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# SAT<sup>\*</sup>

# WRITING

# WORKBOOK

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George Ehrenhaft, Ed.D.

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**SAT**<sup>\*</sup>  
**WRITING**  
**WORKBOOK**

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**George Ehrenhaft, Ed.D.**

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Mamaroneck High School, Mamaroneck, NY



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## Greetings from the Author

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Hello and welcome to the world of the SAT Writing Test. I sincerely hope that in these pages you'll find just what you need to earn the highest possible score on the exam.

If you're unsure what the test is all about, read Part I. If you need to brush up on grammar, turn to Part V. To fine-tune your test-taking skills, go to Parts II and VI, where you'll find practice exams just like those on the SAT. Part III will take you by the hand through the process of writing a winning essay...and so on.

The book's chapters follow the format of the SAT. First comes the essay section, then the three types of multiple-choice questions in the order they appear on the exam. In short, my book is a complete guide to the SAT Writing Test. The more time you have until the SAT, the better you can prepare yourself. But even if the test is tomorrow, the book can still give you a quick fix on what to expect when you open your exam booklet.

If the SAT is weeks or months away, let the book work for you. Use it regularly and often. Let it acquaint you with the format of the test and accustom you to writing a clear, coherent, and purposeful essay in less than half an hour. (The SAT gives you exactly twenty-five minutes.) Then read and evaluate actual essays composed by high school juniors and seniors on SAT topics. Review the concepts of English grammar, usage, and rhetoric on which you'll be tested. Practice answering multiple-choice questions, using surefire tactics for getting them right. Take the practice tests at the back of the book, and watch your test scores soar—I hope.

I've done a mountain of work in writing this book for you. Now it's time for you to start climbing. So, shake a leg and best of luck! I'll be rooting for you on the sidelines.



# Contents

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## Greetings from the Author

## PART I

### The Basics: Getting Acquainted with the Writing Test

- Overview of the Writing Test
- The Essay
- Multiple-Choice Questions

## PART II

### Dress Rehearsal: A Sample Test

- Sample Test
- Answer Key
- Performance Evaluation Chart
- Conversion Table
- Answer Explanations

## PART III

### How to Write an Essay in 1,500 Seconds

#### Steps for Writing the Perfect Essay

- Prewriting: Getting Set to Write
  - Reading and Analyzing the Topic Carefully
  - Narrowing the Topic
  - Choosing a Main Idea
  - Gathering and Arranging Ideas Purposefully
- Composing: Putting Words on Paper
  - Writing a Gripping Introduction
  - Building an Essay with Paragraphs
  - Paragraph Development
  - Transitions
  - Using Plain and Precise Language
  - Fresh Language and Surprises
  - Varying Sentence Structure
  - Sentence Types
  - Repetition of Ideas
  - Short and Long Sentences
  - Ending Your Essay
- Editing and Proofreading: The Final Touches

Editing for Clarity  
Editing for Interest  
Checking for Standard Usage and Mechanics  
**Review**  
**Answer Key to Practice Exercises**

## **PART IV**

### **You Be the Ump: Essays for Evaluation**

**How Essays Are Judged and Graded**  
Guidelines for Evaluation  
Essays for Evaluation  
**Essay Topics for Practice**

## **PART V**

### **The Heart of the Test: Multiple-Choice Questions**

**Introduction**  
**Improving Sentences Questions**  
Sample Sentence Improvement Questions  
Problems in Style and Expression  
Problems in Sentence Structure  
Problems in Standard Usage  
**Review**  
**Identifying Sentence Errors**  
Errors in Expression and Style  
Errors in Grammar and Usage  
**Improving Paragraphs Questions**  
Answering the Questions  
How to Answer Improving Paragraphs Questions  
**Review**  
**Answer Key to Practice Exercises**

## **PART VI**

### **Tests for Practice, Practice, Practice**

**Practice Test A**  
Answer Key  
Performance Evaluation Chart  
Conversion Table  
Answer Explanations  
**Practice Test B**  
Answer Key  
Performance Evaluation Chart  
Conversion Table

Answer Explanations

**Practice Test C**

Answer Key

Performance Evaluation Chart

Conversion Table

Answer Explanations

**Practice Test D**

Answer Key

Performance Evaluation Chart

Conversion Table

Answer Explanations

## PART I

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# THE BASICS: GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE WRITING TEST

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- A Preview of the Test
- How Colleges Use the Test
- Format of Test Questions
- How the Essay Is Scored
- To Guess or Not to Guess on Short-Answer Questions
- How to Find the Best Answers

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## Overview of the Writing Test

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The entire SAT lasts three hours and forty-five minutes, including one hour for the Writing Test.

