

SAT & ACT

Foundations

English and Writing

SAMPLE



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CONTENTS

PARTS OF SPEECH

Nouns	6
Pronouns	8
Verbs	10
Adjectives	12
Adverbs	14
Prepositions	16

GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Subjects	22
Prepositional Phrases	24
Objects	26
Subject-Verb Agreement	28
Pronoun Basics	32
Pronoun Agreement	34
Pronoun Case	36
Verb Tenses	38
Adjectives vs. Adverbs	40
Comparative and Superlative	42
Idioms	44
Diction	46

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Main Clauses	50
Dependent Clauses	52
Fragments	54

Run-ons	56
Transitions	58
Misplaced Modifiers	60
Dangling Modifiers	62
Parallelism	64
Comparisons	66
Passive Voice	68
<i>RHETORICAL SKILLS</i>	
Main Idea	72
Adding	76
Deleting	80
Organization	84
<i>PUNCTUATION (ACT ONLY)</i>	
Commas	90
Semicolons and Colons	96
Apostrophes	99
<i>ESSAY</i>	
Essay	104
Essays as Debates	105
Organization	106
Thesis Statement	108
Opening Sentence	110
Introductions	112
Supporting Paragraphs	114
Argumentation and Explanation	116

Counter-Argument	118
Concrete Evidence	120
Relevant Information	122
Conclusions	124
Diction	126
Preparing Your Essay	136
Choosing Examples	138
Essay Blueprinting	140
Essay Prompts	150

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Nouns

Learning to identify nouns is a key component of understanding and finding the main focus of a sentence.

🔑 A **noun** is a word used to name a person, place, thing, or abstract idea.

Jonathan threw the ball to his friend.

Due to their specialized feet, basilisk lizards can run on water.

The whole nation has hope that the conflict will be over quickly.

The people who witnessed the magician were awed by his illusions and filled with wonder.

🔑 Nouns say what something is, where something happens, and what is affected in a sentence.

My brother is a volunteer firefighter.

The concert was held at the city's new park.

The local mouse problem caused more people to own cats.

🔑 Abstract nouns name ideas, qualities, and characteristics. These may be harder to recognize as nouns because the things they name are not physical objects.

Comic book heroes continue to inspire us with their courage, ideals, and humanity.

Hope can be enough to keep people motivated.

TRY IT OUT

Spot the nouns in the following sentences:

1. Kate walked quickly to the grocery store.
2. Roger has an upcoming appointment with the dentist.
3. Linda worries about the outcome of her final exam.
4. John watched the reflection of the moon on the ocean waves.
5. Some early carwashes used acid to clean the dirt and grime off cars.
6. The work of coal miners was strenuous and dangerous.
7. Scientists continue to debate over whether dinosaurs were warm-blooded or cold-blooded.
8. Mountain goats are well-adapted for their habitat in rocky, cold regions.
9. Last week, mushrooms grew in our yard.
10. Samantha had never seen a giraffe before her trip to the zoo.
11. Cobbling, the profession of repairing shoes, is less common now, due to industrial mass production.
12. Omar believes it is important to know the colonial history of the Thanksgiving holiday.
13. Sarah could sense the anxiety that Jim was feeling.
14. His knowledge of words makes him very good at crossword puzzles.
15. Michael has charisma, passion, and intelligence; he is a great candidate for our representative.

Subject-Verb Agreement – Part 1

Subject-verb agreement errors are commonly made during casual conversation, so it may be difficult to notice them at first, but with some practice you'll learn how to spot them quickly.

🔑 Every verb must match with a subject, which performs the action of the verb.

Singular subjects require singular verbs, and plural subjects require plural verbs.

The flowers were sprouting, but the parsley on the porch was not sprouting yet.

plural plural singular singular

The garden was fertilized with compost, and the ferns indoors were in plain soil.

singular singular plural plural

🔑 Usually, singular verbs end in *s* and plural verbs do not.

Singular	Plural
runs	run
speaks	speak
is	are
was	were
has	have
misses	miss

Remember that most plural nouns end in *s*, whereas most verbs that end in *s* are singular. So, in a subject-verb pair, usually only one of the words will end in *s*.

🔑 When finding the subject that matches with a verb, use the simple subject.

