

**Official SAT Practice**

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# Lesson Plans

for Teachers by Teachers

## LESSON 1

## Reading—Central Idea and Evidence

**Subscore:** Command of Evidence

**Focus:** Determining the central idea of a text and identifying textual evidence

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**Objectives:**

Students will

- annotate the text in ways that will be helpful for the questions that follow.
- identify information and ideas explicitly stated in the text.
- draw reasonable inferences and logical conclusions from a text.
- cite the textual evidence that best supports a claim or point.

**Before the Lesson:**

- Review Chapters 3, 5, and 6 in the SAT® *Study Guide for Students*.
- Review the article on the Command of Evidence Subscore at <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning/new-sat-about-sat/a/understanding-your-command-of-evidence-subscore>.
- Review the article on Information and Ideas at <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning/about-the-sat-reading-test/a/the-sat-reading-test-information-and-ideas>.
- Preview the overview of the Reading Test video.
- Preview and print (if necessary) the student materials.

## Introductory Activity | 10 minutes

1. Ask students to make lists of the kinds of texts they read in school. Encourage them to think about all of the subjects they take.
2. As a class, discuss how they read the texts from different classes similarly and differently. What do they read for, and what do they look for as they read?
3. Share a 2-minute video that provides an overview of the Reading Test: <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning/about-the-sat-reading-test/v/about-sat-reading-test-what-to-expect>.
4. Remind students that as they take the SAT, they are encouraged to write in their test booklet, and this is especially important for the Reading section of the test. What they write—called “annotations”—will help them to stay engaged as they read and will help them to focus on the important details of the passage.
5. Student annotations may include the following items (point out the sample annotation in the student materials for this lesson):
  - a. *Brief summaries*—Write a one or two sentence summary every 2–3 paragraphs.
  - b. *Identification of main ideas*—Underline the most important parts that give you a sense of what the author is trying to communicate.
  - c. *Key words*—Circle specific word choices that may give you a sense of the author’s tone or perspective toward the subject.
  - d. *Other marks*—Some students are visual learners and may want to draw brief sketches of important information, or they may want to draw arrows between sections of the text that relate to each other.
6. Model the annotation process for your students with the first four paragraphs of the passage in their student materials, demonstrating each of the types of annotations described above, specifically focusing on summary writing. Afterward, discuss with your students how annotations can help them to focus on the important features of the text.
7. View a video on Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy, seeing annotation (and think alouds) in action. The first 2:30 of the video covers this section: <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/sat-reading-writing-practice/new-sat-reading/v/reading-science-passage>.

**Group/Pair Discussion/Activity | 25 minutes**

1. Working in pairs or small groups, students should annotate the remainder of the passage using each of the annotation types described above.
2. Students should compare their annotations and together they should write a 2–3 sentence summary of the passage, focusing on the most important aspects of the text. Groups or pairs can compare their summaries, clarifying details and comprehension as needed.
3. In groups, students should answer Questions 9 and 10 that follow, which ask about the main idea of the passage, and provide evidence for their answers. Guide them with the following rationales, focusing specifically on how they need **evidence from the text** to support their inferences. Over and over on the SAT, students will be asked to locate supporting and relevant evidence; be sure to share how “C” is the best answer for Question 9 because of its evidence.

**Rationale for #9:**

**Explanation:** Choice C is the best answer. The first paragraph describes the 9,000-mile journey that Adelita made and raises the question, which the rest of the passage tries to answer, of how this loggerhead turtle was able to “steer a route across two oceans to find her destination” (lines 5–6). The answer comes most directly in the last paragraph, which presents Putman’s belief that loggerhead turtles “work out their position using two features of the Earth’s magnetic field that change over its surface” (lines 50–52): its inclination and its intensity. It is reasonable, therefore, to infer from the passage that this was the method that Adelita used.

Choice A is not the best answer because there is no evidence in the passage that Adelita used the current of the North Atlantic gyre to navigate her 9,000-mile journey. The passage does discuss the North Atlantic gyre but only as the place where loggerhead turtle hatchlings “born off the sea coast of Florida spend their early lives” (lines 22–23).

Choice B is not the best answer because there is no evidence in the passage that Adelita navigated her 9,000-mile journey with the aid of cues from electromagnetic coils designed by Putman and Lohmann. The passage does say that Putman and Lohmann use electromagnetic coils as part of their research on loggerhead turtles, but the coils are part of tanks used in a laboratory to study loggerhead hatchlings (see lines 12–16).

