

Answers and Explanations

The Essay

Your essays will be judged according to the scoring guide that is discussed in Chapter 1. Review it before looking at the sample student responses to the essay prompt.

Essay Scoring Guide

- 6** This score is reserved for *outstanding* essay responses. A student earning a 6 response has effectively and insightfully developed a point of view on the issue and demonstrates exceptional critical thinking, using appropriate examples and reasons within the response. These essays are well organized, clearly focused, and exceptionally coherent. This level of essay demonstrates skillful use of language, apt vocabulary, and a variety of sentence structure. Although not without flaws, a 6 response is relatively free of most errors of usage, mechanics, and grammar.
- 5** This score reflects an effective essay; it demonstrates *reasonable mastery* of composition skills. It may have occasional lapses in quality; overall it is a very successful response. A student earning a 5 response has effectively developed a point of view on the topic or issue, has demonstrated strong critical thinking skills, and generally has used appropriate examples to develop his or her point of view. The organization is focused, showing good coherence and progression of ideas. This essay will exhibit facility in the use of language and appropriate vocabulary for the task. A variety of sentence structure is present with a minimum of mechanical and grammatical errors.
- 4** This score reflects a *competent response*, which demonstrates adequate mastery, although it will have lapses, in contrast to the quality of the 5 and 6 responses. A student earning a 4 response has developed a point of view and demonstrates critical thinking on the issue. However, the examples and development of ideas are less strong or less consistent than 5 or 6 responses. General organization is evident, and progression and coherence is present, although not always consistent. Language and vocabulary skills may be more limited or less appropriate. Some sentence structure variety is used, although grammar, punctuation, and mechanical skills may be less evident.
- 3** This score reflects an *inadequate response* to the essay question. It does, however, demonstrate a developing mastery of composition skills. The point of view will be evident, along with critical thinking, but it may be inconsistent. Examples and support are often weak or inadequate to make the writer's point. Organization, coherence, and focus are less well developed, and lapses may be found in sentence structure and/or flow of ideas. Vocabulary may be limited. Grammar, usage, and mechanical errors are present.
- 2** This score reflects a *seriously limited* essay response, which demonstrates little mastery. The point of view is present but limited due to vagueness, weak critical thinking, or inappropriate or insufficient examples, reasons, or other evidence to support the writer's position. The essay is poorly organized; it has little coherence, and it displays little facility in the use of language. Sentence structure is not varied, and errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are serious enough to obscure meaning.
- 1** This score reflects an essay that is *fundamentally lacking*. No mastery is evident as demonstrated by a lack of a viable point and/or little or no evidence to back a position. The essay is disorganized and/or unfocused, resulting in an incoherent response. Vocabulary is limited; sentence structure displays serious flaws; mechanical, grammatical, and usage errors are pervasive, seriously interfering with the meaning.

Essay Prompt

J.K. Rawlings maintains that “The most important things in friendship are tolerance and loyalty.”

Are tolerance and loyalty the most important things in a friendship? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. If you think other qualities are more important than tolerance and loyalty, be sure to explain. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your readings, experiences or observations.

Sheena’s Response

By saying that tolerance and loyalty are the most important things in friendship, J.K. Rawlings captures the key to every relationship. A friend is someone who is tolerant and loyal and someone who deserves the same qualities in return.

It is sometimes difficult, in this world, to find someone tolerable who can tolerate you in return. In my own experience, I was fortunate enough to find a person like this. She tolerated my annoying habits, and I tolerated hers. In time I grew to love her quirks and adore the little things that once drove me crazy. I believe that if one is able to tolerate something for a long enough period of time, she will grow to understand it, accept it and maybe even adore it.

Tolerance isn’t enough, however, to make a true friendship last. One must be loyal as well. In high school, particularly, people gossip and spread rumors. People will ditch a friend for a relationship. People often mistreat those who love them the most. When a friend is loyal, she understands, or at least attempts to understand, that friendship is more important than a relationship, and that secrets are meant to be secret. Although the friend I mentioned before and I have grown apart, in past times we shared our innermost thoughts and desires. Out of loyalty and respect for her (for what is loyalty if not a specific form of respect?) I will not share that which she told me in earnest, and I know that she will honor me in the same way.

Although J.K. Rawlings spoke only of loyalty and tolerance, I believe there is more to a friendship. True friends share love, sympathy, strength, compassion, laughter and tears. When two people are loyal and tolerant, I believe these other things will naturally follow.

All of these things pertain not just to friendships, but to all relationships in life. Partnerships, marriages, families and teammates must all be loyal to and tolerant of one another. Anyone who has contact with other human beings must exhibit these two traits if they wish to be successful.

