CollegeBoard

Skills Insight™ for the SAT® Suite

- PSAT™ 8/9
- PSAT/NMSQT® and PSAT™ 10
- SAT®

The College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading education institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools.

For further information, visit **www.collegeboard.org**.

About the SAT Suite of Assessments

The College Board is working with educators to make it easier for students to navigate a path through high school, college, and career. The SAT® Suite of Assessments — SAT (grades 11 and 12), PSAT/NMSQT® and PSAT™ 10 (grades 10 and 11), and PSAT™ 8/9 (grades 8 and 9) — provides a comprehensive solution to systematically and progressively measure the knowledge, skills, and understandings that are essential for college and career readiness and success. Together, the tests reflect the kinds of meaningful, engaging, and challenging work that students find in the best middle and high school courses taught today and can be used to create and sustain the durable bond between assessment and instruction that provides the backbone of a sound education. The SAT Suite focuses on a deep understanding of the knowledge and skills shown by current research to matter most for college readiness and success.

The College Board's SAT Suite of Assessments provides benchmarks and consistent feedback for measuring student progress over time. The tests measure the same knowledge and skills in ways that make sense for different grade levels, so it's easier for students, parents, and educators to monitor student progress:

- PSAT™ 8/9 sets readiness baseline.
- PSAT™ 10 and PSAT/NMSQT® let you check on student progress.
- SAT® connects students to college.

As students advance from grade to grade, the tests keep pace, matching the scope and difficulty of work found in the classroom. The SAT Suite's progression is reflected in a common score scale that provides consistent feedback across assessments. Subscores and cross-test scores provide insight into specific strengths and weaknesses. These scores help students see where they can improve and help teachers adjust instruction for students who are ahead or behind.

To provide support for teachers and students in their efforts to create personalized plans for student practice and growth, we have created Skills Insight, actionable suggestions that focus intervention and practice activities so students develop college and career readiness skills.

Using Skills Insight for the SAT Suite

Skills Insight for the SAT Suite demonstrates how the SAT Suite of Assessments is linked to the knowledge and skills taught in the classroom. Educators can use Skills Insight to see the academic skills typically mastered at each score band and develop strategies for improvement. It also provides actionable suggestions for improving skills that help students gain additional practice.

Step 1: Review student data

The K–12 Score Reporting Portal supports teaching and learning by offering in-depth, configurable reports that connect student results to classroom work. Educators can review individual student results as well as aggregate results for the school, district, state, and nation. Go to **https://k12reports.collegeboard.org/login** to sign in and review online reports (connect with your school's Access Manager to get access to the K–12 Score Reporting Portal). To find the percent of students in each score band, use the Scores by Institution and Scores by Demographic reports.

Step 2: Use Skills Insight

Use **Skills Insight for the SAT Suite** to understand how student scores on the SAT Suite relate to specific academic skills in each score band. This valuable feedback helps identify the strengths and weaknesses of students in a given score band.* While educator reports in the K–12 Score Reporting Portal do not link to Skills Insight, the Question Analysis Report gives additional information about student scores, including information about the various types of questions and how students responded.

Students can access Skills Insight™ in their online score report by clicking on the tab at the top of their Student Score Report screen, giving them more information about the knowledge and skills they have demonstrated, and the knowledge and skills on which they should focus for growth. Skills Insight connects a student's focus areas to the subscores and the skills that are assessed. Students can click on the Questions box to see the questions associated with the subscores.

Step 3: Review suggestions for improvement

On the following pages, in addition to descriptions of performance and insight into skills measured at each score band, you'll find suggestions for improving and practicing particular skills. These can be woven into lesson and curricular planning.

Use Skills Insight for the SAT Suite to:

- Align curriculum with college readiness goals.
- Inform curriculum and instruction in order to increase the level of college readiness in your school and district.
- Understand the links between the skills being taught in the classroom and the skills assessed on the SAT Suite.
- Focus instruction on areas where students need to improve, and adjust lesson plans using relevant suggestions for improvement.
- Look at the types of skills assessed in each score band and have students answer sample questions.
- Determine students' individual skill strengths and weaknesses.

For a deeper analysis and personalized practice recommendations, help students use Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy at **satpractice.org**.

* Please note: Score bands differ for each assessment. Academic skills listed in the Skills Insight for the SAT Suite are vertically aligned across assessments.

	PSAT 8/9	PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10	SAT
Test Score Range	6–36	8–38	10–40
Essay	NA	NA	2–8

Reading Score Range 6–14

Academic Skills

Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- Not all texts are equally complex. Texts that pose more challenge than others tend to have features such as a larger amount of information and ideas, a more intricate structure, a less obvious purpose, and more sophisticated language. To be ready to succeed in college and career, students need to become comfortable with the complexity of texts they are likely to be assigned in their early postsecondary classes. Begin this process by spending time reading moderately challenging texts. These are texts whose information, ideas, structure, purpose, and language require some analysis. Read these texts closely and purposefully, and think about what important information is directly stated or clearly indicated as well as what inferences (reasonable conclusions) you can draw.
- *Textual evidence* refers to the information and ideas you might cite as support (evidence) for the points or claims an author makes or for the conclusions you yourself draw as you read. Textual evidence is the answer to the "how do you know that?" question that teachers often ask and can come in the form of quotations, facts, figures, examples, and other information and ideas from a text. When you are reading, think about what information the author supplies to support his or her points or claims, and think also about what evidence you would cite to defend your own interpretation of the text.
- A text's central idea or theme is the main point the author is trying to make. An author may make several points, but typically one of them is more important than the others. You can think of the central idea as what you would tell someone who asked you what the text you were reading was about. As you read, think about that key message. For many texts, it is possible to sum up the central idea in a single sentence. After you come up with that sentence, compare it to what you know from the text to see whether anything critical has been left out or anything trivial left in, and revise the sentence as needed.
- Authors draw many connections between information, ideas, and people. Among the most important of these are cause-effect, comparison-contrast, and sequential (e.g., time, order) relationships. As you read, consider listing or drawing out (as in a graphic organizer) some of those relationships. Whatever format you use, think about such things as what outcomes particular causes have, how two related things are alike and different, and which events in a series happened first, second, and so on.
- While there are many ways to figure out the meaning of words and phrases you encounter in your reading (e.g., consulting a dictionary, examining prefixes and suffixes), one important approach involves using context clues—basically, the information and ideas that surround a particular word or phrase in the text and that often help define it. During your reading, when you encounter a word or phrase whose meaning you are unsure of, figure out what you can about the meaning from the surrounding context. Often, "reading around" the word or phrase (a sentence or two before or after) will offer more insight than reading only the sentence containing the word or phrase.
- Developing a good understanding of a topic often involves reading more than one text on that topic. An important skill when reading multiple texts on the same topic is recognizing when and where these texts say similar and different things. As you read two or more texts on a topic, list or draw out some of the key similarities and differences between or among the texts. You might begin, for example, by coming up with a word or phrase that describes the attitude of each author toward the topic or noting the central idea of each text.
- Authors of informational texts often use graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts, to support and illustrate their points. Learning to "read" such graphics is an important skill for college, career, and life. When encountering an informational graphic, look for clues to its meaning and importance in its title; the labels for its rows, lines, bars, or the like; and any explanatory notes. Be sure that you can locate important information in the graphic and make at least simple meaningful comparisons (e.g., recognizing what it means when one bar is longer than others on a graph).

Reading Score Range 15–19

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Read closely in a moderately challenging passage to identify explicitly stated information or ideas
- Determine the best textual evidence for a simple conclusion [COE]
- Identify the central idea of a passage with a single, clear purpose
- Identify a simple relationship between information, ideas, or people (e.g., recognizing a basic comparison, contrast, or sequence)
- Determine the meaning of a relatively common word or phrase using clear context clues [WIC]
- Recognize a straightforward similarity or difference in a pair of moderately challenging passages
- Locate data or make a simple accurate interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing the size of two clearly labeled bars representing easy-to-interpret values on a bar graph) [COE]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- Spend time reading moderately challenging texts. These are texts whose information, ideas, structure, purpose, and language require some analysis. Read these texts closely and purposefully, and think about what inferences (reasonable conclusions) you can draw.
- When you are reading, look for examples in the text that provide support (evidence) for the conclusions the text is presenting. For example, if the text states that plastic bags are harmful to sea life, look for places in the text that provide specific examples of how sea creatures are harmed by plastic bags.
- When you are reading moderately challenging texts, look closely at the key information and ideas, and then use them to help you determine the central idea or theme—the main message—the author wants to convey.
- When you are reading, look for important connections in the text. Consider: Did one event cause another? Is a series of events presented in chronological order? Are two ideas or people similar or different? Focus on these sorts of central questions about relationships in texts.
- High-utility academic words and phrases are ones readers encounter frequently in their reading in a range of subjects. (These are different from technical terms, which are specific to particular subjects. A quick example: You would likely find *hypothesis* in many sorts of readings, whereas *mitosis* would mostly be found in biology texts.) While knowledge of all words and phrases is important, knowledge of high-utility academic words and phrases is particularly so because this vocabulary appears so often in so many places. Work on developing your vocabulary through reading, vocabulary lessons, and class discussions, paying particular attention to acquiring the meaning(s) of common high-utility academic words and phrases (those you encounter many times) and how their particular meaning is often shaped by the contexts in which they appear.
- Authors make particular word and phrases choices not only to convey information clearly and precisely but also to accomplish specific rhetorical purposes, such as provoking laughter or influencing readers' opinions. When you are reading moderately challenging texts, think about what purpose or effect is likely intended by the choice of words and phrases that seem particularly meaningful or central to the authors' messages.
- *Point of view* and *perspective* are similar terms for the stance that an author or narrator takes in a text. (You may be familiar with *narrative points of view*, such as third person limited, but *point of view* here generally has the broader meaning noted above.) When reading literary texts, use close reading strategies to form a general idea of the narrator and what textual clues, such as descriptive details and dialogue, signal about the narrator's feelings, beliefs, and the like. You can use similar strategies when reading moderately challenging informational texts to help uncover the authors' stances on the topics they discuss.
- Sometimes authors state their purposes directly. In other cases, readers must infer such purposes using various textual clues, such as an author's choice of words and phrases and what the author chooses to stress, deemphasize, or even ignore. When reading, look for explicit statements of purpose; when those do not appear, use close reading strategies and such clues as noted above to figure out likely intent.
- When reading multiple texts on the same topic, look for similarities and differences among them. For example, you may notice that certain historical texts include or leave out various details about an event. Consider highlighting similarities in one color and differences in another.
- Examine each informational graphic you encounter carefully, and be sure you understand what information the graphic is presenting and what the elements of the graphic (such as the bars or lines on a graph) represent. Drawing on this knowledge, locate data and make accurate interpretations, using such features as the graphic's title, axis labels, and legend to aid you.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; WIC = Words in Context

Reading Score Range 20–24

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Read closely in a moderately challenging passage to draw a reasonable inference
- Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when both evidence and conclusion are relatively obvious and direct (e.g., a clearly stated fact as evidence for a simple logical conclusion) [COE]
- Determine the central idea or theme of a moderately challenging passage
- Determine a basic relationship between information, ideas, or people (e.g., establishing a cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or sequential relationship)
- Determine the meaning of a common high-utility academic word or phrase, especially when clear context clues are available (e.g., when the passage's topic suggests a likely definition) [WIC]
- Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a moderately challenging passage [WIC]
- Identify the narrator's point of view in a literary passage; determine the author's perspective in a moderately challenging informational passage
- Determine the implicit main purpose of a moderately challenging passage; identify the clearly indicated main purpose of a complex passage
- Identify a similarity or difference in a pair of moderately challenging passages (e.g., recognizing that a particular detail appears in one passage but not in the other)
- Locate data or make a straightforward accurate interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing the sizes of numerous bars on a bar graph; determining which of two lines, each revealing a clear trend, represents a higher value on a line graph) [COE]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- Spend time reading complex texts. These are texts that can be difficult to understand at first because the information, ideas, structure, purpose, and language may be unfamiliar and will require careful analysis. Read these texts closely and purposefully, and focus on identifying key information that is stated directly in the text. Then, think about what inferences (reasonable conclusions) you can draw from that information.
- When you are reading, look for the conclusions the text is presenting, and look for and analyze details in the text that can support those conclusions. Determine what evidence provides the best support for a given conclusion. Check your interpretations by identifying all possible evidence and making sure you can determine what evidence stands out as providing particularly effective support.
- When you are reading complex texts, look closely at the key information and ideas, and then use them to help you determine the central idea or theme the author wants to convey.
- When you are reading, look for the connections the authors draw between information, ideas, and people. Among the most important of these are cause-effect, comparison-contrast, and sequential relationships. Pay attention to words that signal such relationships, such as *because*, *differs*, and *then*.
- High-utility academic words and phrases—vocabulary found frequently in readings across a range of subjects—are particularly valuable to know when trying to unlock the meaning of texts. Work on developing your vocabulary through reading, vocabulary lessons, and class discussions, paying particular attention to acquiring the meaning(s) of relatively common high-utility academic words and phrases (those you encounter fairly frequently) and how their particular meaning is often shaped by the contexts in which they appear. Also, underline or highlight figurative (nonliteral) expressions in texts, and use context clues to help determine their literal meaning.
- When you are reading complex texts, pay careful attention to the specific word and phrase choices authors make, and consider what purpose or effect is being sought. Keep in mind when reading texts of any sort that the purpose or effect of word and phrase choice may be somewhat subtle, such as when an author chooses words and phrases to express a particular emotion. For example, consider how the impact changes if an author chooses the word *catastrophic* instead of *damaging* or *serious*.
- When reading complex texts, keep in mind that authors sometimes refrain from stating points of view or perspectives directly and instead rely on the reader to draw reasonable inferences based on the information and ideas in the texts. Also, keep in mind that authors and narrators sometimes represent points of view or perspectives that are not their own, such as those of a character who disagrees with the main character. Use textual clues, such as the reactions to events a character has or the points an author chooses to stress, deemphasize, or even ignore, as signals of the basic stance an author or narrator is taking and to distinguish that stance from others that may be presented in the text.
- When reading complex texts, look for explicit statements of purpose; when those do not appear (or when the real purpose seems to diverge from the stated purpose), use close reading strategies and such clues as word and phrase choice, emphasis, and tone, to figure out an author's likely intent.
- When reading multiple texts on the same topic, look for similarities and differences in how authors present information or ideas. For example, you may notice that one author stresses the importance of or takes a particular stance on a historical event that differs markedly from what most of the other authors have to say. (Whether this is good or bad requires careful judgment.) Consider highlighting similarities in one color and differences in another.
- Examine each informational graphic (e.g., table, graph, or chart) you encounter carefully. Drawing on the knowledge you gain, locate data and make accurate interpretations, including determining the graphic's overall purpose and summarizing clear trends. It is also important to be able to draw connections between the data in the graphic and the accompanying text. A good place to start is by identifying places in the text where the author presents and analyzes data from the graphic.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; WIC = Words in Context