Choice D is not the best answer because there is no evidence in the passage that Adelita navigated her 9,000-mile journey with the aid of a simulated “magnetic signature” configured by Lohmann. The passage does describe how Lohmann and Putman manipulate magnetic fields as part of their research on loggerhead turtle hatchlings (see, for example, lines 14–19), but there is no indication that the two scientists used (or even could use) the kind of equipment necessary for this project outside of laboratory tanks or with Adelita in the wild.

## Rationale for #10:

**Explanation:** Choice D is the best answer because in lines 58–60, the author indicates that “together, [inclination and intensity] provide a ‘magnetic signature’ that tells the turtle where it is.” Therefore, these lines serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice A is not the best answer because in lines 1–3, the author establishes that Adelita made a 9,000-mile journey but does not explain how she navigated it. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice B is not the best answer because in lines 27–28, the author indicates that Lohmann is able to “mimic the magnetic field at different parts of the Earth’s surface” in his laboratory but does not explain how Adelita navigated her 9,000-mile journey or suggest that Lohmann had any influence over Adelita’s trip. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice C is not the best answer because, in lines 48–49, the author notes that loggerhead turtles “in the wild” may make use of “landmarks like the position of the sea, sun and stars” but does not indicate that Adelita used such landmarks to navigate her 9,000-mile journey. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

4. Point out that sometimes a question asks students to make comparisons and judgments based on various parts of the passage. To prepare students to practice answering this type of question, ask them to return to the full passage about the loggerhead turtles and to highlight the name of the researcher, **Ken Lohmann**, every time the writer mentions his name, and to think about the relationship between Lohmann’s work and that of **Putman**. Ask the class to speculate on how the work of each relates to the other’s, and then ask them to answer Question 12 and discuss why the correct answer is B based on this rationale:

## Rationale for #12:

**Explanation:** Choice B is the best answer. Putman “works in the lab of Ken Lohmann, who has been studying the magnetic abilities of loggerheads for over 20 years” (lines 12–14). Lohmann had earlier demonstrated that loggerhead turtles “could use the [magnetic] field as a compass to get their bearing” (line 19) and “use their magnetic sense to work out their latitude—their position on a north-south axis” (lines 32–34). Putman has since (“Now,” line 34) built on Lohmann’s work by demonstrating that the turtles “can also determine their longitude—their position on an east-west axis” (lines 34–35).

**Individual Application | 15 minutes**

1. Students should read only the first paragraph of the next passage and annotate the text with the methods they have been practicing. Be sure to inform them that unlike the previous texts, this one is a passage from the novel, *Ethan Frome*, a literary text.
2. Students should answer the following two questions, 16 and 17, and be able to explain why they chose the answers they did by specifically identifying the EVIDENCE they used to answer the questions. When you discuss the rationales, focus on the specific words and phrases that support the correct answers, spending some time examining why the incorrect answers for #16 are not supported with direct evidence from the text.

**Rationale #16:**

**Explanation:** Choice C is the best answer. Lines 8–14 mention many of Mattie’s traits: she is friendly (“smiled and waved”), eager (“jumped down with her bundles”), easygoing (“she ain’t a fretter”), and energetic (“like the lighting of a fire on a cold hearth”). However, the trait that appeals the most to Ethan, as suggested by it being mentioned last in the paragraph, is her openness to the world around her: “She had an eye to see and an ear to hear: he could show her things and tell her things, and taste the bliss of feeling that all he imparted left long reverberations and echoes he could wake at will” (lines 15–19).

Choice A is not the best answer because the passage suggests that Ethan does not actually view Mattie as particularly well suited to farm labor. When first seeing Mattie, Ethan thinks to himself, after “looking over her slight person,” that “she don’t look much on housework” (lines 10–11).

Choice B is not the best answer because the passage suggests that Mattie’s youth is not what Ethan values most about Mattie. Although the passage does note that “the coming to his house of a bit of hopeful young life was like the lighting of a fire on a cold hearth” (lines 12–14), the narrator goes on to note that “the girl was more than the bright serviceable creature [Ethan] had thought her” (lines 14–15), indicating that Ethan values something more in Mattie than simply her vivacity.

Choice D is not the best answer because although Ethan acknowledges that Mattie “ain’t a fretter” (line 12), there is no evidence that Mattie’s freedom from worry is what Ethan values the most about Mattie. The first paragraph lists several positive traits that Mattie has, with the most emphasis being placed on her openness to the world around her (see explanation for choice C).