In conclusion, I believe that J. K. Rawlings put it perfectly when she said that friendships depend on loyalty and tolerance. When you have that, everything else will follow.

Comments

With the exception of a few pronoun agreement errors, this is an outstanding essay. It would be likely to earn a six from the SAT essay readers. If you review the requirements of a six on the scoring guide, you will find that this response fulfills the requirements. Remember, each score on the Scoring Guide will have a range of responses that receive the same score. There is not just one type of six or one type of five essay, four essay, and so on, but many papers can all garner the same score.

This student stays focused on the prompt. She not only addresses both characteristics—tolerance and loyalty—but she also goes beyond these traits to add some others that she feels are crucial in a friendship. As she says, with loyalty and tolerance, the others will naturally follow.

The personal anecdote is most appropriate in a response to a prompt such as this one. Do not hesitate to use personal examples when applicable. Remember, even if in real life the anecdote doesn't quite fit the needs of the prompt, you can adjust it a bit so that it is more focused and more useful as support for your statements.

David's Response

Friendship is made up of many components. I would have to say that tolerance and loyalty certainly are important, but because there are so many parts to a good friendship, it is difficult to judge whether they are the most important qualities. Many other pieces of a friendship are vital, but some of them may grow from a basis of tolerance and/or loyalty.

Trust, for example, is something that is definitely important in any successful relationship. It is difficult to work with anyone you don't have faith in. They could be telling half-truths or they may be unreliable. Without trust people would be forced to do everything themselves and would become socially isolated. However, it is possible that loyalty is more important than trust, because a friend's loyalty may be a source of trust. If someone sees that a loyal friend has come through for him or her time and time again, trust will develop. And one must ask one's self if a disloyal friend could ever be trusted.

Though I agree that loyalty is certainly one of the most important factors in a friendship, I do not know if I agree that tolerance is as well. Tolerance, I'm sure, helps a friendship, but it may not be as necessary as many other parts. Friends are often the first to critique work and point out flaws. Often times a friend's lack of tolerance can help a person improve themselves. Competition is also very common between friends, and that is just not tolerating the fact that one will be beaten. Also, wouldn't it make sense that someone would be a friend that they find easier to tolerate than most other people? Non-tolerance seems to be a big part of friendship too.

I think that acceptance is more important than tolerance in a friendship. One must accept the flaws of a friend at times, but many of a friend's problems are solved because they are not tolerated. It is important to accept a friend for who they are, but not everything they do must be tolerated. No friendship is perfect, but that does not mean that attempting perfection is out of the question.

Comments

Whew, this young man really likes long sentences, doesn't he? For the most part, however, he handles them well. Only one or two become a bit convoluted and would probably have been better if broken up into smaller bits.

There is nothing wrong with long sentences, nor is there anything wrong with short ones. After all, both William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway are authors worth reading. Nevertheless, variety is encouraged. Sometimes, as in David's response, a sentence may become so long that its focus becomes lost. However, let's remember that this is a 25-minute writing, and that leaves little time for any major reworking of your sentences.

This is a good response to the prompt. It disagrees a bit with Rawlings, and it adds some thoughts and ideas. That is commendable. You will not be graded up or down for agreeing or disagreeing with a prompt. This essay defines tolerance differently than the first response. This is a good response to this prompt, and would, no doubt, earn a five from an SAT Essay reader.

Comments on Both Essay Responses

Both of these responses demonstrate that the writers have successfully mastered good composition skills that will enable them to succeed in college. It is the quality evident in these essays that you want to strive to attain for yourself. The first response is more clean-cut and to the point; therefore, garnering a probable six. The second seems to waffle a bit due to its lengthy sentences, probably receiving a five. Nevertheless, writing such as these responses is just what colleges are looking for from their incoming students.