The Writing Test is divided into three sections:

Section 1: An essay question (25 minutes)
Section 2: Multiple-choice questions (25 minutes)
Section 3: More multiple-choice questions (10 minutes)

The first twenty-five minutes of the SAT is devoted to Section 1 of the Writing Test. During that time you will be asked to write an essay in response to a given topic.

Section 2 of the Writing Test is given later in the exam. It consists of three types of multiple-choice questions that ask you to (1) correct poorly written sentences, (2) find grammar and usage errors in a set of sentences, and (3) revise an early draft of a given essay.

Section 3, lasting ten minutes, is administered toward the end of the SAT. It contains additional multiple-choice questions on correcting poorly written sentences.

Altogether then, the SAT Writing Test consists of an essay question and two sections of multiple-choice questions.

## FORMAT OF THE SAT

Section			
1	Part 1 of the Writing Test	Essay	25 minutes
2	Math		
3	Critical Reading		
4	Part 2 of the Writing Test	35 multiple-choice questions	25 minutes
5	Math		
6	Critical Reading		
7	Math		
8	Critical Reading		
9	Part 3 of the Writing Test	14 multiple-choice questions	10 minutes

NOTE: Every SAT also contains a tenth section that doesn't count in calculating your score. It's an experimental section included by the College Board to test potential questions in writing, math, or critical reading for use on future SAT exams. The experimental section is not identified.

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Total Time	Content	Item Types	Score
60 minutes	Writing ability, grammar, usage, and word choice	An essay (25 minutes) and two multiple-choice sections (25 minutes and 10 minutes)	200–800

## PURPOSE OF THE WRITING TEST

Your score on the test adds an important dimension to your college admissions profile. It shows admission officials how well you write, especially how well you write under the pressure of time. This information suggests your potential for success in college courses that require writing. In particular, your essay provides evidence of

**The depth of your thinking.** You reveal the depth of your thinking by responding perceptively to the topic, or question. Your response also shows whether you can devise a thesis, or main idea, and develop it insightfully.

**Your ability to organize ideas.** You show your ability to organize ideas by arranging material according to a logical, sensible plan.

**The way you express yourself.** You reveal your ability to express yourself by accurately and succinctly conveying your thoughts to the reader.

**Your mastery of standard written English.** You demonstrate your use of standard written English by writing an essay relatively free of errors in grammar and usage.

The multiple-choice questions deal with everyday problems in grammar, usage, style, word choice, and other basic elements of writing. Instead of asking you about obscure matters of grammar, the questions will ask you to identify common sentence errors and to improve sentences and paragraphs.

Although most colleges use the results of the SAT Writing Test as a criterion for admission, some colleges also use scores to determine academic placement. A high score may entitle you to waive a freshman composition course. A score that suggests deficiencies may place you in a remedial writing program to be completed either before classes begin or during the first semester. To understand just how your score will affect you, consult the literature of the colleges to which you are applying. Or, here's another idea: bring up the use of SAT scores during your interview with a college admissions official.

## HOW THE TEST IS SCORED

Your essay will be read by two experienced evaluators, most likely high school or college teachers trained to judge the overall quality and effectiveness of students' essays. Neither reader will know the grade that the other reader has given your essay. Nor will they know your name or the name of your school. Each reader will assign your essay a grade on a scale of 1 (low) to 6 (high). Your essay's subscore will be recorded as the sum of the two scores (2 to 12).

On the multiple-choice questions, you'll earn a point for each correct answer and lose a quarter of a point (0.25) for each wrong answer. An item left blank will neither add to nor take away from your score. A machine will score your responses to forty-nine questions and will report a subscore on a scale of 20 to 80.