## Rationale #17:

**Explanation:** Choice D is the best answer. Lines 15–19 explain that Mattie “had an eye to see and an ear to hear: [Ethan] could show her things and tell her things, and taste the bliss of feeling that all he imparted left long reverberations and echoes he could wake at will.” In other words, Mattie is open, or receptive, to ideas and experiences, and the placement of this point at the end of the list of traits Ethan admires (“But it was not only . . .”) suggests that her openness is most important to him. Therefore, these lines serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice A is not the best answer because lines 1–6 only describe Ethan and Mattie’s living situation and indicate that Ethan enjoys walking with her in the evenings. They do not indicate which quality of Mattie’s Ethan values the most. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice B is not the best answer because lines 6–12 only indicate Ethan’s first impression of Mattie. Mattie comes across as generally friendly and enthusiastic in their first encounter, but it is not these qualities that Ethan values the most. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

Choice C is not the best answer because lines 12–14 only convey that there was something special about Mattie beyond her friendliness and enthusiasm. They do not indicate what Ethan values the most about Mattie. Therefore, these lines do not serve as the best evidence for the answer to the previous question.

3. Students should write a brief reflection on their current abilities to annotate and to identify the most important details of a text, and explain based on evidence from that text.

## Homework | 20–30 minutes

- Ask students to link their College Board and Khan Academy accounts in order to import score information and to personalize their practice. If students do not have any score information in their College Board accounts, they should take the Diagnostic Quiz 1—Reading.
- Students should practice on Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy®, focusing specifically on using the highlighting tool to mimic the annotations they practiced in this lesson. Students should work on identifying the passage’s main ideas and key supporting details.
- Students should also read the following two articles from the Tips and Strategies tab:

### “Understanding Your Command of Evidence Subscore”

<https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning/new-sat-about-sat/a/understanding-your-command-of-evidence-subscore>

### “SAT Reading Test: Information and Ideas”

<https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning/about-the-sat-reading-test/a/the-sat-reading-test-information-and-ideas>

## Teacher Notes

### A Note About Skill Levels

Skill Levels range from 2–4 on Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy and correlate to practicing easier (Level 2), medium (Level 3), and hard (Level 4) SAT passages in terms of complexity. Once students have linked accounts, taken a diagnostic quiz (on Official SAT Practice), or taken a practice test, practice will be personalized to their skill level. By practicing questions successfully, they will be able to “level up” to more complex passages.

### A Note About Personalization

Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy will recommend a Reading content area (science, literature, social studies, or history) in which students should practice. Students can apply the lesson’s skills (e.g., identifying the central idea and using textual evidence) to whichever content area Official SAT Practice recommends.

## Student Materials—Lesson #1

### Introductory Activity

[6] As Kingman developed as a painter, his works were often compared to **15** paintings by Chinese landscape artists dating back to CE 960, a time when a strong tradition of landscape painting emerged in Chinese art. [7] Kingman, however, **16** vacated from that tradition in a number of ways, most notably in that he chose to focus not on natural landscapes, such as mountains and rivers, but on cities. **17** ! Detail

**18** His fine brushwork conveys detailed street-level activity: a peanut **1** vendor pushing his cart on the sidewalk, a pigeon pecking for crumbs around a fire **19** hydrant, an old man tending to a baby outside a doorway. His broader brush strokes and sponge-painted shapes create majestic city **D1** skylines, with skyscrapers **D2** towering in the background, bridges **D2** connecting neighborhoods on either side of a river, and **20** delicately painted **D3?** creatures, such as a tiny, barely visible cat prowling in the bushes of a park.

To art critics and fans alike, these city scenes represent the innovative spirit **+** of twentieth-century urban Modernism.

During his career, Kingman exhibited his work **21** internationally. He garnered much acclaim **+**. In 1936, a critic described one of Kingman's solo exhibits as "twenty of the freshest, most satisfying watercolors that have been seen hereabouts in many a day." **22** **++**

Annotations often include:

- Brief summaries:* Write a one or two sentence summary every 2–3 paragraphs.
- Identification of main ideas:* Underline the most important parts that give you a sense of what the author is trying to communicate.
- Key words:* Circle specific word choices that may give you a sense of the author's tone or perspective toward the subject.
- Other marks that might be included:* Some students are visual learners and may want to draw brief sketches of important information. Some students may want to draw arrows between sections of the text that relate to each other.



This passage is adapted from Ed Yong, "Turtles Use the Earth's Magnetic Field as Global GPS." ©2011 by Kalmbach Publishing Co.

In 1996, a loggerhead turtle called Adelita swam across 9,000 miles from Mexico to Japan, crossing the entire Pacific on her way. Wallace J. Nichols tracked this epic journey with a satellite tag. But Adelita herself had no such technology at her disposal. How did she steer a route across two oceans to find her destination?

Nathan Putman has the answer. By testing hatchling turtles in a special tank, he has found that they can use the Earth's magnetic field as their own Global Positioning System (GPS). By sensing the field, they can work out both their latitude and longitude and head in the right direction.

