

# The **SSAT** Course Book

**MIDDLE & UPPER LEVEL**

**VERBAL**

Focusing on the Individual Student



**SUMMIT  
EDUCATIONAL  
GROUP**

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## Anticipate the Answer

- Before looking at the answer choices, define the stem word.** If the stem word is familiar to you, try to come up with a definition of your own.

Choose the answer that most closely resembles your definition.

OBNOXIOUS:

- (A) clear
- (B) slick
- (C) offensive
- (D) odorous
- (E) athletic

Before looking at the answers, try to define *OBNOXIOUS* in your own words. For instance, you might say *OBNOXIOUS* means "rude."  
*Offensive* (C) is the choice that most closely matches "rude."

PROFANITY :

- (A) trouble
- (B) fame
- (C) prediction
- (D) expletive
- (E) popularity

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- You do not need an exact synonym or definition to anticipate the answer. If you have a phrase or a general idea that helps you understand the stem word, this may be enough to find the correct answer.

**PUT IT TOGETHER**

1. BENEFICENT:

- (A) angry
- (B) sneaky
- (C) generous
- (D) attractive
- (E) majestic

2. NOXIOUS:

- (A) magnificent
- (B) religious
- (C) healthful
- (D) sinful
- (E) harmful

3. BANAL:

- (A) prolific
- (B) generous
- (C) eternal
- (D) soothing
- (E) bland

4. BENEVOLENT:

- (A) evil
- (B) veiled
- (C) sympathetic
- (D) anonymous
- (E) giving

## Attractors

❑ **Avoid answers that are related to the stem word but are not synonyms.**

Some questions, especially medium and difficult ones, will contain incorrect answer choices that are there to steer you away from the correct answer. We call these answer choices attractors because they “attract your attention.”

BAZAAR:

- (A) oddity
- (B) market
- (C) publication
- (D) repository
- (E) deviation

(A) attracts your attention because *BAZAAR* looks and sounds like “bizarre,” which means odd.  
In fact, a *BAZAAR* is a market or marketplace, so (B) is correct.

RENAISSANCE:

- (A) history
- (B) rebirth
- (C) festival
- (D) exploration
- (E) age

If you’ve studied the *RENAISSANCE* in history, or been to a *RENAISSANCE* fair, you might be tempted to pick (A), (C), or possibly (E).  
(B) is the correct answer.



21. CULPRIT:

- (A) vessel
- (B) savage
- (C) felon
- (D) star
- (E) patron

22. PLACID:

- (A) serene
- (B) arrange
- (C) uneasy
- (D) location
- (E) ideal

23. AMBLE:

- (A) stroll
- (B) wager
- (C) desire
- (D) risk
- (E) disturb

24. CELEBRITY:

- (A) precision
- (B) scandal
- (C) haste
- (D) purity
- (E) renown

25. WRATH:

- (A) cover
- (B) twist
- (C) quiet
- (D) fury
- (E) folder

26. ELUDE:

- (A) mimic
- (B) support
- (C) avoid
- (D) fling
- (E) pursue

27. MUNDANE:

- (A) foolish
- (B) ordinary
- (C) cheerful
- (D) irate
- (E) promising

28. CONCEIT:

- (A) secret
- (B) modesty
- (C) honesty
- (D) ability
- (E) arrogance

29. RATTLE:

- (A) unnerve
- (B) brace
- (C) fasten
- (D) magnify
- (E) deliver

30. EXHIBIT:

- (A) deplete
- (B) inspect
- (C) vacate
- (D) feature
- (E) restrain

## General Information

### Format/Directions

The verbal section of the SSAT has one set of 30 analogies. They appear after the 30 synonym questions. The questions go from easy to difficult.

Directions are as follows:

The following questions ask you to find relationships between words. For each question, select the answer choice that best completes the meaning of the sentence.