Before scores are sent out, the College Board will convert the two subscores to the SAT scale of 200–800. Your total for the Writing Test, along with your scores in math and critical reading, will be reported to you, to your guidance counselor, and to the admissions offices of the colleges you designate.

## TO GUESS OR NOT TO GUESS

Subtracting credit for wrong answers on multiple-choice questions is meant to discourage blind guessing. If you haven't a clue about how to answer a question, leave it blank. If you can confidently eliminate one of the five choices, it probably pays to guess. The odds are one in four that you'll be right. These are not terrific odds, but suppose that on four questions you eliminate one wrong choice and you guess four times. If you guess right just once, you'll earn a point and lose three-quarters of a point, a net gain of one quarter. If you leave all four blank, you will gain nothing. Yes, it's a gamble because you could make four incorrect guesses, but the chances of losing every time are only one in four. And you could get lucky and hit two, three, or even four correct answers.

**TIP**



If a question stumps you completely, don't try to answer it.

When a question gives you trouble, and you can't decide among, say, three choices, common wisdom says that you should go with your first impulse. Testing experts and psychologists agree that there's a better than average chance of success if you trust your intuition. However, there are no guarantees, and because the mind works in so many strange ways, relying on your initial choice may not always work for you.

Another piece of folk wisdom about guessing is that if one answer is longer than the others, that may be your best choice. That's not information you should depend on. In fact, since economy of expression is a virtue in writing, a shorter choice may more often be the best answer. The truth of the matter is that you can't depend on tricks or gimmicks on the SAT.

## HOW TO PREPARE

By reading these words you've already begun preparing for the exam. Actually, you began years ago when you first wrote words on paper and a string of school teachers began hammering the basics of English grammar into your head.

But that was then. Now it's time to brush up on your grammar, become acquainted

with the precise format of the test, and develop a number of useful tactics for writing the essay and answering the multiple-choice questions.

Once you have finished reading these introductory pages, take the diagnostic test in Part II. Afterwards, check your answers and identify the questions you missed. By doing so, you can tell not only how much studying you need to do but what material to study. If, say, you couldn't finish writing the essay in the allotted twenty-five minutes, you'd do well to read the pages of Part III that discuss planning and composing an essay. Or, if you missed a couple of multiple-choice questions related to pronoun choice or parallel structure, study the relevant pages in Part V, and do the practice exercises.

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## The Essay

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Writing an essay by hand in less than half an hour is a challenge. Even professional journalists, accustomed to working under the pressure of deadlines, would be hardpressed to produce a good essay in twenty-five minutes. But take heart! The essay score is just one piece of data on your college application, and no one taking the SAT will have a nanosecond more than you to complete the assignment. If you've been a reasonably proficient essay writer in the past, be confident that you'll perform equally well on the SAT. In fact, you may do even better than usual because you're likely to be pumped up to do your best work.

**TIP**



The goal of your essay: To organize your thoughts and express them clearly, interestingly, and correctly.

When writing the SAT essay, you must condense into a few minutes all the steps that other writers, enjoying the luxury of time, might stretch into hours or even into days. Chances are you've done it before. An essay test in social studies, for example, may have required you to fill up a blank page quickly with all you knew about the Reign of Terror or causes of the Civil War. The numerous in-class essays you've produced over the years have no doubt trained you for the kind of instant essay asked of you on the SAT. In your classes, of course, success was based partly on how closely your ideas resembled those that the teacher had in mind. That's not true on the SAT. You can't cram for this essay the way you can for a test in physics or Spanish. Because you don't know the topic, you must quickly process your thoughts and get them onto paper.

Ordinarily, an essay writer takes a long time to think about ideas and write them down. The verb *essay*, in fact, means to assess thoughtfully: **not** on the SAT, however. The time limit forces an almost instant response and limits leisurely reflection. If you manage to come up with one or more profound insights, more power to you, but keep

in mind that the objective of an SAT essay is more mundane—to show colleges that you can organize your thoughts and express them clearly, interestingly, and correctly.

The answer you write in response to the question is not predetermined. What you need to know is already lodged inside you. The task you face on test day is to arrange your ideas and put them into readable form on paper. It is not a measure of what you know but rather a demonstration of what you can do.