Multiple-Choice Questions, Set 1

Improving Sentences

- 1. E.** As the sentence is presented, it contains way too many useless words. “Although” is a good transition word to use in this situation. The sentence is actually composed of one independent clause and one dependent clause introduced by although. When dependent clauses are at the end of a sentence, they are rarely separated by even a comma, never a semi-colon. Choice **E** is the best choice. It offers the necessary *semi-colon*, as well as two independent clauses with a subject plus a verb plus a complete thought. The word although is gone, but the insertion of the word however gives the sentence its style.
- 2. C.** This is one of those misplaced modifier sentences that are often amusing. The footsteps are not walking the dog behind the narrator. The correct response, Choice **C**, makes the most sense. The narrator is walking the dog, and he/she hears footsteps. Most questions like these are not too difficult as long as you take about half a minute to think about what has been stated.
- 3. A.** This sentence is perfectly okay the way it is stated. The concept presented, “made their own clothes” is being commented upon—it is a “practice” that is fast being lost. This makes Choice **A** the best response. None of the other choices is appropriate.
- 4. C.** The second sentence of this question is actually just a composite of descriptives, not a sentence in and of itself. The second “sentence” lacks a subject-verb-complete thought combination. Therefore, Choice **C** is the only response that is acceptable because it offers the correct components of a sentence.
- 5. C.** If you giggled at this question, don’t be surprised. The statement is rather silly as it reads in its original format. This is a misplaced modifier. Poor auntie did not die with feathers. If she did indeed die, then she left some feathered, vintage hats. That makes letter Choice **C** the best response to this question.
- 6. A.** Although we are not sure about the fate of this university football team, the sentence, as it is presented, Choice **A**, is the best answer. The original statement presents the best sequence of events—once it was good; now it is looking to be good again. Most of the choices offer incorrect sequencing of words or ideas.
- 7. D.** Here we have a classic case of a run-on sentence—two independent clauses joined together incorrectly. In order to join two independent clauses, your options are to utilize the semi-colon. You can also revert to the BOY FANS (but, or, yet, for, and, no, so), the coordinate conjunctions, preceded by a comma. Only Choice **B** offers a conjunction. However, the coordinate conjunction lacks the required comma, so Choice **B** is not correct. Choice **A** has only a comma between the clauses, so that won’t work. Choice **C** is too wordy, and Choice **E** uses passive voice. That leaves Choice **D** as the correct response.
- 8. E.** This sentence has an interrupter that needs to be set off by commas. The phrase “an innovative thinker who developed many things” describes Henry Ford. It needs to be separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. Therefore, Choice **E** is the best choice for this sentence. Choice **B** throws in too many commas, and Choices **C** and **D** just don’t make much sense.
- 9. C.** Although you might be tempted to leave this sentence as it is stated, take a look at Choice **C**, the best response. Note how Choice **C** is a cleaner, less wordy version than Choice **A**. The other responses are too jumbled or do not suffice as an independent clause that is necessary following the semi-colon.
- 10. E.** This sentence sounds almost correct as it is, Choice **A**. However, the word “because” makes better sense in this sentence than “not unlike.” Choice **E** is therefore the best one for improving this sentence. The other choices only make the sentence worse.
- 11. D.** As this pee-wee sentence stands, it is not a sentence but a series of phrases. It needs a subject and a verb. The soccer team is the subject, and they hoped to win their game, Choice **D**. Choice **B** is just more phrases. Choice **C** might work, but it doesn’t make good sense, and Choice **E** has unnecessary words.