Sample Question:

Cow is to bull as

- (A) rooster is to chicken
- (B) goose is to gander
- (C) pony is to horse
- (D) frog is to toad
- (E) dog is to cat



Choice (B) is the best answer because a bull is a male cow just as a gander is a male goose. Of all the answer choices, (B) states a relationship that is most like the relationship between cow and bull.

- Some analogies will give you the first three words of the analogy in the question and one word in each answer choice.

Marigold is to flower as piranha is to

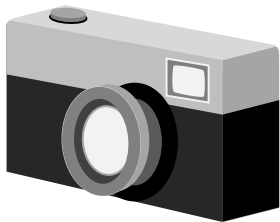
- (A) Venus flytrap
- (B) tulip
- (C) shark
- (D) fish
- (E) ocean

**TRY IT OUT**

Read the following passage actively and be prepared to answer the “active reading” questions that follow:

The photography bug bit me when I was young. The first time I rode a bike, and when I learned to juggle, and on my earliest birthdays: my mother was always there with her Polaroid. Within seconds of her snapping a shot, a picture came crawling out from the slot on the front of the camera. The image would be black at first, but within a few minutes, the photo would materialize, as if a dark fog was clearing. It is hard to describe the joy I felt as I watched the images form in these Polaroid photographs. There was an *inexplicable* excitement in waiting to see what would develop in the little square frame of the picture. It was a feeling like nothing else, and it is linked to many of my favorite memories of growing up. That anticipation is why I am a photographer today.

In modern photography, film is being replaced by digital technologies. Pictures no longer develop; they appear instantly on digital displays and are stored as data. Despite these advancements, I stubbornly continue to use my old cameras. Whenever I can, I use actual film in creating my photos because I don't want immediate, predictable results. For me, the joy of photography lies in a childlike sense of wonder and excited expectation.



1. What does the author mean by “The photography bug bit me”?
2. Do you know the meaning of “inexplicable”? If not, what do you think it means?
3. Why did the author decide to become a photographer?
4. What is the author comparing in the second paragraph?
5. How does the author feel about digital photography? How does this relate to his passion for photography?

**TRY IT OUT**

Many organisms have developed incredible adaptations for the environments in which they live. The most impressive examples are classified as “extremophiles,” which are organisms that can thrive in conditions that are too harsh for most forms of life. One of the most well-known and unique extremophiles is the tardigrade, also known as the “water bear” or “moss piglet.” This microscopic animal looks like a cross between a grub and a gummy bear.

5 Tardigrades can survive in environments that would be lethal to any other animal. They can live in temperatures colder than -400 degrees and hotter than 300 degrees Fahrenheit. They can also survive without water for nearly a decade. This is necessary because tardigrades commonly live in puddles and moss, which often dry out. They can reduce their metabolism to less than one-thousandth of their normal rate, and will return from this dormant state when they have a supply of water. Tardigrades have been found in many of the harshest environments on earth, such as boiling hotsprings and arctic ice. They can even survive the vacuum of space! These amazing creatures show the surprising resilience of life. Research on extremophiles has led to new discoveries that allow scientists to work in conditions that would be too severe for our own bodies.

1. The author mentions “boiling hotsprings” (line 10) as an example of

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4. This passage is primarily about

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2. As used in line 8, “state” means which of the following?

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3. It can be inferred from the passage that the tardigrade can survive dehydration by

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## Tone / Attitude Questions

- ❑ Tone questions ask you to identify the author's tone, or the mood of the passage. Look for descriptive words to help you identify the author's opinions or feeling about the topic of the passage.
- ❑ Common tone / attitude questions:
  - The author's tone can best be described as...
  - Which of the following best describes the author's attitude?

Tone questions will often contain these words: *tone, attitude, mood, feel, opinion.*

- ❑ When determining the tone of a passage, look for words that convey emotion or judgment.

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
 Here in the long unlovely street,  
 Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,  
 A hand that can be clasped no more--  
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
 And like a guilty thing I creep  
 At earliest morning to the door.  
 He is not here; but far away  
 The noise of life begins again,  
 And ghastly through the drizzling rain  
 On the bald street breaks the blank day.