More precisely, the essay will measure your skill in elaborating a point of view on an issue. You must first think critically about the issue presented in the essay assignment, forming *your* particular perspective on the topic. Then you must develop that point of view, supporting your ideas with appropriate evidence. An essay completed in twenty-five minutes is bound to be shorter than most essays required in high school or college courses. It won't be as polished as a piece written over a period of hours or days. But it represents what you can do during the initial phase of the writing process, and twenty-five minutes should give you enough time to prove that you have what it takes to write a respectable first draft.

The topic, called the *prompt*, consists of a quotation or a short passage followed by a question asking your opinion about the content of the quote or passage. Although no one can predict the subject of the prompt, you can be sure that the directions for writing the essay will always say something like:

*Think carefully about the issue presented in the following quotation and the assignment below:*

“People rarely stand up and speak out for what they truly believe, particularly when their views will not be popular among their peers. Rather than oppose accepted beliefs, they remain silent, finding it easier to simply go along with the majority.”

**Assignment:** Do people generally avoid expressing unpopular beliefs? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Based on these instructions, you must write an essay explaining whether you accept or reject the proposition that people seldom express beliefs that differ from those of the majority. An essay agreeing with the statement would argue that most people choose to go along with the crowd rather than create controversy by voicing an unpopular view. On the other hand, an essay that adopts a contrary point of view would develop the idea that people in general prefer to have their voices heard even when they disagree with prevailing beliefs and values. A third possibility, of course, is that circumstances determine whether a person speaks out or remains silent.

What you say in the essay is completely up to you. There is no wrong or right answer. You won't be penalized for an unusual or unpopular point of view unless it is based on a faulty premise or pure fantasy. Once you've decided on your perspective, **present your case**. Concentrate on expressing your thoughts coherently and correctly.

All parts of an essay should work together to make a single point. If the evidence you provide wanders from the main idea or raises additional issues that you don't have time to discuss, the effect of the essay will be diluted. Above all, you don't want readers to reach the end scratching their heads over the point of the essay.

Once you have decided on your position on the issue, **develop your thoughts** clearly and effectively. Developing your thoughts means nothing more than backing up your opinion with illustrative material, drawn from virtually any source you wish: from your **reading** inside or outside of school, from your **courses**, from **personal experience**, or from **observation**. In short, you may use facts, statistics, common sense, historical background—anything, really, to demonstrate that your opinion is grounded on something more solid than a feeling or a personal preference. Remember, the kind of writing expected on the SAT is rational discourse, not emotional blabbering.

The assignment urges you to **plan your essay** before you begin to write. For some students, that means using an outline, but for others, just jotting a few notes on a piece of paper. Whether you prefer to write lists of ideas or just think about an approach before committing words to paper, on the SAT you must write an **essay**—not a play, not a poem, not a short story, not dialogue, not a fable, just an essay. Your essay need not follow a prescribed format, but you'll probably get the best results with a straightforward, no-nonsense approach consisting of some sort of introduction, a body of material that supports your main idea, and an appropriate conclusion. Variations are possible, but twenty-five minutes doesn't give you much time to be inventive.

**TIP**



The content of your essay is more important than its length.

The directions for writing the essay don't tell you how long it should be. That's because the number of words is up to you. Just remember that quantity counts less than quality. A single paragraph may not give you the chance to develop your ideas completely. Two paragraphs might do, but three or more suggest that you have the capacity to probe pretty deeply into the subject. Plan to write at least two or three paragraphs. Three, in fact, may be preferable to two, although that's a generalization that doesn't apply to every essay. (We'll talk more about that in Part III.) In the end, the number of paragraphs is less important than the substance of each paragraph. Even one paragraph can demonstrate that you are a first-rate writer.

A plain, natural writing style is probably best. Think of your readers as everyday folks who appreciate straight, plain, everyday language. Readers will be turned off by formal, pompous, or overblown prose. Elegant words have their place, of course, but use them sparingly to avoid sounding pretentious or foolish.

As SAT day draws near, review these suggestions for writing an essay. Knowing what to do ahead of time will add to your peace of mind and enable you to start work immediately when the proctor says, "Open your exam booklet and begin."