Reading Score Range 25–29

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Read closely in a complex passage to identify explicitly stated information or ideas or to draw a relatively simple reasonable inference
- Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when the evidence requires some interpretation or analysis [COE]
- Determine the central idea or theme of a complex passage
- Determine a relationship between information, ideas, or people (e.g., establishing a cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or sequential relationship)
- Determine the meaning of a relatively common high-utility academic word or phrase; determine the literal meaning of a straightforward figurative expression [WIC]
- Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a complex passage or in a simpler passage when the purpose or effect is somewhat subtle (e.g., an author using words to convey a particular emotion) [WIC]
- Draw a straightforward reasonable inference about point of view or perspective in a complex passage (e.g., identifying a technique the author uses to shape point of view in a literary passage; distinguishing among the multiple perspectives in an informational passage)
- Determine the main purpose of a complex passage
- Establish a similarity or difference in how authors present information or ideas (e.g., in terms of point of view, structure, or relationships) in a pair of complex passages
- Locate data or make an accurate interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., drawing a valid conclusion based on an understanding of a bar graph's overall purpose; summarizing a clear trend from several data points); draw a straightforward, supportable connection between a graphic and its accompanying passage (e.g., determining a graphic's clear main purpose and finding a matching assertion in the passage) [COE]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- Spend time reading complex texts. These are texts that can be difficult to understand at first because the information, ideas, structure, purpose, and language may be unfamiliar and will require careful analysis. Read these texts closely and purposefully in order to draw inferences (reasonable conclusions).
- When you are reading, pay careful attention when texts require you to make inferences (reasonable interpretations) to reach conclusions. After you reach those conclusions, look for and analyze details in the text that can support those conclusions. Determine what evidence provides the best support for a given conclusion. Check your interpretations by identifying all possible evidence and making sure you can determine what evidence stands out as providing particularly effective support.
- When you are reading complex texts, keep in mind that such texts often contain several important ideas. Consider these ideas carefully, and try to "rank" them in terms of importance to the text. The central idea(s) or theme(s) are likely to be the highest-ranked one(s).
- When you are reading, practice summarizing the text by restating the important ideas in only a few sentences. Check your understanding by rereading the text to determine if your summary is accurate.
- When you are reading complex texts, keep in mind that the connections the authors draw between information, ideas, and people, such as cause-effect, comparison-contrast, and sequential relationships, will require careful analysis. Pay attention to words and phrases that signal such relationships, such as *on the other hand, as a result*, and *subsequently*.
- High-utility academic words and phrases—vocabulary found frequently in readings across a range of subjects—are particularly valuable to know when trying to unlock the meaning of texts. Work on developing your vocabulary through reading, vocabulary lessons, and class discussions, paying particular attention to acquiring the meaning(s) of relatively uncommon high-utility academic words and phrases (those you encounter fairly infrequently) and how their particular meaning is often shaped by the contexts in which they appear. Also, use close reading strategies to help determine the literal meaning of challenging figurative expressions, such as analogies.
- When you are reading complex texts, pay careful attention to the specific word and phrase choices authors make, and consider what purpose or effect is being sought. Keep in mind when reading texts of any sort that the purpose or effect of word and phrase choice may be fairly subtle or complex, such as when an author uses word play or parody to convey attitude.
- When you are reading, think about how particular parts of a text relate to and further the purpose of the text as a whole. Consider, for example, whether a particular detail illustrates a larger idea or calls that idea into question.
- When reading complex texts, keep in mind that authors often refrain from stating points of view or perspectives directly and instead rely on the reader to draw reasonable inferences based on the information and ideas in the texts. Also, keep in mind that texts, especially more sophisticated ones, often contain multiple points of view or perspectives, some of which may be in conflict with one another, and that point of view or perspective, particularly in literary texts, may shift as new characters or topics are introduced. Use textual clues, such as the interactions multiple characters have or the use of characterizing words and phrases (e.g., *undeniably, apparently*), as signals to the stance an author or narrator is taking and to distinguish that stance from others that may be presented in the text. Use text features, such as chapter breaks, and other clues to help identify shifts in point of view or perspective.
- When reading complex texts (or texts of any sort), pay careful attention not only to the likely purpose of the text as a whole but also to the main purpose of particular paragraphs or sections. As with the main purpose of texts, the main purpose of one or more paragraphs or sections is sometimes stated and sometimes only implied. When considering purpose at either the whole-text or paragraph/section level, it may help to think in terms of action words and phrases, such as *support*, *persuade*, and *call into question*.
- When you are reading complex arguments, pay careful attention to the form's main elements, including *claims* (assertions an author is trying to convince readers of), *counterclaims* (assertions the author is trying to disprove), *reasoning* (the author's analysis), and *evidence* (facts, details, examples, and the like the author uses to support claims and dispute counterclaims). Claims (and counterclaims) are much like central ideas, the chief difference being that central ideas are mainly informational, whereas claims are assertions that can be argued. Use close reading strategies similar to those for determining central ideas and themes to discern claims (and counterclaims). When assessing an author's reasoning, look for both strengths as well as gaps, unstated (and possibly unsupportable) assumptions, signs of bias, and the like that may point to weaknesses.
- When reading multiple complex texts on the same topic, look for similarities and differences in the positions the authors take. Such comparisons and contrasts can take many forms. One approach is thinking about how one author might respond to another on a particularly uncertain or controversial point. To this end, consider annotating each author's take on such a point and comparing and contrasting the results.
- Examine each informational graphic (e.g., table, graph, or chart) you encounter carefully. Drawing on the knowledge you gain, make accurate interpretations, including comparing results in terms of two variables and considering the implications of the data. Draw connections between the data in the graphic and the accompanying text. Consider, for example, how specific pieces of data can be represented in terms of the concepts and language of the passage.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; WIC = Words in Context

Reading Score Range 30–34

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Read closely in a complex passage to draw a reasonable inference
- Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when the evidence requires some interpretation or analysis and the conclusion may require making an inference [COE]
- Determine the central idea or theme of a complex passage that features several important ideas (e.g., making the most defensible interpretation of a literary passage that is subject to multiple interpretations; distinguishing the author's or narrator's main point or perspective from other points or perspectives represented in the passage)
- Recognize an accurate summary
- Determine a relationship between information, ideas, or people in a complex passage (e.g., establishing a cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or sequential relationship)
- Determine the meaning of a relatively uncommon high-utility academic word or phrase; determine the literal meaning of a moderately challenging figurative expression [WIC]
- Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a complex passage or in a simpler passage when the purpose or effect is fairly subtle or complex (e.g., an author using word play or parody) [WIC]
- Determine the main purpose of a portion of a passage (e.g., a detail or a metaphor) in relation to the passage as a whole
- Draw a reasonable inference about point of view or perspective in a complex passage (e.g., identifying where point of view switches in a literary passage; distinguishing among conflicting perspectives in an informational passage)
- Determine the main purpose of a complex passage or that of one of its paragraphs
- Determine a claim or counterclaim in a complex argument; analyze a subtle argumentative technique or flaw (e.g., an author using weak reasoning in support of a claim) [COE]
- Compare two authors' positions in a pair of complex passages (e.g., determining the extent to which two authors agree or disagree about a claim)
- Make an accurate, somewhat subtle or complex interpretations of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing results in terms of two variables; recognizing an implication of the values represented on a table); draw a supportable connection between a graphic and its accompanying passage (e.g., characterizing a broad trend exhibited in a graph using the concepts and language of the passage) [COE]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- Spend time reading highly complex texts. These are texts that can be challenging even for very skilled readers because the information, ideas, structure, purpose, and language are often unfamiliar and require sophisticated analysis. Read these texts closely and purposefully, and focus on key information that is stated directly in the text as well what inferences (reasonable conclusions) you can draw.
- Particularly challenging texts often require you to make subtle or complex inferences. In addition, the evidence provided in support of those inferences is sometimes subtle, abstract, or (in literary texts) figurative. When you are reading these texts, draw your own conclusions and then analyze the evidence in the text that supports those conclusions. Remember, the evidence might not be directly stated, and you may need to interpret the text carefully. Determine what evidence provides the best support for a given conclusion. Check your interpretations by identifying all possible evidence and making sure you can determine what evidence stands out as providing particularly effective support.
- When you are reading highly complex texts, keep in mind that such texts typically contain several important ideas. Consider these ideas carefully, and try to "rank" them in terms of importance to the text. The central idea(s) or theme(s) are likely to be the highest-ranked one(s).
- When you are reading highly complex texts, keep in mind that such texts often require readers to make meaning from subtle or complex connections, such as cause-effect, comparison-contrast, and sequential relationships, between information, ideas, or people presented in the texts. Pay attention to words, phrases, and sentences that signal such relationships, and check your understanding by annotating the text or using a graphic organizer to represent the relationships visually.
- High-utility academic words and phrases—vocabulary found frequently in readings across a range of subjects—are particularly valuable to know when trying to unlock the meaning of texts. Work on developing your vocabulary through reading, vocabulary lessons, and class discussions, paying particular attention to acquiring the meaning(s) of uncommon high-utility academic words and phrases (those you encounter infrequently) and how their particular meaning is often shaped by the contexts in which they appear. Keep in mind that word meaning can shift over time, so that a word or phrase appearing in a text from an earlier time period may be used differently than is common today; use context clues to help you assess the intended meaning. Also, use close reading strategies to help determine the literal meaning of challenging figurative expressions, such as extended metaphors.
- When you are reading highly complex texts, pay careful attention to the specific word choices authors make, and consider what purpose or effect is being sought. Keep in mind when reading texts of any sort that the purpose or effect of word and phrase choice may be subtle or highly complex, such as when an author establishes meaning through tone via understatement, exaggeration, or sarcasm.
- When you are reading, think about how particular parts of a text relate to and further the purpose of the text as a whole. Keep in mind that the relationships may be subtle or complex, such as when rhetorical questions serve to underline what the author believes to be self-evidently true and unquestionable.
- When reading complex or highly complex texts, keep in mind that authors often refrain from stating points of view or perspectives directly and instead rely on the reader to draw reasonable inferences based on the information and ideas in the texts. Also, keep in mind that texts, especially more sophisticated ones, often contain multiple points of view or perspectives, some of which may be in conflict with one another, and that point of view or perspective, particularly in literary texts, may shift as new characters or topics are introduced. Use textual clues, such as the credibility an author seems to imbue a character with or the weight an author gives to one or another opinion, as signals to the stance an author or narrator is taking and to distinguish that stance from others that may be presented in the text; check your understanding by annotating the text or using a graphic organizer to represent the relationships visually. Use text features, such as chapter breaks, and other clues to help identify shifts in point of view or perspective.
- When reading multiple highly complex texts on the same topic, look for similarities and differences in the positions the authors take. Keep in mind that in texts of this complexity, authors' positions are likely to be sophisticated and nuanced. Determine as much as you can about each author's position, and look for textual evidence that shows the extent to which the positions are similar or different. Assess the extent to which authors agree or disagree philosophically as well as on particularly uncertain or controversial points. Check your understanding by annotating the texts or using a graphic organizer to represent the relationships visually.
- Examine each informational graphic (e.g., table, graph, or chart) you encounter carefully. Drawing on the knowledge you gain, make accurate interpretations, including comparing results in terms of three or more variables and determining which bars on a bar graph can reasonably be considered part of an overarching category. Draw connections between the data in the graphic and the accompanying text. Consider, for example, how the graphic's data can be summarized in terms of the concepts and language of the passage.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; WIC = Words in Context