The tone of this poem is gloomy and sad. The somber mood is clearly seen in words such as "dark," "guilty," and "ghastly." A sense of loss is felt in the images of a heart that "used to beat so quickly" and "a hand that can be clasped no more."

Even if you struggle to understand what the poem is about, it is easy to see that it is not a happy subject.

## TRY IT OUT

One of the greatest testaments to the ingenuity and perseverance of modern man is the success of the desert cities of the American Southwest. In the middle of a vast, harsh land, great cities have grown and thrived. The success of our desert cities is especially remarkable because of the many challenges presented by the desert environment. With most rain falling in the hills and mountains of California, very little moisture comes as far as Utah, Arizona, or New Mexico. With no access to oceans and few rivers, these areas rely on man-made canals and reservoirs for their necessary water. The city of Phoenix receives only a few inches of rain per year; however, the average inhabitant uses 150 gallons of water per day. In order to bring water to the city, an impressive 300-mile system of pumps, pipes, and aqueducts was built to bring water from Lake Havasu across the desert to the residents of Arizona's largest city. 20 years in the making, this project is an amazing achievement of engineering and determination. This is a sign of the great abundance and productiveness of the whole United States. These desert cities show that we can succeed in even the harshest and most unproductive land because of our hard work and many resources.

There are some critics who would argue that the cities of the American Southwest are a drain on our country and that there is no compelling reason for so many people to live in such a remote, unproductive area. However, while it is true that the modern cities of the Southwest are dependent on the resources they can bring from other areas, these desert cities also provide valuable resources to other regions. The Southwest is a major source of American copper, gold, silver, and uranium. While these deserts may be harsh, they contain a wealth of resources.

1. The tone of this passage is best described as
  - (A) delighted
  - (B) skeptical
  - (C) critical
  - (D) admiring
  - (E) mocking
2. The style of this passage is most like what would be found in
  - (A) an author's diary
  - (B) a geography textbook
  - (C) a dramatic novel
  - (D) a short story
  - (E) a letter sent to a friend
3. The attitude expressed by "some critics" (line 13) can best be described as
  - (A) sarcastic
  - (B) humorous
  - (C) negative
  - (D) sympathetic
  - (E) curious

- ❑ Don't waste too much time on a difficult sentence or word. There probably won't be a question on it. If you do get a question about the sentence or word, you can go back and figure it out then. You'll likely be more able to understand a difficult sentence or word when you go back with more knowledge of the passage.
- ❑ **Before looking at the answer choices, try to think of the answer in your head.** Try not to look at the answer choices until you know what the answer should be. Then find the answer that most closely matches your anticipated one.
- ❑ **Avoid "could be" answers.** On many SSAT reading questions, there are multiple answer choices that could be correct, but there is only one best answer. If you try to test if you can prove the answer choices correct, you might get stuck with several answers that seem right. Instead, focus on finding your own best answer first.
- ❑ **Eliminate answers which are too broad, too narrow, or simply incorrect.** As you read through the possible answers, eliminate answer choices that:
  - cover more than the passage does.
  - talk only about a portion of the passage.
  - have nothing to do with the discussed topic.
- ❑ For an answer choice to be correct, it must be **entirely** correct. Do not get stuck on answer choices that are only partly right.

#### ❑ Answering the Questions

Main idea questions ask for the main idea or author's opinion. Anticipate the answer to main idea questions. Eliminate answers that are too broad, too narrow, or simply wrong.

Vocabulary questions ask you to define a word as it is used in context.

Defend your answer to detail questions with information from the passage.

Inference questions ask you to draw conclusions based on what is written. Do not expect the answer to be explicitly stated in the passage.

On except/least/not questions, find which answer choice doesn't fit with the others.

Use process of elimination to solve Roman numeral questions.