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## Multiple-Choice Questions

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Two separate sections of the SAT (25 minutes and 10 minutes) give you a total of forty-nine multiple-choice questions that deal with errors in grammar, usage, word choice (diction), and expression (idiom). There are three types of questions:

1. Improving Sentences (25 questions)
2. Identifying Sentence Errors (18 questions)
3. Improving Paragraphs (6 questions)

Of the three types, Identifying Sentence Errors are the briefest—rarely more than two or three lines. Most students answer them more quickly and easily than the others. The Improving Sentences questions take a bit longer because they require more reading, and the Improving Paragraphs questions take longer still because they relate to problems embedded in the text of an essay that you are given to read.

Yet, there’s no need to rush through any of the questions. The test has been carefully calibrated to coincide with the time allotted, provided you work steadily.

### THE ORDER OF QUESTIONS

Questions in the sentence-improvement and sentence-error sections are arranged more or less in order of difficulty, but that’s not always the case. Don’t assume, therefore, that question 7 will be harder than question 6, or 14 harder than 13. Because your mind works differently from everybody else’s, you may often find later questions easier than earlier ones. If you come to a question that baffles you, don’t agonize over it. Just go the next one, and go back later if time permits. Paragraph-improvement questions are arranged differently: They follow the progress of the passage. It may make sense to answer them in the order they are given, although you may find it useful to get specific questions out of the way before tackling questions that deal with whole paragraphs or the complete essay. Try different techniques while taking practice exams to find the one that works best for you.

### IMPROVING SENTENCES QUESTIONS

In this section of the test you are asked to recognize errors in standard English as well as problems in style and expression. In each question, part of a sentence—or sometimes the whole sentence—is underlined. You are given five versions of the underlined words. Your task is to choose the best one. Because choice A always repeats the underlined segment of the original, select A only if you think no change is needed. In any case, never choose an alternative that substantially changes the meaning of the original sentence, even if its grammar and style are perfect.

### Sample Questions

1. The custom of awarding huge scholarships to college athletes have gotten out of hand.
- (A) of awarding huge scholarships to college athletes have gotten out of hand
  - (B) of huge scholarships awarded to college athletes has gotten out of hand
  - (C) of awarding gigantically huge scholarships to student athletes attending college have gotten out of hand
  - (D) is out of hand by which awards for college athletes are granted huge scholarships
  - (E) of rewarding college athletes with huge scholarships are out of hand

*Explanation:* A basic rule of English grammar is that the subject of a sentence must agree in number with its verb. That is, a singular subject must have a singular verb, and a plural subject must be accompanied by a plural verb.

Choice B is the best answer because both the verb, *has*, and the subject, *custom*, are singular.

Choice A uses *have*, a plural verb that fails to agree with *custom*, a singular subject.

Choice C is an excessively wordy variation of choice A.

In choice D, both the subject, *custom*, and the verb, *is*, are singular, but the sentence contains an extremely awkward phrase, “out of hand by which.”

Choice E uses *are*, a plural verb that fails to agree with the subject, *custom*.

2. Both of my cousins who live in San Francisco speak both Chinese and Arabic.
- (A) Both of my cousins who live in San Francisco
  - (B) Both of my two cousins living in San Francisco
  - (C) My two cousins, who lives in San Francisco
  - (D) My two cousins in San Francisco
  - (E) My two San Francisco cousins of mine

*Explanation:* Because sentences cluttered with unnecessary words are less effective than tightly written sentences, one of your tasks while answering Improving Sentences questions is to recognize unnecessary and redundant words and phrases.

Choice D is the best answer because it is more concisely written than the other choices.

Choice A is grammatically correct, although it could be stylistically improved by eliminating the repetition of the word *both*.

Choice B also suffers from needless repetition but compounds the problem with the word *two*, a redundancy.

Choice C is more economical, but it contains the singular verb, *lives*, that disagrees with its plural subject, *cousins*.

Choice E contains a redundancy, *my* and *of mine*.