Reading Score Range 35–40

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Read closely in a highly complex passage to identify explicitly stated information or ideas or to draw a reasonable inference
- Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when the evidence is subtle, abstract, or figurative and the conclusion requires making one or more inferences [COE]
- Determine the central idea or theme of a highly complex passage
- Determine a subtle or complex relationship between information, ideas, or people in a highly complex passage
- Determine the meaning of an uncommon high-utility academic word or phrase, including an archaic usage found in a text from an earlier time period; determine the literal meaning of subtle or complex figurative language [WIC]
- Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a highly complex passage or in a simpler passage when the purpose or effect is subtle or highly complex (e.g., the author establishing meaning chiefly through tone via understatement, exaggeration, or sarcasm) [WIC]
- Determine the main purpose of a portion of a passage in relation to the passage as a whole when the purpose is subtle or complex (e.g., the author using rhetorical questions to indicate self-evident truths)
- Draw a nuanced inference about point of view or perspective in a complex or highly complex passage (e.g., tracing a subtle shift in point of view in a literary passage; associating particular opinions with the individuals who hold them in an informational passage)
- Compare two authors' positions in a pair of highly complex passages or in a simpler pair when the comparison is subtle or complex (e.g., determining the extent to which two authors agree or disagree philosophically)
- Make an accurate subtle or complex interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing results in terms of three or more variables; determining which bars on a bar graph can reasonably be considered part of an overarching category); draw a subtle or complex supportable connection between a graphic and its accompanying passage (e.g., summarizing the results displayed in a table using the concepts and language of the passage) [COE]

Suggestions for Improvement

This is the top score band, and students who score at this level will likely have mastered the skills listed at all other levels. However, the ability to read and understand texts of all sorts is a skill that must be practiced often. We encourage you to continue to engage in academic reading, review the skills and suggestions listed in the 25–29 and 30–34 score bands, and explore the Official SAT Practice at satpractice.org.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; WIC = Words in Context

Writing and Language Score Range 6–14

Academic Skills

Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- In your writing and revising, provide basic support for a point or claim (e.g., by offering a fact or an example).
- In your writing and revising, use an understanding of the basic purpose of a text or paragraph to recognize and eliminate information and ideas that are clearly irrelevant to that purpose.
- In your writing and revising, determine the basic relationship of information in a paragraph in order to make effective decisions about structuring that information (e.g., grouping related ideas together).
- In your writing and revising, craft an introduction to a paragraph that appropriately reflects that paragraph's main topic. In addition, use simple transitional words or phrases to establish basic relationships among information and ideas, such as using *for instance* to signal a forthcoming example.
- In your writing and revising, use your vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of particular contexts to make straightforward word and phrase choices.
- In your writing and revising, eliminate obvious wordiness or redundancy within a single expression (e.g., *moving quickly and rapidly*).
- In your writing and revising, combine sentences in relatively simple ways and to achieve relatively simple purposes, such as removing clearly repetitive language to improve the flow of ideas.
- In your writing and revising, form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting clear and substantial disruptions in structure, such as obvious comma splices, faulty parallelism at the word level, and nonstandard relative pronouns.
- In your writing and revising, use an understanding of particular contexts to make fundamental verb tense decisions (e.g., deciding whether past or present tense is needed and then maintaining a consistent tense throughout the text).
- In your writing and revising, maintain subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement in straightforward situations, such as when the number of the subject is clearly singular or plural and when subject and verb are close to each other in the sentence.
- In your writing and revising, use conventional expression in straightforward situations, such as recognizing and correcting a nonsensical expression, using a preposition to signal a simple relationship (such as direction), and selecting appropriately between common words that are frequently confused, such as *to* and *too*.
- In your writing and revising, determine when particular contexts call for singular or plural possessive nouns and for plural or possessive nouns.
- In your writing and revising, use commas to set of simple nonrestrictive elements (e.g., *Her mother, a dentist, worked long hours*).
- In your writing and revising, eliminate obviously unnecessary and disruptive punctuation (e.g., between verb and direct object).

Writing and Language Score Range 15–19

Academic Skills

Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- In your writing and revising, provide basic support for a point or claim (e.g., by offering a fact or an example).
- In your writing and revising, use an understanding of the basic purpose of a text or paragraph to recognize and eliminate information and ideas that are clearly irrelevant to that purpose.
- In your writing and revising, determine the basic relationship of information in a paragraph in order to make effective decisions about structuring that information (e.g., grouping related ideas together).
- In your writing and revising, craft an introduction to a paragraph that appropriately reflects that paragraph's main topic. In addition, use simple transitional words or phrases to establish basic relationships among information and ideas, such as using *for instance* to signal a forthcoming example.
- In your writing and revising, use your vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of particular contexts to make straightforward word and phrase choices.
- In your writing and revising, eliminate obvious wordiness or redundancy within a single expression (e.g., *moving quickly and rapidly*).
- In your writing and revising, combine sentences in relatively simple ways and to achieve relatively simple purposes, such as removing clearly repetitive language to improve the flow of ideas.
- In your writing and revising, form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting clear and substantial disruptions in structure, such as obvious comma splices, faulty parallelism at the word level, and nonstandard relative pronouns.
- In your writing and revising, use an understanding of particular contexts to make fundamental verb tense decisions (e.g., deciding whether past or present tense is needed and then maintaining a consistent tense throughout the text).
- In your writing and revising, maintain subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement in straightforward situations, such as when the number of the subject is clearly singular or plural and when subject and verb are close to each other in the sentence.
- In your writing and revising, use conventional expression in straightforward situations, such as recognizing and correcting a nonsensical expression, using a preposition to signal a simple relationship (such as direction), and selecting appropriately between common words that are frequently confused, such as *to* and *too*.
- In your writing and revising, determine when particular contexts call for singular or plural possessive nouns and for plural or possessive nouns.
- In your writing and revising, use commas to set of simple nonrestrictive elements (e.g., *Her mother, a dentist, worked long hours*).
- In your writing and revising, eliminate obviously unnecessary and disruptive punctuation (e.g., between verb and direct object).

Writing and Language Score Range 20–24

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Use supporting information to achieve a simple purpose (e.g., providing a short list of examples introduced by including) [COE, EOI]
- Delete information that is obviously irrelevant to the main focus of a paragraph or passage (e.g., eliminating a detail that has no clear relationship to a passage's topic) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to achieve a simple purpose (e.g., grouping related information together; establishing a basic chronology) [EOI]
- Introduce a paragraph that has a clear, well-defined focus [EOI]
- Use a transitional word or phrase to establish a simple logical relationship between sentences (e.g., indicating sharp contrast) [EOI]
- Make an effective word or phrase choice in a straightforward situation (e.g., using a common but still appropriate expression instead of an awkward or meaningless one) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate obvious wordiness or redundancy (e.g., removing repetition within a short phrase) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences in a relatively simple way (e.g., making a second sentence into a relative clause of the first) or to achieve a relatively simple purpose (e.g., eliminating obvious awkwardness or repetition) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a clear and substantial disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating an obvious comma splice; correcting a lack of parallelism in a simple series of words; replacing a nonstandard relative pronoun with a standard one) [SEC]
- Recognize and correct an obviously inappropriate shift in verb tense (e.g., the use of present tense when the context clearly calls for past tense) [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a straightforward situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when the number of the subject is clear and the subject and verb appear close together in the sentence) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a straightforward situation (e.g., recognizing and correcting a nonsensical expression; choosing a preposition that establishes a logical relationship (e.g., with, for); selecting appropriately between common words that are frequently confused, such as to and too) [SEC]
- Distinguish between singular and plural possessive nouns and between plural and possessive nouns [SEC]
- Use commas to set off a simple nonrestrictive element (e.g., a phrase describing the person just named) [SEC]
- Eliminate obviously unnecessary and disruptive punctuation (e.g., between verb and direct object) [SEC]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- In your reading, identify the ways authors use signals such as topic sentences or introductory phrases (e.g., *for example*, *in contrast*) to guide the reader and provide structure to the text.
- In your writing and revising, use supporting information to achieve a specific purpose, perhaps by providing a cause for an effect or offering direct support in the form of an example for a claim.
- In your writing and revising, delete information that is irrelevant to a paragraph or text, such as a detail that interrupts an explanation or sequence or that strays from the main topic.
- In your writing and revising, demonstrate that you understand an informational graphic (e.g., a table, graph, or chart) by describing accurately important data it contains.
- In your writing and revising, order the sentences in a paragraph to achieve a specific purpose, such as placing a supporting detail immediately after a sentence that makes a claim.
- In your writing and revising, craft an introduction and conclusion appropriate for a text's content and purpose, such as a conclusion that restates the text's main claim. In addition, use transitional words or phrases to establish logical relationships between sentences, such as indicating a sequence or contrast or introducing a definition.
- In your writing and revising, use your vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of particular contexts to make effective word and phrase choices.
- In your writing and revising, eliminate wordiness or redundancy within a sentence, such as when adjectives with the same meaning or very similar meanings (e.g., *fast* and *quick*) are used to describe the same thing.
- In your writing and revising, maintain a consistent style and tone within a text, revising language that is clearly too informal or formal for the context.
- In your writing and revising, experiment with various ways of combining sentences to achieve specific purposes, such as improving clarity or the flow of ideas.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting disruptions in structure, such as sentence fragments that are not purposeful, faulty parallelism, and unclear relationships between introductory and main clauses.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use an understanding of particular contexts to determine appropriate verb tense and pronoun person and number.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, recognize and correct vague or ambiguous pronouns.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, maintain subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement in somewhat challenging situations, such as when a short phrase intervenes between subject and verb.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use conventional expression in somewhat challenging situations, such as appropriately completing a phrasal verb (e.g., using *go against* instead of *go after* to indicate opposition) and selecting appropriately between less-common words that are frequently confused, such as *effect* and *affect*.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, determine when particular contexts call for singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, appropriately punctuate items in a series with commas (or possibly semicolons in particularly complicated series).
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use punctuation to set off nonrestrictive elements, and eliminate punctuation incorrectly setting off restrictive elements.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, eliminate unnecessary punctuation in somewhat challenging situations, such as between a noun and preposition and between a verb and a clause serving as its object.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; EOI = Expression of Ideas; SEC = Standard English Conventions; WIC = Words in Context