Prompt: *Nobody could have guessed that this would have happened to him.*

Nobody could have guessed that this would have happened to him. Just a week before, Frank had shoved him into the cold, dark depths of his own locker. For years, Frank had teased and tormented Kyle. Now, Kyle had the chance to play on the same team as Frank, the star quarterback of the school football team.

The coach of the football team had explained a few days earlier that one of their star players wasn't able to play anymore. The wide receiver had been injured in a recent practice, severely damaging his ankle, and wouldn't be returning for the rest of the season. Kyle was the wide receiver on the junior varsity team, and now the coach needed him to help fill the position on the varsity team.

Kyle's mind was filled with worries. Would he be able to play well enough? Most of the players were at least a year older than him, so they were more experienced. Would Frank bully him? He was tired of Frank calling him names and pushing him around. However, the situation could also be a great opportunity. Maybe he could show his skills, succeed, and have more of a chance to get an athletic scholarship. He had accepted the coach's offer because, more than anything, he wanted to prove to himself and to Frank that he was a strong player.

On the night of his first varsity game, Kyle nervously watched his teammates play. He sat on the hard bench on the sidelines and awaited his chance to shine. After the other team fumbled the ball early in the game, Kyle was able to get on the field with the offensive team. The players gathered in a huddle and Frank started barking out orders.

"Are you sure you can handle this, rookie?" Frank said, looking harshly at Kyle.

"Just get the ball to me," Kyle said with confidence. "I'm faster than anyone on the other team."

The players gathered on the line of scrimmage. Frank called the play, the linebacker snapped the ball, and Kyle was off running. His jersey waved in the cool air. He looked back and saw Frank look up toward him. For a second, he doubted that Frank would pass to him, but then the ball was launched, spiraling tightly toward him. Kyle sprinted on and snatched the ball out of the air. The other players were already far behind him, and he ran with the bright lights shining on him and the crowd cheering.

At the end zone, Kyle stood triumphant. Frank ran up to him and patted him on the back.

"Wow, I didn't know you were that fast," Frank said.

Kyle knew that he had earned Frank's respect. He had been afraid to join the varsity team, but he knew he could prove that he was as good as anyone.

SETUP

CONFRONTATION

RESOLUTION



## The Resolution

- ❑ The end of a story shows what happened as a result of the character's actions.

Something should have changed since the beginning of the story. In resolutions, characters often have a new realization or understanding. If the character has learned something, describe how he/she has changed or what he/she has learned. If the character has handled an issue, explain how the situation has changed.

- ❑ Your resolution should make the story feel complete, with no loose ends.

*Looking back, I sometimes regret the time I spent being Leslie's friend. I wish I hadn't been a bully and that I hadn't lived with such low self-esteem because of her. I have a hard time accepting that I let myself be such a close friend to her. However, although I wish I could change my past, it has made me the person I am today. Because of what I have gone through, I have learned to be more accepting of others and of myself. I never judge or criticize my peers, and I also have more confidence in myself because I don't worry about the opinions of others. In the end, it has become one of my life's most important lessons.*

## Preparing a Formal Essay

- Most essays have three essential parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.

The **introduction** establishes the main idea and focus of your essay. It includes your thesis, which is your essay's central argument or point.

The **body** is used to explain your argument and describe how your examples support that argument.

The **conclusion** summarizes your essay and connects your examples back to your main idea.

- Before you begin writing your essay, make sure that you know what your thesis and examples will be.

Take some time to plan and outline your essay. This will ensure that your writing is focused and your time is managed effectively.

## Vocabulary List 14

<b>venerate</b>	to regard with respect, adore
<b>collaborate</b>	to work jointly with others
<b>corroborate</b>	to support with evidence, to confirm
<b>mitigate</b>	to make milder, to make less severe
<b>exacerbate</b>	to make more severe or worse
<b>repudiate</b>	to reject, to disown, to not accept
<b>scrutinize</b>	to examine closely
<b>dispel</b>	to drive away by scattering, to dissipate
<b>censure</b>	to criticize harshly, to condemn
<b>hamper</b>	to impede, to get in the way, to fetter

An award was given to the **venerated** paleontologist when he retired after over 50 years of important contributions to the field.

