

Writing for the SAT

The purpose of the SAT I essay is to show your ability to write about a given topic within a limited time frame of 25 minutes.

Scoring

According to the College Board website, essay scorers are looking for your ability to “develop a point of view on an issue presented in an excerpt, support your point of view using reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, experience, or observations, and follow the conventions of standard written English.”

http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/essay/pracStart.html

Preparation

There is no easy formula that will lead to success. You cannot prepare for a specific topic, but you can “prepackage” your strategies before taking the test. Consider all of the following that provide a knowledge base upon which you can draw to support your point of view:

- Literature you have read in high school
- Historical examples
- Current events
- Personal experiences
- Personal observations

Using Your Time Effectively on the Exam

1. Read the literary excerpt and the assignment question carefully.
2. Decide your point of view on the topic. If you are having trouble determining your point of view, try completing the following sentence: “When people finish reading my essay, I want them to understand that _____.” The information that you provide to complete this statement will help you identify your thesis.
3. Don’t be afraid to use “I.” You are expressing your opinion and giving examples from your experience, so it is appropriate to use the first-person pronoun.
4. Outline your essay.
 - a) Introduction: Reword the topic and state your point of view.
 - b) Body paragraphs: Cite examples or pieces of evidence to support your point of view. Provide explanations showing how the evidence supports your point of view.
 - c) Conclusion—Summarize your point of view in one or two sentences.
5. Write legibly on the lined paper provided. Note that you must use pencil.

Note: SAT II exams include selected response items exclusively.