Writing and Language Score Range 25–29

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Clarify an aspect of the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., using a phrase to set up examples that follow in subsequent sentences) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., providing a cause for an effect; offering direct support for a claim) [COE, EOI]
- Delete information that is clearly irrelevant to a paragraph or passage (e.g., eliminating a detail that interrupts an explanation or sequence or that obviously digresses from the main topic) [COE, EOI]
- Use a general understanding of an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, to revise a passage (e.g., drawing on knowledge of what a graph's bars represent to improve the accuracy of a passage's description of the graph) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., placing a supporting detail immediately after a sentence that makes a claim) [EOI]
- Introduce or conclude a passage based on a general understanding of the passage's content and purpose (e.g., adding a conclusion that restates the passage's main claim) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word or phrase to establish a straightforward logical relationship between sentences (e.g., indicating sequence or contrast; introducing a definition) [EOI]
- Make an effective word or phrase choice based on vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of the context (e.g., recognizing when a particular word is or is not commonly used to describe a person or object) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate wordiness or redundancy within a sentence (e.g., recognizing when adjectives with the same meaning or very similar meanings, such as fast and rapid, are used to describe the same thing) [WIC, EOI]
- Maintain a basic consistency in style and tone within a passage (e.g., revising language that is clearly too colloquial or formal for the context) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences in a straightforward way (e.g., making a second sentence into a prepositional phrase of the first) or to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., establishing a logical arrangement of sentence elements) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating an obvious, rhetorically inappropriate fragment; maintaining parallelism in a simple series of phrases; establishing a clear relationship between an introductory and main clause) [SEC]
- Determine appropriate verb tense or pronoun person and number on the basis of an understanding of the context (e.g., correcting an inappropriate shift from past tense to present or past perfect tense; making a needed shift from past to present tense to signal a change in time frame; correcting an inappropriate shift from third person they to second person you) [SEC]
- Recognize and correct an obviously vague or ambiguous pronoun (e.g., replacing a pronoun without a clear antecedent with the appropriate noun) [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when a short phrase intervenes) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., choosing the preposition that appropriately completes a phrasal verb; selecting appropriately between less-common words that are frequently confused, such as effect and affect) [SEC]
- Distinguish among singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns [SEC]
- Appropriately punctuate items in a series (e.g., a three-item series of nouns with accompanying adjectives) [SEC]
- Use punctuation to set off a nonrestrictive element (e.g., an interrupting phrase); eliminate punctuation inappropriately setting off a simple restrictive element (e.g., a job title that precedes a person's name) [SEC]
- Eliminate unnecessary punctuation in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., between noun and preposition; between verb and a clause serving as its object) [SEC]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- In your writing and revising, establish and clarify the structure of a paragraph or text by, for example, adding a sentence to create context for a paragraph's discussion or to present a claim that the paragraph subsequently supports.
- In your writing and revising, use supporting information, such as a specific and relevant example or an appropriate quotation, to develop a point or claim logically.
- In your writing and revising, make careful decisions about adding, revising, or deleting information in order to sharpen the focus of a paragraph or text.
- In your writing and revising, use data located in or accurately interpreted from an informational graphic (e.g., a table, graph, or chart) as well as distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information.
- In your writing and revising, look for and correct critical issues of logic or cohesion, such as a gap in a chronological sequence or the lack of an effective transition between ideas, and reorder or add sentences to a paragraph to address these issues.
- In your writing and revising, craft an introduction and conclusion based on a text's content and purpose. In addition, use transitional words, phrases, clauses, and sentences to establish logical relationships between sentences and paragraphs.
- In your writing and revising, use a well-developed vocabulary and a well-developed understanding of particular contexts to make nuanced word and phrase choices, including ones that call on knowledge of the connotations of relatively uncommon words with similar meanings.
- In your writing and revising, look for and eliminate relatively subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences, such as when information overexplains a concept already made clear.
- In your writing and revising, use an understanding of a particular context to make careful decisions about style and tone, maintaining consistency and possibly achieving particular rhetorical aims, such as choosing language that sets a particular mood.
- In your writing and revising, combine sentences to accomplish a relatively subtle purpose, such as using an appropriate conjunction to improve the logic and flow of ideas.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting relatively subtle disruptions in structure, such as rhetorically inappropriate fragments created by the use of a semicolon, faulty parallelism in series of phrases, problematic conjunctions, and obvious dangling modifiers.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use a well-developed understanding of particular contexts to determine the appropriate verb tense and mood and pronoun person and number.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use an understanding of particular contexts to recognize and correct vague or ambiguous pronouns.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, carefully distinguish among the possessive determiners *its* and *their*, the contractions *it's* and *they're*, and the adverb *there*.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, maintain subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement in challenging situations, such as when a clause or multiple short phrases intervene between a subject and verb and possibly suggest a different number for the verb than the subject warrants.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use conventional expression in challenging situations, such as selecting appropriately between relatively uncommon words that are frequently confused (e.g., *discrete* and *discreet*).
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use an understanding of particular contexts to make careful distinctions among singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use an understanding of particular contexts and of the difference between restrictive and nonrestrictive elements to make careful decisions about how or whether to use punctuation to set off one or more elements.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, eliminate unnecessary punctuation in challenging situations, such as between a long subject and the predicate and after a word or phrase, such as *including*, that sets up a list of examples.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; EOI = Expression of Ideas; SEC = Standard English Conventions; WIC = Words in Context

Writing and Language Score Range 30–34

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Establish and clarify the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., adding a sentence to frame a paragraph's discussion or to present a claim that the paragraph subsequently supports) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to develop a point or claim logically (e.g., offering a specific, relevant example; using a quotation that clarifies a concept or observation) [COE, EOI]
- Sharpen the focus of a paragraph or passage by making a careful decision about adding, revising, or deleting information (e.g., eliminating material that is broadly relevant to a topic but that is poorly placed or integrated) [COE, EOI]
- Locate or accurately interpret data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, to revise a passage (e.g., identifying the value in a table that is associated with a particular condition; distinguishing between accurate and inaccurate interpretations and between relevant and irrelevant information) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to address a critical issue of logic or cohesion (e.g., adding a sentence to fill a discernible gap in a chronological sequence; repositioning a sentence to provide a needed transition between ideas) [EOI]
- Introduce or conclude a passage based on an understanding of the passage's content and purpose (e.g., ensuring that the conclusion offers an adequate sense of closure; achieving a particular rhetorical aim, such as suggesting implications of the findings discussed in the passage) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word, phrase, clause, or sentence to establish a logical relationship between sentences or paragraphs (e.g., signaling a shift in emphasis or focus) [EOI]
- Make a nuanced word or phrase choice based on well-developed vocabulary knowledge and a well-developed understanding of the context (e.g., distinguishing among relatively uncommon words that have similar denotations but differing connotations or uses) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate relatively subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences (e.g., recognizing when information overexplains a concept already made clear and correcting accordingly; deleting repetition involving fairly sophisticated language) [WIC, EOI]
- Make a careful decision about style and tone in a passage based on an understanding of the context (e.g., revising language that is too colloquial or formal in a fairly challenging context; achieving a particular rhetorical aim, such as establishing a particular sentence pattern or choosing language that sets a contextually appropriate mood) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences to accomplish a relatively subtle purpose (e.g., inserting a conjunction to establish a logical relationship; blending elements of two sentences to improve the logic and flow of ideas) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a relatively subtle disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating a rhetorically inappropriate fragment created by the use of a semicolon; maintaining parallelism in a series of phrases; choosing or eliminating a conjunction based on an understanding of the syntax of a relatively sophisticated or long sentence; correcting an obvious dangling modifier) [SEC]
- Determine appropriate verb tense and mood or pronoun person and number on the basis of a well- developed understanding of the context (e.g., making a needed shift into conditional mood to suggest a possible but not certain outcome) [SEC]
- Recognize and correct a vague or ambiguous pronoun based on an understanding of the context (e.g., replacing an ambiguous pronoun with a noun after a close reading to determine what the appropriate noun should be) [SEC]
- Make careful distinctions among the possessive determiners its and their, the contractions it's and they're, and the adverb there [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a challenging situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when a clause or multiple short phrases intervene and possibly suggest a different number for the verb than the subject warrants) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a challenging situation (e.g., selecting appropriately between relatively uncommon words that are frequently confused, such as discrete and discreet) [SEC]
- Make careful distinctions among singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns based on an understanding of the context (e.g., noting that the article the establishes that the noun it precedes is singular or singular possessive) [SEC]
- Make a careful decision about how or whether to use punctuation to set off one or more sentence elements based on an understanding of the context (e.g., determining whether an element is restrictive or nonrestrictive through a close reading of the context and then punctuating or not punctuating accordingly; using matching punctuation, such as two commas rather than a comma and a dash, to set off a nonrestrictive element) [SEC]
- Eliminate unnecessary punctuation in a challenging situation (e.g., between a long subject and the predicate; after a word or phrase, such as including, that sets up a list of examples) [SEC]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- In your writing and revising, make sophisticated decisions relating to the structure of a paragraph or text in which the language and content are complex by, for example, using a clause to set up information when the link between the clause and information is subtle.
- In your writing and revising, use supporting information to develop logically a point or claim, demonstrating your thorough understanding of a challenging context.
- In your writing and revising, make sophisticated decisions about adding, revising, or deleting information in order to sharpen the focus of a paragraph or text.
- In your writing and revising, use data accurately interpreted, paraphrased, or summarized from an informational graphic (e.g., a table, graph, or chart).
- In your writing and revising, make sure that the sentences in a paragraph result in a logical and cohesive paragraph. For example, you may decide to reposition rather than delete a sentence that, when properly placed, improves the flow of ideas in a paragraph.
- In your writing and revising, use transitional words, phrases, clauses, and sentences to establish complex or subtle logical relationships between sentences and paragraphs. In addition, notice when such a transition is not needed or is problematic and eliminate it.
- In your writing and revising, use a highly developed vocabulary and a thorough understanding of particular contexts to make sophisticated word and phrase choices, including ones that call on knowledge of the connotations of uncommon words with very similar meanings.
- In your writing and revising, look for and eliminate subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences and paragraphs, such as when the same detail appears multiple times in successive paragraphs or when a sophisticated-sounding but wordy expression is less effective than a simpler and more economical one.
- In your writing and revising, use a thorough understanding of a particular context to make sophisticated decisions about style and tone, achieving subtle rhetorical aims, such as maintaining a sentence pattern that has already been established.
- In your writing and revising, combine sentences to achieve a complex or subtle purpose, such as using an understanding of context to place a blended sentence's emphasis on the most important idea through subordination.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting complex or subtle disruptions in structure, such as incomplete sentences with uncommon structures (e.g., sentences containing a subject clause beginning with *that*) and minor and easily overlooked violations of parallelism (e.g., a missing preposition in a series of phrases).
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, maintain subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement in complex situations, such as when the subject and verb are widely separated and when intervening text suggests a different number for the verb than the subject warrants.
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use conventional expression in complex situations, such as selecting appropriately between or among uncommon words that are frequently confused (e.g., *defuse* and *diffuse*; *pique, peak, and peek*).
- In your writing, editing, and proofreading, use a semicolon to join two closely related independent clauses, and use a colon to introduce lists or elaborations (e.g., a noun phrase renaming a previously mentioned concept; an independent clause explaining a point introduced earlier in a sentence).

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; EOI = Expression of Ideas; SEC = Standard English Conventions; WIC = Words in Context

Writing and Language Score Range 35–40

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Make a sophisticated decision relating to the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., using a clause to set up information when the content and language are complex and the linkage is subtle) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to develop a point or claim logically on the basis of a thorough understanding of a challenging context (e.g., drawing on logic and an understanding of the context to indicate the last step in a complex sequence; including an example that is similar in content to one or more other examples in a paragraph) [COE, EOI]
- Sharpen the focus of a paragraph or passage by making a sophisticated decision about adding, revising, or deleting information (e.g., adding or retaining nonessential but relevant material because it enhances meaning and clarity) [COE, EOI]
- Accurately interpret, paraphrase, or summarize data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, to revise a passage (e.g., encompassing multiple data points in a single relevant general statement) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to address a complex or subtle issue of logic or cohesion (e.g., deciding to reposition rather than delete a sentence that, when properly placed, improves the flow of ideas in a paragraph) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word, phrase, clause, or sentence to establish a complex or subtle logical relationship between sentences or paragraphs; recognize when such a device is not needed or problematic (e.g., drawing on an understanding of the context to eliminate a word or phrase, such as therefore, that wrongly suggests a cause-effect relationship) [EOI]
- Make a sophisticated word or phrase choice based on highly developed vocabulary knowledge and a thorough understanding of a challenging context (e.g., distinguishing among uncommon words that have similar denotations but differing connotations or uses when the distinctions are subtle) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences and paragraphs (e.g., recognizing that a sophisticated-sounding but wordy expression is less effective than a simpler and more economical one; eliminating the second appearance of the same detail in successive paragraphs) [WIC, EOI]
- Make a sophisticated decision about style and tone in a passage based on a thorough understanding of the context (e.g., achieving a subtle rhetorical aim, such as closely matching a sentence pattern already established in a passage) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences to accomplish a complex or subtle purpose (e.g., drawing on an understanding of the context to place a blended sentence's emphasis on its most important idea) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a complex or subtle disruption in structure (e.g., ensuring the completeness of a sentence with an uncommon structure, such as a sentence containing a subject clause beginning with that; correcting minor and easily overlooked violations of parallelism, such as the omission of a preposition, in a series of phrases) [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement in a complex situation (e.g., between subject and verb when the two are widely separated and when intervening text suggests a different number for the verb than the subject warrants) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a complex situation (e.g., selecting appropriately between uncommon words that are frequently confused, such as defuse and diffuse) [SEC]
- Use a semicolon to join two closely related independent clauses [SEC]
- Use a colon to introduce a list or an elaboration (e.g., a noun phrase renaming a previously mentioned concept; an independent clause explaining a point introduced earlier in a sentence) [SEC]

Suggestions for Improvement

This is the top score band and students who score at this level will likely have mastered the skills listed at all other levels. However, communicating clearly and effectively in writing is a key skill for college and career readiness. We encourage you to review the skills and suggestions listed in the 25-29 and 30-34 score bands and explore the Official SAT Practice on satpractice.org.

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; EOI = Expression of Ideas; SEC = Standard English Conventions; WIC = Words in Context

Math Score Range 6–14

Academic Skills

Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- When reading a real-world problem, identify the quantities that change and create an expression or equation to describe the relationship between them.
- When substituting in a value for the variable into an expression, remember to use the order of operations to simplify. Pay attention to negative signs, especially when using an exponent.
- When reading a real-world, multistep, problem identify when a rate will help solve the problem. Then, create and use the rate to solve the problem.
- When reading a real-world, multistep, problem identify parts of a whole, such as 5 questions correct (part) out of 10 questions (whole), in order to calculate percentages.
- When converting units, use a proportion or multiply by a form of one to find the equivalent rate.
- When reading a graph or a table, examine the labels and the scales. Use the table headers, titles, and axes labels to understand the data.
- When solving problems about area and volume, remember that area has two-dimensions (length and width) and that volume has three dimensions (length, width and height).

