receiver). In theoretical terms, people fail to utilize information about their own preferences and experiences in order to produce more efficient outcomes in their exchange relations. In practical terms, people spend hundreds of dollars each year on gifts, but somehow never learn to calibrate their gift expenditures according to personal insight.

This is what your passage should look like after step 2. There are a couple of notable points in the previous images.

- I want you to see how many questions have line references in them.
 - How much of the text includes line references.
 - o Marking the line references keeps you from moving back and forth from question to passage and will save you time.
 - o This allows you to only read the passage once.
3. Do the vocabulary questions first.

You can knock out the vocab questions first and quickly. You generally only need to read the sentence before and after. Plug in all the answers and see which one works the best.

4. Read through the passage, answer the remaining questions in order.

Now you have completed all the vocab questions, start reading the passage from the beginning. Answer the questions as you go and when you find the answer in the text circle it.

At the end of the section this is what your passage should look like:

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12

11

15

16

*Writing the numbers is not an essential step, it is simply there to show you which text is associated with which answer.

This information is given to you to help you understand two things: What the test is, and the best way to approach it. With proper application and practice of this system and its strategies, you will be on your way to your SAT goals!

Summary

- Introduction that gave a roadmap of what you will learn.
- Time and Text which gave a basic structural breakdown of the reading section.
- Hidden differences of topics
- Different tones from passage to passage.
- An in-depth breakdown of the different types of problems in the reading section.
- A list of 9 different strategies and their applications.
- “Order of Operations” which takes all your new knowledge and compiles it into tangible steps on the test.