Identifying Sentence Errors

12. **A.** “Mainly” (as well as most ‘-ly’ words) is an adverb, and adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. In this sentence, if “mainly” is intended to modify the verb “shows” then it needs to be placed after the name Harry. In this sentence, it is most likely that it should be the adjective form, *main*, which should precede the word *trait*. The correct response is Choice **A**. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns.
13. **C.** “In addition,” Choice **C**, is an incorrect transition to use in this sentence. It indicates additional information. This sentence is cause and effect: because of Sam, Laura does (or does not) choose to do something. A better choice for this would be “consequently” or perhaps “subsequently” or even “as a result.” Such words express cause and effect.
14. **E.** You might wonder whether *identify with* is correct as an idiom, or whether *identify to* is the right combination. However, if you felt this sentence sounded okay, then you are hearing well as you “listen” to it inside your head. Choice **E**, No error, is the correct response.
15. **D.** “Past” is incorrect, therefore **D** is the correct response. When we speak, *past* and *passed* sound alike. You may not catch this one because if you read it quickly, it sounds all right. However, *past* is a noun meaning a time that has gone by. (For example, in the *past*, one could buy gasoline for less than a dollar a gallon). Past also is an adjective as in “many people are curious about others’ *past* lives,” or a preposition meaning moving beyond, “I drove *past* the driveway before I realized I had overshot the house. *Passed* is the past tense of the verb to pass; for example, I *passed* the AP U.S. History class with an 88 percent average.
16. **A.** This is another idiom. Sometimes the SAT will surprise you and will ask two or possibly three very similar questions. On the other hand, you might only see a particular “problem” once. Choice **A** should be “accompanied by.”
17. **D.** Poor Carlos—hopefully by now flying has become less terrifying and more enjoyable. Did you have trouble spotting the error in this one? Hopefully not. Notice how both terrified and exhilarated are both mentioned, so using the word simultaneously is redundant, making **D** the answer.
18. **D.** The correct phrase would be *more wisely*, not more wiser. When comparing adverbs like this the sequence is wisely, more wisely, and most wisely.
19. **E.** All the underlined parts of this sentence are accurate. In this case, then Choice **E**, No error, is the correct response.
20. **D.** This sentence provides us with two past tenses—two things happened in the past, one necessarily before the other. First was the planting, and then was the nurturing. The helper verbs, *have* or *had* indicate something that happened in the past before other things in the past. Therefore, Choice **D** is the correct response.
21. **A.** *Grown ups* needs to be possessive; it is their angry noisy behavior. Therefore, it should read *grown ups’*.
22. **D.** At a first read, you might not notice the problem with this sentence. What it says is that his salary was no greater than a clerk. You cannot compare salary to clerk. What it should say is “. . .his salary was no greater than the *salary* of a clerk.”
23. **A.** This sentence is really not a sentence. Therefore, **A** is the best choice as an answer, because it can easily be corrected to read, “Queen Elizabeth I *was* a powerful monarch.” With this slight change, the phrase now has a verb, and you have the makings of a *bona fide* sentence.
24. **D.** This question expects you to recognize something wrong with the verb in Choice **D**. This woman has little concern, lacks true compassion, and therefore *will make* an ineffectual nurse, or if she’s already a nurse, the present tense, “the woman *makes* an ineffectual nurse.”
25. **B.** Irregardless, Choice **B**, is not a word—not now; not ever.
26. **C.** You do not have a sentence. Dozing (a participle used as an adjective modifying the man) Choice **C**, needs to be changed to *dozed* (past tense of to doze) to make this a sensible sentence.
27. **D.** This sentence lacks parallel structure. The toddler needs a nap, a meal, and to be changed. Therefore Choice **D** is not aligned in the appropriate parallel structure.

- 28. B.** Once more the SAT is checking to see whether you know your idioms. In this case, Choice **B**, you cannot be angry *at* a person. You can only be angry *with* a person and at something.
- 29. B.** Here's a case of faulty pronoun agreement. "Everyone" is one of those pronouns that is actually singular; therefore, *their* **B** is incorrect and should be *his* or *her*.

Improving Paragraphs

- 30. D.** As it reads, this first sentence is not a sentence. What it needs is a strong subject and verb. That makes **A** incorrect. Choices **B**, **C**, and **E** actually do have verbs, but none of these choices makes much sense, so **D** is the correct response.
- 31. C.** Sentence 7 contains a lot of extra words. Choice **B** indicates a dedication to adolescents, not to the book; Choice **D** has too many redundant words, and Choice **E** uses the word *adolescence*, which is another word entirely. Therefore, Choice **C** is the correct response to this question.
- 32. C.** The third paragraph actually has a messed up collection of sentences. They are not in an order that makes the best sense. Therefore, sentence 8 would be better placed after sentence 9, making Choice **C** the correct response.
- 33. B.** Still focused on paragraph three, this question asks how best to combine two sentences. Response **B** makes the best combination.
- 34. D.** As you were reading this paragraph, hopefully you found sentence 15 a bit weird. It is jumbled. The best choice for this sentence is **D**, "Anticipating three rejections, she was amazed to discover all three of them wanted to publish her book."
- 35. A.** This sentence is okay as it stands, so Choice **A** is the correct response.