KEY: HOA = Heart of Algebra; PAM = Passport to Advanced Math; PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Math Score Range 15–19

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Create a simple expression or equation in one variable that represents a context [HOA]
- Evaluate a one-variable expression by substituting a value for the variable [HOA]
- Create a rate based on a context and use the rate to solve a simple problem [PSD]
- Use common English conversions (e.g., 1 hour = 60 minutes, 1 foot = 12 inches) to find an equivalent rate [PSD]
- Solve problems that involve percentages [PSD]
- Read information presented in simple tables or simple graphs [PSD]
- Solve problems using area and volume formulas

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- When reading a real-world problem, identify a quantity that varies (time, distance, age, etc…) and use a variable label to represent that quantity in an equation.
- When reading a real-world problem, identify multiple quantities that vary and develop a linear equation or a linear function that defines their relationship.
- When solving linear equations in one variable, think about how to "undo" the equation to get the variable alone. Use the distributive property and/or combine like terms when necessary. The value that makes the equation "true" is the solution to the equation.
- When reading a real-world, multistep, problem identify when a ratio will help solve the problem. Then, create and use the ratio to solve the problem.
- When graphing real-world data, interpret the information provided and determine the best graphical representation.

KEY: HOA = Heart of Algebra; PAM = Passport to Advanced Math; PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Math Score Range 20–24

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Create an expression or equation in one variable that models a context [HOA]
- Create a linear function that models a context [HOA]
- Create a linear equation in two variables that models a context [HOA]
- Solve a linear equation in one variable [HOA]
- Create a ratio based on a context and use the rate to solve a problem [PSD]
- Interpret data represented in a graph [PSD]
- Select an appropriate graphical representation of a context [PSD]
- Select the most appropriate data display that represents the relationship between two variables [PSD]

Suggestions for Improvement

- Identify terms in linear equations and describe their meaning in relationship to the real-world scenario they represent.
- Given a context, create a linear system of equations relating to that context and solve the system. After finding the solution to the system, describe what the solution means relative to the context.
- When solving systems of two linear equations, determine the most efficient strategy based on the current form of the equations. Some equations are more efficient to solve by combination or elimination, while others can be more efficiently solved by substitution or graphing. Transform equations to solve when appropriate.
- When solving a system of linear equations in two variables, interpret an ordered pair (x, y) as the solution.
- When reading a real-world problem, identify restrictions that would be represented with an inequality instead of an equation. Phrases such as "at most," "at least," and "no more than" indicate such restrictions.
- When solving an equation with more than one variable, think about how to "undo" the equation to get the intended variable alone.
- Use the relationship between variables shown on a graph to make predictions and conclusions given a context.
- Make connections between algebraic, graphical, tabular, and verbal representations of linear functions. When given one representation, be able to create any of the other representations.
- Interpret the rate of change of a linear relationship between two variables in a real-world scenario.
- When adding or subtracting polynomials, start by identifying and combining like terms.
- When multiplying polynomials, first examine the expression for structure and then follow the order of operations.
- When factoring polynomials, look for common numbers and/or variables that can be factored out of each term.
- When factoring polynomials, look for relationships that allow the use of the difference of two squares, the square of a binomial, and quadratic trinomials.
- Use what you know about factoring and the zero product property to solve quadratic equations.
- Use the information in a real-world problem to determine whether ratios, proportions, rates and/or unit rates are needed to solve the problem. Multistep problems often require more than one of these to answer the question.
- Identify key information and variables from a scenario in order to set up and calculate ratios, proportions, rates, and unit rates. Pay particular attention to units.
- When reading a real-world problem, identify key information in the problem to determine a unit rate and then use the unit rate to answer the question.
- Pay particular attention to the units in rates and variables. Solving multistep problems may require single or multiple unit conversions.
- When solving real-world, multistep problems including percentages, determine whether the percent of the original amount is needed. Calculate percentages involving discounts, rate increases, sales tax, and interest.
- Find mean, median, mode, and range for a set of data and use measures of central tendency to summarize real-world data.
- Apply proportional relationships in a real-world problem.
- Look for whether or not the data were collected through simple random sampling techniques, thereby allowing sample statistics to inform inferences about a population.
- Find simple and compound probabilities.
- Analyze scatterplot data to estimate a line of best fit.
- When solving geometric problems, look for relationships between complementary, supplementary, right, corresponding, vertical, alternate interior and alternate exterior angles.
- Use the concept of two parallel lines cut by a transversal to examine the eight angles that are formed with only two different angle measures.

KEY: HOA = Heart of Algebra; PAM = Passport to Advanced Math; PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Math Score Range 25–29

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Interpret a term from a linear equation in one variable that models a context [HOA]
- Interpret a term from a linear equation in two variables that models a context [HOA]
- Create a system of two linear equations in two variables that models a context [HOA]
- Solve a system of two linear equations in two variables [HOA]
- Understand that an ordered pair is a solution to a system of two linear equations in two variables [HOA]
- Create an inequality in one or two variables that models a context [HOA]
- Solve a linear equation in one variable [HOA]
- Solve linear equations in which a linear expression is used as a variable [HOA]
- Make connections between different representations (graphs, equations, tables, etc.) of linear relationships between two variables [HOA]
- Rearrange a multivariate equation to isolate a variable or term [PAM]
- Add, subtract, or multiply polynomials [PAM]
- Factor polynomials [PAM]
- Solve quadratic equations [PAM]
- Use the form of the square of a binomial or other fundamental insights into structure to analyze expressions [PAM]
- Create and use ratios, proportions, rates, and unit rates to solve problems [PSD]
- Create a unit rate based on a context and use the unit rate to solve a problem [PSD]
- Utilize one or more unit conversions to solve a problem [PSD]
- Given a context, make a single unit conversion and solve a problem [PSD]
- Solve multistep problems using percentages [PSD]
- Draw a conclusion about information presented in a graph [PSD]
- Synthesize information presented in a table [PSD]
- Calculate mean, median, or range for a set of data [PSD]
- Use a proportion to estimate a population parameter from a point estimate [PSD]
- Evaluate whether the participants selected for a study are representative of the population [PSD]
- Interpret mean, median, or range for a set of data that represents a context [PSD]
- Calculate a simple conditional probability from a two-way table [PSD]
- Interpret the association and other information shown by a scatterplot [PSD]
- Solve a problem about a geometric figure using the vertical angle theorem or theorems about a transversal crossing parallel lines, possibly combining these theorems in a straightforward way

KEY:
HOA = Heart of Algebra
PAM = Passport to Advanced Math
PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- Make connections between the various linear functions that describe real-world situations. Think about what's happening in the situation, and determine when a situation would be described by a linear equation in two variables, a system of two linear equations, or a linear inequality.
- When linear equations or systems of linear equations are presented in standard form, identify the characteristics that would cause the system to have no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions.
- Determine whether the two equations in a system of linear equations have the same slope and/or y-intercept and how those characteristics affect the graph of the system.
- When analyzing a system of two linear equations, predict what a graph with no solution, one solution, and infinitely many solutions would look like.
- Fluency with rational numbers such as fractions and decimals is important. Apply computation skills with fractions and decimals when solving one-variable equations that contain them.
- When analyzing a relationship on a graph of a linear relationship, determine how a change to its equation will shift or scale the graph.
- Identify terms in quadratic equations and describe their meaning in relationship to the real-world situation that they represent.
- Identify terms in polynomial equations and describe their meaning in relationship to the real-world situation that they represent.
- When looking at the exponential function that represents a real-world situation, describe the properties of the function including the base, exponent, and function values and their connection to the real-world situation, and how modifying those properties might impact the function.
- When solving systems of equations composed of one linear equation and one nonlinear equation, think about whether solving the system algebraically or graphically would be more strategic and efficient.
- Use function notation to represent dependent relationships.
- Write radical expressions in equivalent forms using fractional exponents.
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide radical expressions.
- Use the inverse relationship between roots and exponents to solve equations.
- Apply inverse operations to solve equations.
- Determine whether solutions to equations are extraneous.
- Use a graph to determine key features such as *x*- and *y*-intercepts, rate of change, domain and range, minima and maxima, and asymptotes.
- When analyzing a relationship on a graph of a non-linear relationship, determine how a change to its equation will shift or scale the graph.
- When solving quadratic equations, determine if the most efficient method is to complete the square or to apply the quadratic formula. Look for connections between solutions of a quadratic equation and zeros of a quadratic function.
- Identify restrictions in domain and range of a polynomial function. Regroup terms of a polynomial function and factor polynomials by grouping.
- Transform an equation so properties of its graph can easily be interpreted by a strategically chosen form of the equation.
- Use proportional relationships to increase or decrease quantities by a scale factor.
- Solve contextualized problems by developing and using ratios, proportions and/or proportional reasoning, rates, and unit rates.
- Identify the key units provided when reading real-world, multistep problems. Make connections between the measurements or units given in order to determine percent increase or decrease. Notice when the bases of the percentage changes and think through how this affects the situation.
- When analyzing data, think about how outliers affect the mean and median.
- Compute simple, compound, and conditional probabilities.
- Create and interpret representations of data, including tables, tree diagrams, and area models.
- Estimate a line of best fit for a data set and use it to make predictions.
- When analyzing data, look for whether the group of participants has been sampled in a way that would produce a representative sample of the true eligible population.
- When adding or subtracting complex numbers, group real parts and imaginary parts.
- When multiplying complex numbers, use what you know about powers of *i* to simplify expressions or equations.
- When dividing complex numbers, first use what you know about rationalizing a denominator and then think about simplifying powers of *i*.
- Beyond memorization, gain a conceptual understanding of why area, surface area, and volume formulas can be applied to solve multistep problems involving complex and overlapping geometric figures.
- When finding volume, extend understanding of area and surface area.
- Given the volume of a figure, find a surface area or areas of partial figures.
- When solving problems involving similar triangles, apply the concepts that corresponding sides are in proportion and corresponding angles are congruent.

Math Score Range 30–34

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Create and use linear relationships to solve a problem, interpret terms in linear relationships, and make connections between different representations of linear functions, linear equations in two variables, systems of two linear equations in two variables, and linear inequalities [HOA]
- Determine the conditions under which a linear equation or system of two linear equations in two variables written in standard form has no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions [HOA]
- Solve a system of equations consisting of one linear equation and one nonlinear equation [HOA]
- Solve a linear equation in one variable that requires computation with fractions or decimals [HOA]
- Interpret a term from a quadratic equation in one variable that models a context [HOA]
- Interpret a term from a polynomial equation in one variable that models a context [HOA]
- Analyze properties of an exponential function that represents a context [HOA]
- Use function notation to solve problems [HOA]
- Analyze how the changes in quantities in a multivariate equation affect the other variables in the equation [HOA]
- Evaluate a radical expression for given values of a variable [HOA]
- Solve absolute value equations [HOA]
- Solve a rational equation in one variable [HOA]
- Make connections between the graph of a general function and the properties of the function [HOA]
- Add, subtract, or multiply complex numbers [HOA]
- Factor polynomials, where this requires more insight into the structure of the polynomial [HOA]
- Solve quadratic equations [HOA]
- Use properties of polynomial equations to reveal zeros or use zeros of polynomial equations to reveal properties of polynomial graphs [HOA]
- Find parameters in a quadratic or higher-degree polynomial [HOA]
- Solve problems involving more-complex area and volume formulas [HOA]
- Solve geometric problems involving surface area [HOA]
- Find or estimate volumes or dimensions of circular cylinders and spheres [HOA]
- Solve a problem about a geometric figure or figures using properties of similar triangles [HOA]
- Calculate and use mean, median, and range to solve problems and interpret standard deviation of one-variable data sets [HOA]
- Use structure to identify a different algebraic representation of a quadratic or exponential equation that reveals one or more properties of the graph of the equation [HOA]
- Create a proportion and use the proportion to estimate a population parameter from a point estimate [HOA]
- Understand that results from a random sample can extend only to the population from which the sample was drawn [HOA]
- Analyze how changes to a data set affect the mean, median, and mode [HOA]
- Calculate compound and conditional probabilities [HOA]
- Use two-way tables to calculate compound and conditional probabilities [HOA]
- Compare predicted and actual values of a line of best fit for data on a scatterplot [HOA]
- Compute percent change in a complex context, including multistep problems in which the bases of the percentages change [PSD]

Suggestions for Improvement

To advance to the next highest score band, students should focus on the following skills:

- Develop fluency in representing or describing linear functions and inequalities graphically, analytically, and in a table.
- Create and solve systems of linear equations or inequalities using graphs, tables, or equations in a contextualized or non-contextualized setting.
- When analyzing systems of linear equations in two variables written in nonstandard form, be able to transform equations strategically to identify characteristics of the equations to help determine if the system has no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions. Once transformed, determine what modifications of the equations would result in the system having no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions.
- Examine the different components of exponential functions used to model real-world situations. Find key attributes of the function that could impact the model. Some common real-world situations modeled by exponential functions include, but are not limited to, compound interest, population growth, and radioactive decay.
- When dividing polynomials using synthetic division or long division, use what you know about long division of numerals to make conclusions about the remainder.
- Use the distributive property to determine the product of a binomial and a trinomial.
- Use the discriminant of a quadratic equation to determine the nature of the roots.
- When given a quadratic representation in a table, graph, or equation, determine the number of solutions and consider which transformations would change the number of solutions.
- Identify the graph of a polynomial function given its equation.
- Identify key characteristics of a quadratic equation in vertex form and standard form.
- Identify and write an equation given a graph and identify and create a graph given an equation for quadratic and exponential functions.
- Use function notation fluently.
- Use conversion factors between complex, real-world scenarios such as currency rates, temperatures, volume/area/length, weight, speed, and time.
- Use a key feature of a graph to determine the equation.
- Connect the concept that linear functions have a constant rate of change and exponential functions have a constant multiplicative change to a table of values, a graph, or a description of a relationship.
- Use mean, median, and standard deviation to compare and contrast data sets both in and out of context.
- Using a graph or a table of values, estimate the line of best fit.
- Interpret frequency tables, histograms, box plots, and dot plots.
- Interpret margin of error and how sample size can impact it.
- Use sine, cosine, and tangent to solve problems involving right triangles.
- Use connections between geometric figures and algebraic equations to solve problems.
- Apply properties of similar triangles to solve multistep problems.
- Apply properties of 30-60-90 and 45-45-90 special right triangles.
- Apply SSS, SAS, ASA postulates and AAS and HL theorems to prove triangles are congruent.
- Use CPCTC to prove correspondence congruencies.
- Convert between radian and degree measure.
- Solve problems related to trigonometric ratios involving the unit circle.
- Use trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean theorem to solve right triangles.

