

SAT Writing Essays Strategies

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Basic Assumption: The essay is a completely artificial and unnatural piece of writing.

Strategies:

1. **Ignore the short reading.** Write your essay responding to the specific prompt, e. g.:
Do memories hinder or help people in their effort to learn from the past and succeed in the present? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.
2. **Fill both pages.** No matter what the new report says, length matters.
3. **Usually, take one side or the other, don't try to equivocate or be complex.**
4. **Structure your essay as a five-paragraph essay with a topic sentence as the first sentence of every paragraph.**
 - a. Short introductory paragraph with a specific thesis sentence that directly addresses the question in the prompt.
 - b. First development paragraph. Use best example.
 - c. Second development paragraph. Put in lots of detail.
 - d. Third development paragraph. Put in lots of detail.
 - e. Conclusion. Restate thesis and include quotation.
5. **Prepare two historical biographies and two works of literature to use as examples.** If the examples don't fit, change them. Detail counts; factual accuracy doesn't.
6. **Use *plethora* and *myriad* along with other "big" words.** Do not be afraid that the word may have the wrong connotation. Use of infrequently used words counts!
7. **Have two or three quotations ready.** Insert one in the penultimate or concluding paragraph even if it not completely relevant to your argument. My favorite is FDR's "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Remember, readers for these essays have to read between 20-30 essays per hour in four-hour blocks.

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