Putman works in the lab of Ken Lohmann, who has been studying the magnetic abilities of loggerheads for over 20 years. In his lab at the University of North Carolina, Lohmann places hatchlings in a large water tank surrounded by a large grid of electromagnetic coils. In 1991, he found that the babies started swimming in the opposite direction if he used the coils to reverse the direction of the magnetic field around them. They could use the field as a compass to get their bearing.

Later, Lohmann showed that they can also use the magnetic field to work out their position. For them, this is literally a matter of life or death. Hatchlings born off the sea coast of Florida spend their early lives in the North Atlantic gyre, a warm current that circles between North America and Africa. If they're swept towards the cold waters outside the gyre, they die. Their magnetic sense keeps them safe.

## Group/Pair Activity

Using his coil-surrounded tank, Lohmann could mimic the magnetic field at different parts of the Earth’s surface. If he simulated the field at the northern edge of the gyre, the hatchlings swam southwards. If he simulated the field at the gyre’s southern edge, the turtles swam west-northwest. These experiments showed that the turtles can use their magnetic sense to work out their latitude—their position on a north-south axis. Now, Putman has shown that they can also

determine their longitude—their position on an east-west axis. He tweaked his magnetic tanks to simulate the fields in two positions with the same latitude at opposite ends of the Atlantic. If the field simulated the west Atlantic near Puerto Rico, the turtles swam northeast. If the field matched that on the east Atlantic near the Cape Verde Islands, the turtles swam southwest. In the wild, both headings would keep them within the safe, warm embrace of the North Atlantic gyre.

Before now, we knew that several animal migrants, from loggerheads to reed warblers to sparrows, had some way of working out longitude, but no one knew how. By keeping the turtles in the same conditions, with only the magnetic fields around them changing, Putman clearly showed that they can use these fields to find their way. In the wild, they might well also use other landmarks like the position of the sea, sun and stars.

Putman thinks that the turtles work out their position using two features of the Earth’s magnetic field that change over its surface. They can sense the field’s inclination, or the angle at which it dips towards the surface. At the poles, this angle is roughly 90 degrees and at the equator, it’s roughly zero degrees. They can also sense its intensity, which is strongest near the poles and weakest near the Equator. Different parts of the world have unique combinations of these two variables. Neither corresponds directly to either latitude or longitude, but together, they provide a “magnetic signature” that tells the turtle where it is.

**9**

The passage most strongly suggests that Adelita used which of the following to navigate her 9,000-mile journey?

- A) The current of the North Atlantic gyre
- B) Cues from electromagnetic coils designed by Putman and Lohmann
- C) The inclination and intensity of Earth’s magnetic field
- D) A simulated “magnetic signature” configured by Lohmann

**10**

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 1–3 (“In 1996 . . . way”)
- B) Lines 27–28 (“Using . . . surface”)
- C) Lines 48–49 (“In the wild . . . stars”)
- D) Lines 58–60 (“Neither . . . it is”)

**12**

Based on the passage, which choice best describes the relationship between Putman’s and Lohmann’s research?

- A) Putman’s research contradicts Lohmann’s.
- B) Putman’s research builds on Lohmann’s.
- C) Lohmann’s research confirms Putman’s.
- D) Lohmann’s research corrects Putman’s.

## Individual Practice

This passage is adapted from Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome*, originally published in 1911. Mattie Silver is Ethan’s household employee.

Mattie Silver had lived under Ethan’s roof for a year, and from early morning till they met at supper he had frequent chances of seeing her; but no moments in her company  
*Line* were comparable to those when, her arm in his, and her  
5 light step flying to keep time with his long stride, they walked back through the night to the farm. He had taken to the girl from the first day, when he had driven over to the Flats to meet her, and she had smiled and waved to him from the train, crying out, “You must be Ethan!” as she  
10 jumped down with her bundles, while he reflected, looking over her slight person: “She don’t look much on housework, but she ain’t a fretter, anyhow.” But it was not only that the coming to his house of a bit of hopeful young life was like the lighting of a fire on a cold hearth. The girl was more  
15 than the bright serviceable creature he had thought her. She had an eye to see and an ear to hear: he could show her things and tell her things, and taste the bliss of feeling that all he imparted left long reverberations and echoes he could wake at will.

**16**

The description in the first paragraph indicates that what Ethan values most about Mattie is her

- A) fitness for farm labor.
- B) vivacious youth.
- C) receptive nature.
- D) freedom from worry.

**17**

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 1–6 (“Mattie . . . farm”)
- B) Lines 6–12 (“He had . . . anyhow”)
- C) Lines 12–14 (“But it . . . hearth”)
- D) Lines 15–19 (“She had . . . will”)