KEY: HOA = Heart of Algebra; PAM = Passport to Advanced Math; PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Math Score Range 35–40

Academic Skills

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Create linear relationships and use tables and graphs to solve a problem, interpret terms, and make connections between different representations of linear equations in one variable, linear functions, linear equations in two variables, systems of two linear equations in two variables, and linear inequalities [HOA]
- Determine the conditions under which a system of two linear equations in two variables written in nonstandard form has no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions [HOA]
- Solve a radical equation in one variable [HOA]
- Simplify compound rational expressions [HOA]
- Use properties of radicals and exponents to rewrite expressions [HOA]
- Divide polynomials and determine the remainder [HOA]
- Factor polynomial expressions by applying the distributive law with a factor that is a binomial [HOA]
- Determine the conditions under which a quadratic equation has zero, one, or two solutions [HOA]
- Determine whether a linear or exponential relationship exists between two variables given a table, graph, or description [HOA]
- Identify the form of a quadratic function (or other function) that reveals specific information about the function [HOA]
- Identify the equation of the graph of a polynomial by examining the intercepts and end behavior of the graph [HOA]
- Solve problems using trigonometric ratios [HOA]
- Solve a problem involving volume where the dimensions of a solid satisfy algebraic relationships [HOA]
- Solve a complex problem about a geometric figure or figures using properties of similar triangles [HOA]
- Solve problems using special right triangles [HOA]
- Solve problems using the Pythagorean theorem [HOA]
- Solve a problem about a geometric figure or figures using properties of congruent triangles [HOA]
- Use mean, median, and range to solve problems and interpret standard deviation of one-variable data sets, including problems in which only a distribution of values for the data set is given [HOA]
- Identify the equation of a possible line of best fit for data presented on a scatterplot [HOA]
- Convert between radians and degrees [HOA]
- Solve problems using trigonometric ratios [HOA]
- Create and use ratios, proportions, rates, and unit rates to solve problems and utilize unit conversions to solve problems [PSD]
- Apply exponential models to solve problems and make estimates that do not involve an exact number of growth or decay periods [PSD]

Suggestions for Improvement

This is the top score band, and students who score at this level will likely have mastered the skills listed at all other levels. However, it is important to continue to refine and solidify mathematical procedural fluency and conceptual knowledge. Therefore, we encourage students to review the skills and suggested strategies for improvement listed in the 25–29 and 30–34 score bands and engage in further preparation and skill practice using the Official SAT Practice on satpractice.org.

KEY: HOA = Heart of Algebra; PAM = Passport to Advanced Math; PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Essay Score Range 2–3

Academic Skills

- Your essay demonstrated little understanding of the source text. Your essay included only details from the text without reference to the text's central idea(s) and made little or no use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases). [Reading]
- Your essay offered an ineffective analysis of the source text by identifying without explanation some aspects of the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements, or your essay was focused largely or exclusively on summarizing the text. [Analysis]
- Your essay demonstrated little or no cohesion, lacking a clear central claim to guide the organization of the essay, a recognizable introduction and conclusion, and a discernible progression of ideas. Your essay also showed weak control of the conventions of standard written English, with numerous errors that undermined the quality of writing. [Writing]

Suggestions for Improvement

- Before focusing on smaller details in the source text, be sure to convey the text's central idea(s) so that readers know the author's main argument.
- Be sure to move beyond merely mentioning or summarizing what the author says. Identify and describe aspects of the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic or persuasive elements and then analyze how these elements contribute to the author's argument.
- Focus on including a clear central claim that guides the organization of your essay. Be sure to include an introduction and conclusion in your response and make sure your ideas connect logically from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph. Improve your control of the conventions of standard written English and proofread your essay for errors that can undermine your writing quality.

Essay Score Range 4–5

Academic Skills

- Your essay demonstrated some comprehension of the source text by showing an understanding of the text's central idea(s) but not of important details. Your essay also made limited use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases) and may have contained errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the text. [Reading]
- Your essay offered a limited analysis of the source text by attempting to identify and describe the author's use of evidence, reasoning and/or stylistic or persuasive elements, but your essay only asserted the importance of these elements rather than fully explaining them or their use. [Analysis]
- Your essay demonstrated little or no cohesion, lacking a clear central claim that guided the organization of the essay. Your essay had an ineffective introduction and/or conclusion and some progression of ideas within paragraphs but not throughout the response. Sentence structures had little variety. Your essay may have also shown limited control of the conventions of standard written English with errors that detracted from the quality of writing. [Writing]

Suggestions for Improvement

- Be sure to convey your understanding of the central idea(s) and important details from the source text and provide sufficient textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases) to demonstrate your understanding.
- Analyze the source text more effectively by moving beyond making undefended assertions. Evaluate and explain fully how the author uses evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements to build the argument.
- Focus on including a clear central claim and an effective introduction and conclusion in your essay. Make sure your ideas connect logically from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph. Vary the types and lengths of sentences and incorporate precise language whenever possible. Improve your control of the conventions of standard written English and proofread your essay for errors that can undermine your writing quality.

Essay Score Range 6–7

Academic Skills

- Your essay demonstrated effective comprehension of the source text by showing an understanding of the text's central idea(s) and important details while remaining free of substantive errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the text. Your essay also made appropriate use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases). [Reading]
- Your essay offered an effective analysis of the source text by competently evaluating the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements. Your essay contained relevant and sufficient support for claims made and focused primarily on those features of the text that were most relevant to addressing the task. [Analysis]
- Your essay was mostly cohesive. It included a clear central claim and an effective introduction and/or conclusion. Your essay also demonstrated a clear progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay. Sentence structures were varied with some precise word choice. Your essay also showed good control of the conventions of standard written English and was free of significant errors that detract from the quality of the writing. [Writing]

Suggestions for Improvement

- Demonstrate that you comprehend the nuances of the source text by showing an understanding of how the author's central idea(s) and important details interrelate.
- Try to develop original, insightful ideas about the way the author builds the argument, using strategically chosen support for your claims. Be sure to focus consistently on the features of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.
- Ensure that your essay is well organized and has a precise central claim. Provide a skillful introduction and conclusion and a clear and highly effective progression of ideas throughout the essay. Vary your sentence structures and use precise word choice consistently to express your ideas. Ensure that your essay is free from all but the most superficial conventions of standard written English.

Essay Score Range 8

Academic Skills

- Your essay demonstrated thorough comprehension of the source text by showing an understanding of the text's central idea(s), most important details, and how they interrelate. Your essay made skillful use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases) and was free of errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the text. [Reading]
- Your essay offered an insightful analysis of the source text and a thorough, well-considered evaluation of the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements. Your essay also contained relevant, sufficient, and strategically chosen support for your claim(s) and focused consistently on the features of the text that were most relevant to addressing the task. [Analysis]
- Your essay was cohesive: it included a precise central claim and a skillful introduction and conclusion as well as a deliberate and highly effective progression of ideas throughout the essay. Sentence structures were varied and word choice was consistently precise. Your essay also showed a strong command of the conventions of standard written English and was free or virtually free of errors. [Writing]

Suggestions for Improvement

- This is the top Essay score, and students who score at this level will likely have mastered the skills listed in the Essay scoring rubric at all other levels. However, the ability to write well is a skill that must be practiced often. We encourage you to continue to engage in academic writing and explore the Official SAT Practice at satpractice.org.

Reading — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 6–14	SCORE RANGE 15–19	SCORE RANGE 20–24
Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.	• Read closely in a moderately challenging passage to identify explicitly stated information or ideas • Determine the best textual evidence for a simple conclusion [COE] • Identify the central idea of a passage with a single, clear purpose • Identify a simple relationship between information, ideas, or people (e.g., recognizing a basic comparison, contrast, or sequence) • Determine the meaning of a relatively common word or phrase using clear context clues [WIC] • Recognize a straightforward similarity or difference in a pair of moderately challenging passages • Locate data or make a simple accurate interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing the size of two clearly labeled bars representing easy-to-interpret values on a bar graph) [COE]	• Read closely in a moderately challenging passage to draw a reasonable inference • Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when both evidence and conclusion are relatively obvious and direct (e.g., a clearly stated fact as evidence for a simple logical conclusion) [COE] • Determine the central idea or theme of a moderately challenging passage • Determine a basic relationship between information, ideas, or people (e.g., establishing a cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or sequential relationship) • Determine the meaning of a common high-utility academic word or phrase, especially when clear context clues are available (e.g., when the passage's topic suggests a likely definition) [WIC] • Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a moderately challenging passage [WIC] • Identify the narrator's point of view in a literary passage; determine the author's perspective in a moderately challenging informational passage • Determine the implicit main purpose of a moderately challenging passage; identify the clearly indicated main purpose of a complex passage • Identify a similarity or difference in a pair of moderately challenging passages (e.g., recognizing that a particular detail appears in one passage but not in the other) • Locate data or make a straightforward accurate interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing the sizes of numerous bars on a bar graph; determining which of two lines, each revealing a clear trend, represents a higher value on a line graph) [COE]

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; WIC = Words in Context

Reading — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 25–29	SCORE RANGE 30–34	SCORE RANGE 35–40
• Read closely in a complex passage to identify explicitly stated information or ideas or to draw a relatively simple reasonable inference • Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when the evidence requires some interpretation or analysis [COE] • Determine the central idea or theme of a complex passage • Determine a relationship between information, ideas, or people (e.g., establishing a cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or sequential relationship) • Determine the meaning of a relatively common high-utility academic word or phrase; determine the literal meaning of a straightforward figurative expression [WIC] • Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a complex passage or in a simpler passage when the purpose or effect is somewhat subtle (e.g., an author using words to convey a particular emotion) [WIC] • Draw a straightforward reasonable inference about point of view or perspective in a complex passage (e.g., identifying a technique the author uses to shape point of view in a literary passage; distinguishing among the multiple perspectives in an informational passage) • Determine the main purpose of a complex passage • Establish a similarity or difference in how authors present information or ideas (e.g., in terms of point of view, structure, or relationships) in a pair of complex passages • Locate data or make an accurate interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., drawing a valid conclusion based on an understanding of a bar graph's overall purpose; summarizing a clear trend from several data points); draw a straightforward, supportable connection between a graphic and its accompanying passage (e.g., determining a graphic's clear main purpose and finding a matching assertion in the passage) [COE]	• Read closely in a complex passage to draw a reasonable inference • Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when the evidence requires some interpretation or analysis and the conclusion may require making an inference [COE] • Determine the central idea or theme of a complex passage that features several important ideas (e.g., making the most defensible interpretation of a literary passage that is subject to multiple interpretations; distinguishing the author's or narrator's main point or perspective from other points or perspectives represented in the passage) • Recognize an accurate summary • Determine a relationship between information, ideas, or people in a complex passage (e.g., establishing a cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or sequential relationship) • Determine the meaning of a relatively uncommon high-utility academic word or phrase; determine the literal meaning of a moderately challenging figurative expression [WIC] • Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a complex passage or in a simpler passage when the purpose or effect is fairly subtle or complex (e.g., an author using word play or parody) [WIC] • Determine the main purpose of a portion of a passage (e.g., a detail or a metaphor) in relation to the passage as a whole • Draw a reasonable inference about point of view or perspective in a complex passage (e.g., identifying where point of view switches in a literary passage; distinguishing among conflicting perspectives in an informational passage) • Determine the main purpose of a complex passage or that of one of its paragraphs • Determine a claim or counterclaim in a complex argument; analyze a subtle argumentative technique or flaw (e.g., an author using weak reasoning in support of a claim) [COE] • Compare two authors' positions in a pair of complex passages (e.g., determining the extent to which two authors agree or disagree about a claim) • Make an accurate, somewhat subtle or complex interpretations of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing results in terms of two variables; recognizing an implication of the values represented on a table); draw a supportable connection between a graphic and its accompanying passage (e.g., characterizing a broad trend exhibited in a graph using the concepts and language of the passage) [COE]	• Read closely in a highly complex passage to identify explicitly stated information or ideas or to draw a reasonable inference • Determine the best textual evidence for a conclusion when the evidence is subtle, abstract, or figurative and the conclusion requires making one or more inferences [COE] • Determine the central idea or theme of a highly complex passage • Determine a subtle or complex relationship between information, ideas, or people in a highly complex passage • Determine the meaning of an uncommon high-utility academic word or phrase, including an archaic usage found in a text from an earlier time period; determine the literal meaning of subtle or complex figurative language [WIC] • Determine the main purpose or effect of an author's word choice in a highly complex passage or in a simpler passage when the purpose or effect is subtle or highly complex (e.g., the author establishing meaning chiefly through tone via understatement, exaggeration, or sarcasm) [WIC] • Determine the main purpose of a portion of a passage in relation to the passage as a whole when the purpose is subtle or complex (e.g., the author using rhetorical questions to indicate self-evident truths) • Draw a nuanced inference about point of view or perspective in a complex or highly complex passage (e.g., tracing a subtle shift in point of view in a literary passage; associating particular opinions with the individuals who hold them in an informational passage) • Compare two authors' positions in a pair of highly complex passages or in a simpler pair when the comparison is subtle or complex (e.g., determining the extent to which two authors agree or disagree philosophically) • Make an accurate subtle or complex interpretation of data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart (e.g., comparing results in terms of three or more variables; determining which bars on a bar graph can reasonably be considered part of an overarching category); draw a subtle or complex supportable connection between a graphic and its accompanying passage (e.g., summarizing the results displayed in a table using the concepts and language of the passage) [COE]

