

SAT Reading Strategies Guide

Introduction

The SAT Reading section tests your ability to comprehend, analyse, and interpret passages from various subjects, including literature, history, social sciences, and science. This guide provides essential strategies to improve reading speed, accuracy, and question-solving skills. Use this as a reference while practicing SAT reading passages.

How to Use This Guide

- Familiarize yourself with each strategy and apply them during practice tests.
- Identify your weak areas and focus on improving comprehension and speed.
- Use this guide for quick review before test day.

1. Read the Passage Strategically

- Skim the introduction and conclusion to understand the main idea.
- Focus on the **topic sentences** of each paragraph.
- Underline or note key details, but don't get bogged down in specifics.
- If time allows, read quickly for overall comprehension before answering questions.

2. Identify the Main Idea & Author's Purpose

- Ask yourself: **What is the central argument or theme of the passage?**
- Look for repeated ideas or keywords that indicate the main point.
- Identify whether the author is **informing, persuading, or analysing**.

3. Answer Questions Efficiently

- **Do NOT** read the answer choices first—**predict the answer** based on the passage.
- Look for **direct evidence** in the text to support your answer.
- Eliminate answer choices that are extreme, irrelevant, or contradict the passage.

4. Manage Your Time Wisely

- Allocate approximately **13 minutes per passage**.
- Answer easier questions first and come back to difficult ones.
- If stuck between two answers, re-read the relevant part of the passage.

5. Master Evidence-Based Questions

- These questions ask you to **cite specific evidence** for your answer.
- Solve the first question, then look at the evidence options for the second.
- The correct evidence will **directly support the previous answer**.

6. Handle Vocab-in-Context Questions

- Read the surrounding sentences to determine the meaning.
- Avoid common meanings of words if the passage suggests a different meaning.
- Choose the option that best fits the tone and context of the passage.

7. Understanding Literary vs. Informational Passages

- **Fiction/Literature:** Pay attention to character emotions, tone, and shifts in the passage.
- **History & Science:** Focus on arguments, supporting details, and author's perspective.
- **Paired Passages:** Look for **key similarities and differences** between the two passages.

8. Avoid Common Traps

- **Extreme Answer Choices:** Avoid answers with absolute words like “always” or “never.”
- **Partially Correct Answers:** An answer may contain a true statement but still be incorrect if it doesn't fully answer the question.
- **Misleading Words:** Words in answer choices that appear in the passage but distort meaning.

9. Stay Focused & Improve Comprehension

- If you lose focus, **pause and re-read the last sentence.**
- Summarize each paragraph in a few words as you read.
- Practice with **official SAT practice tests** to build endurance.

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