## How to Find Answers to Sentence Improvement Questions

- Read the entire sentence, paying close attention to its meaning.
- Be aware that errors may exist *only* in the underscored segment of the sentence.
- Try to *hear* the sentence in your head.
- Try to determine whether a problem exists.
- Search for wordiness and awkward expression in the underscored segment of the sentence.
- Read the choices, but ignore choice A, which is identical to the underscored segment of the original sentence.
- Eliminate all choices that contain obvious errors.
- Review the remaining choices for flaws in grammar and usage. (See Part V for details about precisely what to look for.)
- Eliminate any choice that changes the meaning of the sentence.
- If no change is needed, mark A on your answer sheet.

## IDENTIFYING SENTENCE ERRORS

Identifying Sentence Errors questions come in the form of a sentence with portions of it underlined, as in the following examples:

1. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the new members sweared that they would never reveal the secret handshake. No error.  
A B C
2. With the development of antitoxins and serums, there are hardly no cases of smallpox or yellow fever anywhere in the world. No error.  
A B C  
D E

Your job is to read each sentence carefully and identify the item that contains an error. Only one of the underlined parts in a sentence may contain an error, and no sentence contains more than one error. Sometimes a sentence may contain no error, in which case the correct answer will be E (No error).

*Explanation:* The correct answer to question 1 is B because the past tense of the verb *swear* is *swore*. The verb *swear* doesn't adhere to the usual pattern of verbs—that is, creating the past tense by adding *-ed* to the present tense, as in *walk/walked* or *love/loved*. Rather, it follows a pattern of its own, just like other so-called irregular verbs, including *eat/eaten*, *ring/rung*, and *sleep/slept*.

Knowing about irregular verbs could have led you to the right answer. Yet, had you never heard about such verbs, you still might have been drawn to choice B by your innate sense of the way English sounds. In other words, your language “ear” may have told you that something was amiss. Nevertheless, even a good ear for language is not a reliable substitute for a thorough understanding of grammar and usage.

The correct answer to question 2 is C because the underlined word is a double

negative. Both *hardly* and *no* are negative words. Therefore, a phrase containing both words constitutes an error in standard usage.

To identify sentence errors on the SAT, you don't need to know the technical terminology of grammar and usage, although it would help to study such basic concepts as the parts of speech, the structure of sentences, and verb tenses—all reviewed for you in Part V.

### **How to Find Answers to Identifying Sentence Errors Questions**

- Read the whole sentence.
- Try to *hear* the sentence in your head.
- Focus your attention on awkward sounding words and phrases.
- Try to explain what the grammatical flaw might be. (*Likely errors are discussed fully in Part V.*)
- Examine choices A–D for possible errors in grammar and usage.
- If all the underscored words are correct, mark E on your answer sheet.

## **IMPROVING PARAGRAPHS QUESTIONS**

The Improving Paragraphs section contains questions about many of the same principles of grammar and usage as the Improving Sentences section, but it raises additional issues related specifically to essay writing—style, organization, use of transitions, paragraph development, and topic sentences, among others. The questions are not meant to stump or trick you. Rather, they deal with aspects of writing familiar to any relatively experienced essay writer.

Questions are based on an unedited draft of a student's essay. Reading the essay, you'll probably notice that it falls short of perfection. Expect to answer one or two questions about problems of grammar and usage. The rest will pertain to improving the style and structure of the essay and expressing the meaning most effectively.

### **Sample Questions**

The excerpt that follows is part of an essay written in response to the topic: *Preserving the Environment—Everybody's Job*.

*[1] As people get older, quite obviously, the earth does too. [2] And with the process of the earth aging, we must keep recycling our waste products. [3] The idea of using things over and over again to conserve our natural resources is a brilliant one. [4] Those who don't do it should be criticized greatly.*

*[5] As we become more aware of the earth's limitations, we all say "Oh, I'd like to help." [6] Not everyone does, even though recycling is an effective place to start. [7] Taking plastic grocery bags back to the supermarket to be recycled is a good idea. [8] Also, join the masses of people who will no longer buy ordinary drinking water sold in plastic bottles. [9] In addition, in almost every town there is a*

*Recycling Center. [10] There are separate bins for paper, glass, and plastic. [11] This is a convenient service to those who support recycling. [12] It is so easy to drive a few blocks to a center to drop off what needs to be recycled. [13] This is just another simple example of how easy it really is to recycle and get involved. [14] Anyone who cannot see its simplicity should be criticized for not doing their part to help make the world a better place.*