An old diary filled with sketches was found in the attic.

singular singular

Fossilized remains of two early bird species were revealed when the canal was dug.

plural plural

A collection of journals containing accounts of Gold Rush settlers was found nearby.

singular singular

TRY IT OUT

- As of 2005, the top four drug firms (*was/were*) responsible for twenty-six percent of total prescription drug sales.
- The latest edition (*has/have*) new features that make older models seem obsolete.
- The top executives of the company (*has/have*) discussed strategies to stay competitive in the modern world.
- Langston Hughes, like many other writers in the 1930's, (*was/were*) influenced by the Harlem renaissance.
- The works of Bach and other great composers (*show/shows*) that mathematics can inspire great art.
- The man seen in these photographs (*is/are*) a suspect for several robberies in a nearby city.
- Most people are surprised to hear that crocodiles, which have existed since the Cretaceous Period, (*is/are*) the closest living relatives to birds.
- A recent study on television commercials (*suggest/suggests*) that annoying advertising can be effective because it is so memorable.
- Kevin heard that chewing on pencils, a habit that he has had since his childhood years, (*is/are*) a symptom of vitamin deficiency.
- The professor's emphasis on long reading lists (*has/have*) made students nervous about taking her class next semester.

PUT IT TOGETHER**SAT Questions**

Identify the underlined error, if one exists:

- The term "curry" is a general description for Asian dishes that typically contains turmeric, coriander, and cumin. No error
- Nathaniel's improvisational piano skills, the product of a lifetime of practice and no formal instruction, continues to win him awards and local fame. No error

ACT Questions

Choose the best version of the underlined portions:

The passenger pigeon, once one of the most abundant birds in the entire world, are now extinct. Sadly, passenger pigeons were over-hunted by early Americans. In the early 19th century, massive quantities of pigeon meat was sold at very low costs because there was such a huge supply available. By the twentieth century, the passenger pigeon had been wiped out.

- A. NO CHANGE
 B. world are
 C. world, is
 D. world,
- F. NO CHANGE
 G. meat sold
 H. meat were sold
 J. meats was sold

Introductions

🔑 The **introduction** of an essay establishes what your main idea is and what you will be discussing. This keeps your essay focused and organized.

🔑 There are three essential elements to an introduction:

- An **opening** that broadly relates to your main idea or grabs the attention of the reader.
- Your **thesis statement**, which states the argument that is central to your essay.
- The **examples** you will be using to prove and defend your thesis.

These examples will be expanded upon in your supporting paragraphs. You can mention these examples in your thesis statement or in a sentence that relates them back to your thesis.

Is it beneficial to learn from your own experience, even when it would be easier to learn from the experiences of others?

Although authority figures often try to impose their ideas and perspectives on younger generations, with the belief that the youth will gain wisdom through the knowledge of the authorities' experiences, this is not the best way for anyone to learn. A lesson that is personally experienced has much more effect than a lesson that is taught. The stories of Holden Caulfield and modernist art show that the greatest learning and innovation come from our own experiences, rather than the information we get from others.

Opening introduces an idea relating to learning from experience.

Thesis statement declares the essay's central argument.

The essay's main examples are mentioned and related to the thesis's argument.

PUT IT TOGETHER

SAT Questions

Rewrite the following essay introduction. Include an opening and thesis statement and mention examples:

Are laws and restrictions a necessary part of progress, or are they too limiting?

As society and technology continue to develop at a rapid pace, is it more important that we make sure these advancements are safe or that we promote more advancement at any cost? This is a complicated question. Some of our greatest discoveries have had horrible outcomes. An example of this is the development of nuclear weapons, which resulted from our advancements in the study of physics. On the other hand, all of our new discoveries increase our knowledge and have the potential to improve our lives. Nuclear power is an example of this, too. Depending on how you see it, either side could be right.

ACT Questions

Rewrite the following essay introduction. Include an opening and thesis statement and mention examples:

In many schools, the curriculum is focused on literary classics. In these schools, students are required to read famous, influential, “great books,” because these books are thought to be necessary for a traditional education. Opponents argue that this type of curriculum is always stuck in the past and ignores modern books that might be more relevant to the world today. In your opinion, should a school’s curriculum be based on classic books?

These books have insights into culture and society that are still relevant in the modern world. The greatest art is timeless. The most famous books have kept their popularity because we can still relate to them. Have they earned their place in our schools? They’re old, but still powerful and important to us. Classic works of art have lasted for a reason. So, in answer to the question of whether classes should use classic books, I would say yes.
