

# SAT/ACT READING GUIDE

Section 1 of the SAT is comprised of five passages: Passage 1 is Literature-based, Passages 2 and 3 are "soft" science based, Passage 4 is history-based, and Passage 5 is Natural Science-based. The test-taker is provided 65 minutes to read these five passages and answer 52 questions, comprised of three passages with ten questions each and two passages with eleven questions each. Section 3 of the ACT is comprised of four passages: Passage 1 is Literature-based, Passage 2 is Social Science-based, Passage 3 is Humanities-based and Passage 4 is Natural Science-based. The test-taker is only provided 35 minutes to read these four passages, with ten questions following each passage.

While the SAT Reading Test is substantively more difficult than the ACT Reading Test, the difficulty regarding the ACT Reading Test resides in the tight timing constraints.

No matter, success on the SAT/ACT Reading Test requires that the test-taker understand precisely what is being tested here: Namely, that these exams are reading comprehension tests NOT reading analysis or reading interpretation tests. In other words, successful test-takers need to: A) comprehend the salient points contained in the various passages, and B) answer all the questions as the authors of the passages would.

In this regard, the correct answers ALWAYS require a two pronged approach: That the test-taker's answers A) answer the precise questions asked, and B) those answers have textual support.

Please note, as in the other test sections of the SAT/ACT exams, one answer is correct, the other answers are incorrect. You are NEVER looking for the best answer; you are always searching the reading passages looking for the correct answer. Of course, this is easier said than done, especially on the SAT Reading Test because the test-taker needs to understand that the SAT/ACT exams are prepared by individuals who have a doctorate degree in educational psychology, meaning these individuals know how teenagers' minds work, and, especially on the SAT test, deliberately compose wrong answer choices which sound correct.

In this regard, the worst methodology to employ on the SAT/ACT Reading Tests is to compare each answer choice to each other, selecting the best sounding answer choice because it does not matter how great the answer choice sounds, if that answer choice does not answer the precise question asked, and lacks textual support from the reading passage, that answer is always wrong.

Therefore, typical wrong answers include answers test-taker knows to be true from test-taker's outside knowledge, maybe answers -if the most test-taker can say is that the answer choice might be true, that answer is wrong, period. In this regard, be careful of those answers that have textual support, but do not answer the precise question asked. In fact, a common trick,

employed on both SAT/ACT, is to deliberately include word(s) from the passage in the wrong answer choice.

Lines Lie: Be careful when question sends you to specific lines in the text. YOUR JOB IS TO CORRECTLY ANSWER QUESTION ASKED; THEREFORE, IF LINES DO NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION ASKED, READ ABOVE/BELOW STATED LINES UNTIL YOU LOCATE ANSWER TO QUESTION ASKED.

Another good test methodology to employ here is to transform the questions, answer choices, and the textual support into more user-friendly language: your own words, only then do you know you fully comprehend what is going on.

You are not supposed to memorize the passages. Indeed, you do not have sufficient time to do that. Instead, read to get a "sense" of what transpired in the passages by grabbing the theme(s) contained in the passages.

As for timing, DO NOT WORK FOR TIME, LET TIME WORK FOR YOU by bringing an accepted digital watch and after you complete each one or two reading passages, check how much time remains. In this regard, you have between eleven and fifteen minutes per passage/questions on the SAT, depending upon difficulty levels. On the ACT, you have between eight and nine and a half minutes per passage/questions, depending on difficulty levels. (Obviously, with test accommodations, adjust timing levels accordingly.).

With dual passages, one each on SAT/ACT, read first passage, answer questions, then second passage, answer questions, then, finally, answer questions on both passages.

Read passages according to your predilections from most to least preferable.

Finally, know that questions are 'roughly chronological' on the SAT Reading Test, but are not chronological on the ACT Reading Test.