Howard Roarke refused to **collaborate** with others; on the contrary, he preferred to work alone.

The evidence from the new dig site could **corroborate** the archaeologist's theory and make it much more credible.

Brian tried to **mitigate** the disagreement between his two friends, but instead his irritating manner **exacerbated** the argument, elevating it to a shouting match.

The defense lawyer **repudiated** the charges that the prosecution was making.

They were careful to **scrutinize** their path, checking to make sure it was safe, as they had been told of avalanches caused by careless hikers.

The strong winds **dispelled** the clouds and cleared the skies.

The young boy was **censured** by his parents for stealing toys from another child.

The bad weather **hampered** the family's plans, and they had to reschedule for another time.

## Vocabulary List 40

<b>mediate</b>	to settle an agreement, to reconcile
<b>decree</b>	to command, to declare
<b>barrage</b>	to attack, to bombard
<b>ruminate</b>	to think, to ponder, to contemplate
<b>vex</b>	to annoy, to irritate; <b>or:</b> to confuse
<b>reprove</b>	to admonish, to castigate, to scold
<b>belittle</b>	to consider less important or valuable, to disparage
<b>retract</b>	to withdraw, to take back
<b>squander</b>	to spend extravagantly, to waste
<b>renounce</b>	to give up, to quit, to relinquish

The counselor talked to the brother and sister so he could **mediate** their argument and help resolve their problems.

The mayor has **decreed** that there will be a new town holiday, and the townspeople were excited by the declaration.

When the actor made an offensive remark, he was **barraged** with harsh criticisms from many people who had been fans.

The mathematician **ruminated** on the problem for hours before he thought of a solution.

The **vexing** questions of the child were trying Ms. Petticoat's patience.

As soon as I made the mistake, I knew that my parents would **reprove** me for what I'd done.

Bullies will try to **belittle** people and make them feel bad about themselves.

The politician **retracted** his statement because he wanted people to forget what he'd said.

Patrick once had a lot of money, but he **squandered** it on expensive food and clothes.

When the first sailor traveled around the world, people had to **renounce** their belief that the world is flat.

## TRY IT OUT

For each word or definition, find the matching vocabulary word and write a sentence using that word:

1. to abandon, to surrender \_\_\_\_\_
2. to criticize, to reprimand \_\_\_\_\_
3. to assault \_\_\_\_\_
4. to back off, to recall \_\_\_\_\_
5. to bother, to irk \_\_\_\_\_
6. to contemplate, to consider \_\_\_\_\_
7. to demean, to deride \_\_\_\_\_
8. to intervene, to referee \_\_\_\_\_
9. to order, to announce \_\_\_\_\_
10. to throw away, to use up \_\_\_\_\_

Complete each of the following sentences by inserting one of the vocabulary words:

11. An adult stepped in to \_\_\_\_\_ between the two arguing children, who eventually settled their disagreement and reached a compromise.
12. After finals ended, she had more than a month to relax and to \_\_\_\_\_ on her future after college, considering the many opportunities and options available to her.
13. Bob \_\_\_\_\_ his inheritance, and, after years of wasteful spending, he had not a penny left.
14. He is insecure about his own accomplishments, so he \_\_\_\_\_ others to make himself look better by comparison.
15. He \_\_\_\_\_ his leadership position, giving up the heavy responsibility to spend more time with his family.
16. Several major problems \_\_\_\_\_ him, but he has a solution to only one of them.
17. The audience hated the performer, and, when he came on stage, they greeted him with a \_\_\_\_\_ of rotten eggs and fruit.
18. The professor \_\_\_\_\_ her favorite pupil for making a simple error, but she scolded him so gently that he was barely embarrassed.
19. The royal \_\_\_\_\_ made local townships responsible for the collection of taxes.
20. Today's newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday's error, apologizing for the mistake and publishing the correct information.