KEY: COE = Command of Evidence; WIC = Words in Context

Writing and Language — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 6–14 and 15–19	SCORE RANGE 20–24	SCORE RANGE 25–29
Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.	**A typical student in this score interval can do the following:** • Use supporting information to achieve a simple purpose (e.g., providing a short list of examples introduced by including) [COE, EOI] • Delete information that is obviously irrelevant to the main focus of a paragraph or passage (e.g., eliminating a detail that has no clear relationship to a passage's topic) [COE, EOI] • Order the sentences in a paragraph to achieve a simple purpose (e.g., grouping related information together; establishing a basic chronology) [EOI] • Introduce a paragraph that has a clear, well-defined focus [EOI] • Use a transitional word or phrase to establish a simple logical relationship between sentences (e.g., indicating sharp contrast) [EOI] • Make an effective word or phrase choice in a straightforward situation (e.g., using a common but still appropriate expression instead of an awkward or meaningless one) [WIC, EOI] • Eliminate obvious wordiness or redundancy (e.g., removing repetition within a short phrase) [WIC, EOI] • Combine sentences in a relatively simple way (e.g., making a second sentence into a relative clause of the first) or to achieve a relatively simple purpose (e.g., eliminating obvious awkwardness or repetition) [WIC, EOI] • Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a clear and substantial disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating an obvious comma splice; correcting a lack of parallelism in a simple series of words; replacing a nonstandard relative pronoun with a standard one) [SEC] • Recognize and correct an obviously inappropriate shift in verb tense (e.g., the use of present tense when the context clearly calls for past tense) [SEC] • Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a straightforward situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when the number of the subject is clear and the subject and verb appear close together in the sentence) [SEC] • Use conventional expression in a straightforward situation (e.g., recognizing and correcting a nonsensical expression; choosing a preposition that establishes a logical relationship (e.g., with, for); selecting appropriately between common words that are frequently confused, such as to and too) [SEC] • Distinguish between singular and plural possessive nouns and between plural and possessive nouns [SEC] • Use commas to set off a simple nonrestrictive element (e.g., a phrase describing the person just named) [SEC] • Eliminate obviously unnecessary and disruptive punctuation (e.g., between verb and direct object) [SEC]	**A typical student in this score interval can do the following:** • Clarify an aspect of the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., using a phrase to set up examples that follow in subsequent sentences) [COE, EOI] • Use supporting information to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., providing a cause for an effect; offering direct support for a claim) [COE, EOI] • Delete information that is clearly irrelevant to a paragraph or passage (e.g., eliminating a detail that interrupts an explanation or sequence or that obviously digresses from the main topic) [COE, EOI] • Use a general understanding of an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, to revise a passage (e.g., drawing on knowledge of what a graph's bars represent to improve the accuracy of a passage's description of the graph) [COE, EOI] • Order the sentences in a paragraph to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., placing a supporting detail immediately after a sentence that makes a claim) [EOI] • Introduce or conclude a passage based on a general understanding of the passage's content and purpose (e.g., adding a conclusion that restates the passage's main claim) [EOI] • Use a transitional word or phrase to establish a straightforward logical relationship between sentences (e.g., indicating sequence or contrast; introducing a definition) [EOI] • Make an effective word or phrase choice based on vocabulary knowledge and an understanding of the context (e.g., recognizing when a particular word is or is not commonly used to describe a person or object) [WIC, EOI] • Eliminate wordiness or redundancy within a sentence (e.g., recognizing when adjectives with the same meaning or very similar meanings, such as fast and rapid, are used to describe the same thing) [WIC, EOI] • Maintain a basic consistency in style and tone within a passage (e.g., revising language that is clearly too colloquial or formal for the context) [WIC, EOI] • Combine sentences in a straightforward way (e.g., making a second sentence into a prepositional phrase of the first) or to achieve a straightforward purpose (e.g., establishing a logical arrangement of sentence elements) [WIC, EOI] • Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating an obvious, rhetorically inappropriate fragment; maintaining parallelism in a simple series of phrases; establishing a clear relationship between an introductory and main clause) [SEC] • Determine appropriate verb tense or pronoun person and number on the basis of an understanding of the context (e.g., correcting an inappropriate shift from past tense to present or past perfect tense; making a needed shift from past to present tense to signal a change in time frame; correcting an inappropriate shift from third person they to second person you) [SEC] • Recognize and correct an obviously vague or ambiguous pronoun (e.g., replacing a pronoun without a clear antecedent with the appropriate noun) [SEC] • Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when a short phrase intervenes) [SEC] • Use conventional expression in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., choosing the preposition that appropriately completes a phrasal verb; selecting appropriately between less-common words that are frequently confused, such as effect and affect) [SEC] • Distinguish among singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns [SEC] • Appropriately punctuate items in a series (e.g., a three-item series of nouns with accompanying adjectives) [SEC] • Use punctuation to set off a nonrestrictive element (e.g., an interrupting phrase); eliminate punctuation inappropriately setting off a simple restrictive element (e.g., a job title that precedes a person's name) [SEC] • Eliminate unnecessary punctuation in a somewhat challenging situation (e.g., between noun and preposition; between verb and a clause serving as its object) [SEC]

KEY:
COE = Command of Evidence
EOI = Expression of Ideas
SEC = Standard English Conventions
WIC = Words in Context

Writing and Language — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 30–34

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Establish and clarify the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., adding a sentence to frame a paragraph's discussion or to present a claim that the paragraph subsequently supports) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to develop a point or claim logically (e.g., offering a specific, relevant example; using a quotation that clarifies a concept or observation) [COE, EOI]
- Sharpen the focus of a paragraph or passage by making a careful decision about adding, revising, or deleting information (e.g., eliminating material that is broadly relevant to a topic but that is poorly placed or integrated) [COE, EOI]
- Locate or accurately interpret data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, to revise a passage (e.g., identifying the value in a table that is associated with a particular condition; distinguishing between accurate and inaccurate interpretations and between relevant and irrelevant information) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to address a critical issue of logic or cohesion (e.g., adding a sentence to fill a discernible gap in a chronological sequence; repositioning a sentence to provide a needed transition between ideas) [EOI]
- Introduce or conclude a passage based on an understanding of the passage's content and purpose (e.g., ensuring that the conclusion offers an adequate sense of closure; achieving a particular rhetorical aim, such as suggesting implications of the findings discussed in the passage) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word, phrase, clause, or sentence to establish a logical relationship between sentences or paragraphs (e.g., signaling a shift in emphasis or focus) [EOI]
- Make a nuanced word or phrase choice based on well-developed vocabulary knowledge and a well-developed understanding of the context (e.g., distinguishing among relatively uncommon words that have similar denotations but differing connotations or uses) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate relatively subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences (e.g., recognizing when information overexplains a concept already made clear and correcting accordingly; deleting repetition involving fairly sophisticated language) [WIC, EOI]
- Make a careful decision about style and tone in a passage based on an understanding of the context (e.g., revising language that is too colloquial or formal in a fairly challenging context; achieving a particular rhetorical aim, such as establishing a particular sentence pattern or choosing language that sets a contextually appropriate mood) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences to accomplish a relatively subtle purpose (e.g., inserting a conjunction to establish a logical relationship; blending elements of two sentences to improve the logic and flow of ideas) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a relatively subtle disruption in structure (e.g., eliminating a rhetorically inappropriate fragment created by the use of a semicolon; maintaining parallelism in a series of phrases; choosing or eliminating a conjunction based on an understanding of the syntax of a relatively sophisticated or long sentence; correcting an obvious dangling modifier) [SEC]
- Determine appropriate verb tense and mood or pronoun person and number on the basis of a well- developed understanding of the context (e.g., making a needed shift into conditional mood to suggest a possible but not certain outcome) [SEC]
- Recognize and correct a vague or ambiguous pronoun based on an understanding of the context (e.g., replacing an ambiguous pronoun with a noun after a close reading to determine what the appropriate noun should be) [SEC]
- Make careful distinctions among the possessive determiners its and their, the contractions it's and they're, and the adverb there [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent agreement in a challenging situation (e.g., ensuring agreement between subject and verb when a clause or multiple short phrases intervene and possibly suggest a different number for the verb than the subject warrants) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a challenging situation (e.g., selecting appropriately between relatively uncommon words that are frequently confused, such as discrete and discreet) [SEC]
- Make careful distinctions among singular, singular possessive, plural, and plural possessive nouns based on an understanding of the context (e.g., noting that the article the establishes that the noun it precedes is singular or singular possessive) [SEC]
- Make a careful decision about how or whether to use punctuation to set off one or more sentence elements based on an understanding of the context (e.g., determining whether an element is restrictive or nonrestrictive through a close reading of the context and then punctuating or not punctuating accordingly; using matching punctuation, such as two commas rather than a comma and a dash, to set off a nonrestrictive element) [SEC]
- Eliminate unnecessary punctuation in a challenging situation (e.g., between a long subject and the predicate; after a word or phrase, such as including, that sets up a list of examples) [SEC]

SCORE RANGE 35–40

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Make a sophisticated decision relating to the structure of a paragraph or passage (e.g., using a clause to set up information when the content and language are complex and the linkage is subtle) [COE, EOI]
- Use supporting information to develop a point or claim logically on the basis of a thorough understanding of a challenging context (e.g., drawing on logic and an understanding of the context to indicate the last step in a complex sequence; including an example that is similar in content to one or more other examples in a paragraph) [COE, EOI]
- Sharpen the focus of a paragraph or passage by making a sophisticated decision about adding, revising, or deleting information (e.g., adding or retaining nonessential but relevant material because it enhances meaning and clarity) [COE, EOI]
- Accurately interpret, paraphrase, or summarize data in an informational graphic, such as a table, graph, or chart, to revise a passage (e.g., encompassing multiple data points in a single relevant general statement) [COE, EOI]
- Order the sentences in a paragraph to address a complex or subtle issue of logic or cohesion (e.g., deciding to reposition rather than delete a sentence that, when properly placed, improves the flow of ideas in a paragraph) [EOI]
- Use a transitional word, phrase, clause, or sentence to establish a complex or subtle logical relationship between sentences or paragraphs; recognize when such a device is not needed or problematic (e.g., drawing on an understanding of the context to eliminate a word or phrase, such as therefore, that wrongly suggests a cause-effect relationship) [EOI]
- Make a sophisticated word or phrase choice based on highly developed vocabulary knowledge and a thorough understanding of a challenging context (e.g., distinguishing among uncommon words that have similar denotations but differing connotations or uses when the distinctions are subtle) [WIC, EOI]
- Eliminate subtle wordiness or redundancy within a sentence or between sentences and paragraphs (e.g., recognizing that a sophisticated-sounding but wordy expression is less effective than a simpler and more economical one; eliminating the second appearance of the same detail in successive paragraphs) [WIC, EOI]
- Make a sophisticated decision about style and tone in a passage based on a thorough understanding of the context (e.g., achieving a subtle rhetorical aim, such as closely matching a sentence pattern already established in a passage) [WIC, EOI]
- Combine sentences to accomplish a complex or subtle purpose (e.g., drawing on an understanding of the context to place a blended sentence's emphasis on its most important idea) [WIC, EOI]
- Form conventional, complete sentences, recognizing and correcting a complex or subtle disruption in structure (e.g., ensuring the completeness of a sentence with an uncommon structure, such as a sentence containing a subject clause beginning with that; correcting minor and easily overlooked violations of parallelism, such as the omission of a preposition, in a series of phrases) [SEC]
- Maintain subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement in a complex situation (e.g., between subject and verb when the two are widely separated and when intervening text suggests a different number for the verb than the subject warrants) [SEC]
- Use conventional expression in a complex situation (e.g., selecting appropriately between uncommon words that are frequently confused, such as defuse and diffuse) [SEC]
- Use a semicolon to join two closely related independent clauses [SEC]
- Use a colon to introduce a list or an elaboration (e.g., a noun phrase renaming a previously mentioned concept; an independent clause explaining a point introduced earlier in a sentence) [SEC]