Multiple-Choice Questions, Set 2

Improving Sentences

- E.** The underlined clause needs parallel structure. *Sun disappeared* and *wind gusting* are not balanced. Either both verbs have to be past tense, *-ed*, or present participle, *-ing*. This brings you to Choices **D** and **E**. Choice **D** is just too convoluted, so Choice **E** is the correct response.
- C.** It's hard to tell just who is under the table and who is munching tidbits. The best thing for a sentence like this is to picture it in your mind: Bobby at the table dropping food (probably his vegetables) to the dog under the table. The clearest representation of this scenario is Choice **C**.
- A.** Again, can you picture the sequence of events here? Katya was talking on the phone; she rubbed her eyes and dislodged her contact lens, which fell somewhere in the clutter on her desk. Actually, the original presentation of facts, Choice **A**, presents the best version of the sentence.
- D.** The key to this sentence is the phrase "during this coming summer," an occasion yet to take place. Therefore, you need to look for the option that indicates a future event. Choice **D** is the only sentence using the future tense, *will take*.
- B.** This is one of those sentences that tempts you to go for the plural (*diversity* and *variety*). However, the subject is *look*, singular. You might become so caught up in figuring out whether the verb is correct or not in the original, that you overlook the fact that the conjunction, *which*, does not have its requisite comma in front of it. That is the error in the original sentence. Since that option is not offered, you have to go to the conjunction *that* because it does not require a comma. The correct response is Choice **B**.
- E.** This sentence sounds okay, doesn't it? As soon as you see the conjunction *for*, however, your antennae should go up. *For* is a coordinate conjunction, one of the BOY FANS; therefore, it requires a comma in front of it, making Choice **E** the correct response.
- A.** This sentence requires the *not only* . . . *but also* combination. It is best presented in its original format. No change is necessary. Choice **A** is the correct response.
- E.** This sentence has two independent clauses. These clauses need a semi-colon between them, or a coordinate conjunction (BOY FANS) preceded by a comma. You might get suckered in by Choice **B**. However, the word *exceptional* is an adjective, and in this case you need the adverb form, *exceptionally*. Choice **D** offers the wrong form of *their*. Choice **C** won't work because a comma cannot replace a semi-colon. Therefore, Choice **E** is the correct response.
- B.** The verb tenses of these two clauses do not go together. *Would have saved* needs a similar past tense in the underlined section. The best fix for this is Choice **B**. It sounds much better, doesn't it?
- E.** Sounds okay, doesn't it? Take a closer look. Here you have a redundancy. *Discussed* and *talked about* say the same thing. The least complicated and best response for this question is Choice **E**. SAT prefers sentences that are clear and concise.
- A.** This one is complicated, at least at first. Take it slowly. You will soon realize that Choices **B–E** just make the sentence harder to understand. The sentence is best presented just the way it is in its original format, Choice **A**.
- B.** These two clauses need to get together on their verb tenses. *After* the paper was turned in, implies something that has already taken place. Therefore, the best combination would be to choose Choice **B**, *was criticized*.
- D.** Who is five-years-old, and who is going on a plane ride for the first time? Use your imagination: probably the grandmother has already flown, and most likely the child of five has not. Choice **D** states this in the most concise and reasonable manner.
- A.** Don't rush this one, even though it is the last one of this section. If you consider all the choices, it should be clear to you that Choice **A**, the original sentence, is the best presentation of sentiments. Choice **B** indicates the people are charming; Choice **C** seems like the bears are making a purchase; Choice **D** is too wordy; and Choice **E** is just awkward.

Rating Your Performance

Essay

Remember your essay will be read by two readers. So when you figure your **total points**, they will be out of 12, not just out of 6. It is best if you can have two different readers evaluate your writing, or at least you and another person for better accuracy. Evaluate your response using the Scoring Guide provided within the answers and explanations.

Essay subscore: _____

Multiple Choice, Set 1

Improving Sentences Questions 1–11 Number correct _____

Identifying Sentence Errors Questions 12–29 Number correct _____

Improving Paragraphs Questions 30–35 Number correct _____

Multiple Choice, Set 2

Improving Sentences Questions 1–14 Number correct _____

Subtotal _____ (A)

Wrong Answers (Do Not Count Unanswered Questions)

Section 2 Number wrong _____

Section 3 Number wrong _____

Subtotal _____ (B)

Subtract $\frac{1}{4}$ (.25) from B for each wrong answer _____ (C)

minus (C) = _____ (D)

Round (D) to the nearest whole number for your multiple-choice **Raw Score** _____**Essay subscore** _____

Conversion Table

This table will give you an approximation of what your score would be if this practice test had been an actual SAT Writing Test. The essay counts for about 30 percent of the final score; the multiple-choice questions count for about 70 percent.

For example: If your multiple-choice **raw score** was 35 and your **essay subscore** was 6, the table indicates that your final score on the test would fall between 500 and 710, or about 600 (out of 800).

Multiple-Choice Raw Score	Essay Subscore 0	Essay Subscore 2	Essay Subscore 4	Essay Subscore 6	Essay Subscore 8	Essay Subscore 10	Essay Subscore 12
40–49	520–690	530–720	550–740	580–770	620–800	650–800	680–800
30–39	430–630	450–660	470–680	500–710	530–740	560–770	590–800
20–29	360–540	370–570	390–590	420–620	460–650	490–690	520–710
10–19	270–460	280–490	300–510	330–540	370–480	400–610	430–630
0–9	200–380	200–410	210–430	240–450	270–490	300–520	330–560
–12– –1	200–280	200–310	200–330	200–350	240–390	270–420	300–450