*[15] When I go to other people's houses and see glass bottles and jars mixed in with household garbage, I get disgusted and often say, "Why don't you recycle that glass instead of throwing it out?" [16] It angers me when they respond, "It's too much trouble." [17] Such people are ignorant and deserve to be taught a lesson about how wastefulness is slowly destroying the earth.*

1. Considering the essay as a whole, which of the following best explains the main purpose of the second paragraph?
  - (A) To explain the historical background of the topic
  - (B) To provide a smooth transition between the first and third paragraphs
  - (C) To define terms introduced in the first paragraph
  - (D) To develop an idea presented in the first paragraph
  - (E) To present a different point of view on the issue being discussed

*Explanation:* To answer this question, you must read the whole essay. You must also know something about how paragraphs function in an essay.

All the choices name legitimate uses of paragraphs, but only choice D applies to this essay because it develops by example an idea originating in the first paragraph—how easy it is to recycle. Choices A, C, and E can be quickly discarded. Choice B is a possibility because in a unified essay each paragraph, aside from the opening and closing paragraphs, in some way serves as a bridge between paragraphs. Because the second paragraph is the longest of the essay, however, its main function is probably more than transitional.

2. Which of the following sentences most effectively combines sentences 9, 10, and 11 (reproduced below) into a single sentence?

*[9] In addition, in almost every town there is a Recycling Center. [10] There are separate bins for paper, glass, and plastic. [11] This is a convenient service to those who support recycling.*

- (A) Recycling centers offer recyclers convenience by providing separate bins for paper, glass, and plastic and by being located in almost every town.
- (B) Recycling centers, located in almost every town, provide convenient bins for separating paper, glass, and plastic.
- (C) Almost every town has a recycling center with separate bins for paper, glass, and plastic, and this is a convenience for recyclers.
- (D) Besides, people who recycle will find recycling centers in almost every town, providing convenient separation to recycle paper, glass, and plastic into bins.
- (E) For the convenience of recyclers in almost every town, paper, glass, and plastic are separated into provided bins at its recycling center.

*Explanation:* This question relates to sentence structure—in particular how the structure of a sentence helps to convey meaning. You probably know that in a series of short sentences each idea carries equal weight. But combining short sentences permits a writer to highlight the important ideas while de-emphasizing others. To answer this question, then, you must decide which idea expressed by the three sentences deserves to be given the greatest emphasis.

The three sentences in question come from a paragraph that discusses the ease and appeal of recycling. Because sentences 10 and 11 refer to the convenient arrangement of recycling bins, they are more important to the development of the paragraph than sentence 9, about the location of recycling centers.

Usually, the main point of a sentence is found in its main clause. Knowing that, read each of the choices. Choices A and C give equal weight to the location and convenience of recycling centers. Choice D stresses the location rather than the convenient arrangement of bins in recycling centers. Choice E not only alters the meaning but contains both an ambiguous pronoun reference (“its”) and an awkward usage (“provided bins”). Therefore, choice B is the best answer. It highlights the facilities offered by recycling centers while diminishing the importance of their location.

## **How to Find Answers to Improving Paragraphs Questions**

- Read the entire essay, paying attention to its main idea and to the writer’s purpose.
- Ignore all errors except those raised by the multiple-choice questions.
- Carefully read each question and the five choices.
- Eliminate any choice that contains wordiness, repetition, and awkward expression. Also discard choices that contain flaws in grammar and usage. (*The types of errors to look for are discussed fully in Part V.*)
- As you answer the questions, keep in mind the main idea of each paragraph and the point of the whole essay. (*For details on all aspects of essay writing, see Part III.*)

## **A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

The multiple-choice sections of the SAT Writing Test pertain to matters of grammar, usage, and rhetoric typically taught in English classes. If your sense of grammar and usage is rusty, however, or if rhetoric is a mystery, take heart. This book, after all, is a thorough test-prep guide that explains virtually everything you need to know for the test and describes how you can earn a score to make you proud.

Are you ready to begin? If so, set aside an hour to complete the sample writing test. Good luck!

Please Note: All directions which appear for the Diagnostic and Practice Tests are