KEY:
COE = Command of Evidence
EOI = Expression of Ideas
SEC = Standard English Conventions
WIC = Words in Context

Math — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 6–14	SCORE RANGE 15–19	SCORE RANGE 20–24
Students in this score band are beginning to obtain the basic foundational skills to be college ready.	**A typical student in this score interval can do the following:** • Create a simple expression or equation in one variable that represents a context [HOA] • Evaluate a one-variable expression by substituting a value for the variable [HOA] • Create a rate based on a context and use the rate to solve a simple problem [PSD] • Use common English conversions (e.g., 1 hour = 60 minutes, 1 foot = 12 inches) to find an equivalent rate [PSD] • Solve problems that involve percentages [PSD] • Read information presented in simple tables or simple graphs [PSD] • Solve problems using area and volume formulas	**A typical student in this score interval can do the following:** • Create an expression or equation in one variable that models a context [HOA] • Create a linear function that models a context [HOA] • Create a linear equation in two variables that models a context [HOA] • Solve a linear equation in one variable [HOA] • Create a ratio based on a context and use the rate to solve a problem [PSD] • Interpret data represented in a graph [PSD] • Select an appropriate graphical representation of a context [PSD] • Select the most appropriate data display that represents the relationship between two variables [PSD]

KEY: HOA = Heart of Algebra; PAM = Passport to Advanced Math; PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Math — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 25–29

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Interpret a term from a linear equation in one variable that models a context [HOA]
- Interpret a term from a linear equation in two variables that models a context [HOA]
- Create a system of two linear equations in two variables that models a context [HOA]
- Solve a system of two linear equations in two variables [HOA]
- Understand that an ordered pair is a solution to a system of two linear equations in two variables [HOA]
- Create an inequality in one or two variables that models a context [HOA]
- Solve a linear equation in one variable [HOA]
- Solve linear equations in which a linear expression is used as a variable [HOA]
- Make connections between different representations (graphs, equations, tables, etc.) of linear relationships between two variables [HOA]
- Rearrange a multivariate equation to isolate a variable or term [PAM]
- Add, subtract, or multiply polynomials [PAM]
- Factor polynomials [PAM]
- Solve quadratic equations [PAM]
- Use the form of the square of a binomial or other fundamental insights into structure to analyze expressions [PAM]
- Create and use ratios, proportions, rates, and unit rates to solve problems [PSD]
- Create a unit rate based on a context and use the unit rate to solve a problem [PSD]
- Utilize one or more unit conversions to solve a problem [PSD]
- Given a context, make a single unit conversion and solve a problem [PSD]
- Solve multistep problems using percentages [PSD]
- Draw a conclusion about information presented in a graph [PSD]
- Synthesize information presented in a table [PSD]
- Calculate mean, median, or range for a set of data [PSD]
- Use a proportion to estimate a population parameter from a point estimate [PSD]
- Evaluate whether the participants selected for a study are representative of the population [PSD]
- Interpret mean, median, or range for a set of data that represents a context [PSD]
- Calculate a simple conditional probability from a two-way table [PSD]
- Interpret the association and other information shown by a scatterplot [PSD]
- Solve a problem about a geometric figure using the vertical angle theorem or theorems about a transversal crossing parallel lines, possibly combining these theorems in a straightforward way

SCORE RANGE 30–34

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Create and use linear relationships to solve a problem, interpret terms in linear relationships, and make connections between different representations of linear functions, linear equations in two variables, systems of two linear equations in two variables, and linear inequalities [HOA]
- Determine the conditions under which a linear equation or system of two linear equations in two variables written in standard form has no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions [HOA]
- Solve a system of equations consisting of one linear equation and one nonlinear equation [HOA]
- Solve a linear equation in one variable that requires computation with fractions or decimals [HOA]
- Interpret a term from a quadratic equation in one variable that models a context [HOA]
- Interpret a term from a polynomial equation in one variable that models a context [HOA]
- Analyze properties of an exponential function that represents a context [HOA]
- Use function notation to solve problems [HOA]
- Analyze how the changes in quantities in a multivariate equation affect the other variables in the equation [HOA]
- Evaluate a radical expression for given values of a variable [HOA]
- Solve absolute value equations [HOA]
- Solve a rational equation in one variable [HOA]
- Make connections between the graph of a general function and the properties of the function [HOA]
- Add, subtract, or multiply complex numbers [HOA]
- Factor polynomials, where this requires more insight into the structure of the polynomial [HOA]
- Solve quadratic equations [HOA]
- Use properties of polynomial equations to reveal zeros or use zeros of polynomial equations to reveal properties of polynomial graphs [HOA]
- Find parameters in a quadratic or higher-degree polynomial [HOA]
- Solve problems involving more-complex area and volume formulas [HOA]
- Solve geometric problems involving surface area [HOA]
- Find or estimate volumes or dimensions of circular cylinders and spheres [HOA]
- Solve a problem about a geometric figure or figures using properties of similar triangles [HOA]
- Calculate and use mean, median, and range to solve problems and interpret standard deviation of one-variable data sets [HOA]
- Use structure to identify a different algebraic representation of a quadratic or exponential equation that reveals one or more properties of the graph of the equation [HOA]
- Create a proportion and use the proportion to estimate a population parameter from a point estimate [HOA]
- Understand that results from a random sample can extend only to the population from which the sample was drawn [HOA]
- Analyze how changes to a data set affect the mean, median, and mode [HOA]
- Calculate compound and conditional probabilities [HOA]
- Use two-way tables to calculate compound and conditional probabilities [HOA]
- Compare predicted and actual values of a line of best fit for data on a scatterplot [HOA]
- Compute percent change in a complex context, including multistep problems in which the bases of the percentages change [PSD]

SCORE RANGE 35–40

A typical student in this score interval can do the following:

- Create linear relationships and use tables and graphs to solve a problem, interpret terms, and make connections between different representations of linear equations in one variable, linear functions, linear equations in two variables, systems of two linear equations in two variables, and linear inequalities [HOA]
- Determine the conditions under which a system of two linear equations in two variables written in nonstandard form has no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions [HOA]
- Solve a radical equation in one variable [HOA]
- Simplify compound rational expressions [HOA]
- Use properties of radicals and exponents to rewrite expressions [HOA]
- Divide polynomials and determine the remainder [HOA]
- Factor polynomial expressions by applying the distributive law with a factor that is a binomial [HOA]
- Determine the conditions under which a quadratic equation has zero, one, or two solutions [HOA]
- Determine whether a linear or exponential relationship exists between two variables given a table, graph, or description [HOA]
- Identify the form of a quadratic function (or other function) that reveals specific information about the function [HOA]
- Identify the equation of the graph of a polynomial by examining the intercepts and end behavior of the graph [HOA]
- Solve problems using trigonometric ratios [HOA]
- Solve a problem involving volume where the dimensions of a solid satisfy algebraic relationships [HOA]
- Solve a complex problem about a geometric figure or figures using properties of similar triangles [HOA]
- Solve problems using special right triangles [HOA]
- Solve problems using the Pythagorean theorem [HOA]
- Solve a problem about a geometric figure or figures using properties of congruent triangles [HOA]
- Use mean, median, and range to solve problems and interpret standard deviation of one-variable data sets, including problems in which only a distribution of values for the data set is given [HOA]
- Identify the equation of a possible line of best fit for data presented on a scatterplot [HOA]
- Convert between radians and degrees [HOA]
- Solve problems using trigonometric ratios [HOA]
- Create and use ratios, proportions, rates, and unit rates to solve problems and utilize unit conversions to solve problems [PSD]
- Apply exponential models to solve problems and make estimates that do not involve an exact number of growth or decay periods [PSD]

KEY: HOA = Heart of Algebra; PAM = Passport to Advanced Math; PSD = Problem Solving and Data Analysis

Essay — Academic Skills

SCORE RANGE 2–3	SCORE RANGE 4–5	SCORE RANGE 6–7	SCORE RANGE 8
• Your essay demonstrated little understanding of the source text. Your essay included only details from the text without reference to the text's central idea(s) and made little or no use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases). [Reading] • Your essay offered an ineffective analysis of the source text by identifying without explanation some aspects of the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements, or your essay was focused largely or exclusively on summarizing the text. [Analysis] • Your essay demonstrated little or no cohesion, lacking a clear central claim to guide the organization of the essay, a recognizable introduction and conclusion, and a discernible progression of ideas. Your essay also showed weak control of the conventions of standard written English, with numerous errors that undermined the quality of writing. [Writing]	• Your essay demonstrated some comprehension of the source text by showing an understanding of the text's central idea(s) but not of important details. Your essay also made limited use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases) and may have contained errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the text. [Reading] • Your essay offered a limited analysis of the source text by attempting to identify and describe the author's use of evidence, reasoning and/or stylistic or persuasive elements, but your essay only asserted the importance of these elements rather than fully explaining them or their use. [Analysis] • Your essay demonstrated little or no cohesion, lacking a clear central claim that guided the organization of the essay. Your essay had an ineffective introduction and/or conclusion and some progression of ideas within paragraphs but not throughout the response. Sentence structures had little variety. Your essay may have also shown limited control of the conventions of standard written English with errors that detracted from the quality of writing. [Writing]	• Your essay demonstrated effective comprehension of the source text by showing an understanding of the text's central idea(s) and important details while remaining free of substantive errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the text. Your essay also made appropriate use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases). [Reading] • Your essay offered an effective analysis of the source text by competently evaluating the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements. Your essay contained relevant and sufficient support for claims made and focused primarily on those features of the text that were most relevant to addressing the task. [Analysis] • Your essay was mostly cohesive. It included a clear central claim and an effective introduction and/or conclusion. Your essay also demonstrated a clear progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay. Sentence structures were varied with some precise word choice. Your essay also showed good control of the conventions of standard written English and was free of significant errors that detract from the quality of the writing. [Writing]	• Your essay demonstrated thorough comprehension of the source text by showing an understanding of the text's central idea(s), most important details, and how they interrelate. Your essay made skillful use of textual evidence (quotations and/or paraphrases) and was free of errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the text. [Reading] • Your essay offered an insightful analysis of the source text and a thorough, well-considered evaluation of the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements. Your essay also contained relevant, sufficient, and strategically chosen support for your claim(s) and focused consistently on the features of the text that were most relevant to addressing the task. [Analysis] • Your essay was cohesive: it included a precise central claim and a skillful introduction and conclusion as well as a deliberate and highly effective progression of ideas throughout the essay. Sentence structures were varied and word choice was consistently precise. Your essay also showed a strong command of the conventions of standard written English and was free or virtually free of errors. [Writing]

Appendix

Descriptions of Subscore Components

EOI

Expression of Ideas questions focus on the assessment of students' ability to revise multiparagraph texts for development, organization, and rhetorically effective language use. [Reading and Writing and Language Tests]

SEC

Standard English Conventions questions focus on the assessment of students' ability to edit multiparagraph texts to ensure conformity to the conventions of standard written English sentence structure, usage, and punctuation.[Reading and Writing and Language Tests]

WIC

Words in Context questions focus on the assessment of students' ability to interpret words and phrases in context, analyze word choice rhetorically, and use language effectively in writing. [Reading and Writing and Language Tests]

COE

Command of Evidence questions focus on the assessment of students' ability to understand, evaluate, and make use of textual evidence (facts, details, statistics, and the like). [Reading and Writing and Language Tests]

HOA

Heart of Algebra questions focus on the assessment of students' skills with linear equations and systems of linear equations.[Math Test]

PSD

Problem Solving and Data Analysis questions focus on the assessment of students' ability to use ratios, percentages, and proportional reasoning, as well as to describe graphical relationships and analyze data. [Math Test]

PAM

Passport to Advanced Math questions focus on the assessment of students' skills with analyzing, manipulating, and rewriting expressions, interpreting and building functions, as well as reasoning with more complex equations. [Math Test]