

Writing and Language Test

The overall aim of the Writing and Language Test is to determine whether students can demonstrate college and career readiness proficiency in revising and editing a range of texts in a variety of content areas. The Writing and Language Test does not require students to provide written responses; rather, students will engage in analysis of writing, effective language use, conformity to the conventions of Standard Written English grammar, usage, and punctuation. Students may elect to take the optional Essay, which does require that they complete a direct-writing task (see page 40 for more information).

The test comprises a series of passages and associated multiple-choice questions. Some passages and/or questions are accompanied by one or more graphical representations of data—tables, charts, graphs, etc.—and certain questions require students to make revising and editing decisions to passages in light of information and ideas conveyed graphically. Mathematical computation is not required to answer these questions.

SAT WRITING AND LANGUAGE TEST CONTENT SPECIFICATIONS

	Number	Percentage of Test
Time Allotted	35 minutes	
Passage Word Count	1700 words total from 4 passages; 400–450 words per passage	
Total Questions	44 questions	100%
Multiple Choice (4 options)		100%
Passage Based		100%
Contribution of Items to Subscores and Scores		
Expression of Ideas	24 questions	55%
Standard English Conventions	20 questions	45%
Words in Context (Across Reading and Writing and Language Tests)	8 questions (2 questions per passage)	18%
Command of Evidence (Across Reading and Writing and Language Tests)	8 questions (2 questions per passage)	18%
Analysis in History/Social Studies (Across Math, Reading, and Writing and Language Tests)	6 questions (all Expression of Ideas questions in history/social studies)	14%
Analysis in Science (Across Math, Reading, and Writing and Language Tests)	6 questions (all Expression of Ideas questions in science)	14%
Passage Contents		
Careers	1 passage; 11 questions	25%
History/Social Studies	1 passage; 11 questions	25%
Humanities	1 passage; 11 questions	25%
Science	1 passage; 11 questions	25%
Graphics		
	1 or more graphics in 1 or more sets of questions	
Text Types		
Argument	1–2 passages	25%–50%
Informative/Explanatory Text	1–2 passages	25%–50%
Nonfiction Narrative	1 passage	25%
Text and Graphical Complexity		
Text Complexity	A specified range from grades 9–10 to postsecondary entry across 4 passages	
Graphical Data Representations (tables, charts, graphs, etc.)	Basic to somewhat challenging (low to moderate data density, few variables, simple to moderately challenging interactions)	

General Instructional Strategies for Writing and Language:

- Instruct students to provide quotations from reading passages, data from graphs, tables or charts, or from other relevant text as evidence to support their conclusions in class discussions and on assignments. The SAT Suite of Assessments requires students to analyze passages using relevant evidence in both reading and writing.
- Teach students in all classes to practice writing and language analysis skills—effective language use, expression of ideas, and proper utilization of Standard English Conventions—to develop their analyses of social studies, science, and career-related passages.
- Practice revising and editing during class by asking students to refine their own work, as well as the work of their peers, to build analysis skills related to grammatical conventions, word choice, and sentence structure in extended contexts.
- Give students the opportunity to correct mistakes, both in carefully constructed errors you provide and in their own work. They will be asked to make corrections in word choice, conventions of usage and punctuation, organization, sentence structure, and analysis of graphical data on the SAT Suite of Assessments.