



STRATEGIES FOR
THE SAT READING
SECTION



Understand the Reading Section's Format

- Understand the timing: You have 65 minutes to answer 52 questions based on 5 passages. (On the PSAT you have 60 minutes to answer 47 questions based on 5 passages.)
- Be familiar with the four genres: literature, science, history, and social science.
 - Literature passage will always come first.
 - There will be one science, one history, and one social science. One of these three genres will be repeated in the form of a double passage.
- Be familiar with the types of questions:
 - Big Picture *The central claim of the passage is.....*
 - Little Picture/Function *Based on lines 64 – 78, one positive effect of space mining.....*
 - Inference *The author of passage 1 indicates that using the Internet without safeguards could.....*
 - Vocabulary in Context *As used in line 40, “plastic” most nearly means...*
 - Author Technique - *The author most likely uses the examples in lines 9 – 12 to.....*
 - Evidence Support - *Which choice best supports the author’s claim that there is common ground shared by...*
 - Data Interpretation – *According to the graph, the majority of pollutants.....*

Timing is Everything on the SAT!

Let's do some calculations.

- Five total reading passages – (4 single and one double)
- 65 minutes divided by 5 equals 13 minutes per passage
- 4 to 5 minutes reading the passage
- 8 to 9 minutes to answer approximately 10 questions
- Approximately 54 seconds to answer each question

This is solely an approximation of timing!

Three Most Common Methods to Attack Passages

- Method #1 - Skim the Passage First - Skim effectively, just read the introductory paragraph, conclusion paragraph, and first and last sentences of each body paragraph.
- Method #2 - Skip Straight to the Questions – Allow the questions to guide your read.
- Method #3 – Read the passage in full. Critically read the passage and then answer the questions. On the next slide, we will discuss why this method can be the most effective and how to make it work for you.

Tips on Reading the Passage First – Then Answering the Questions

Can you or should you peak at the questions?
YES!

11

The authors most likely use the examples in lines 1-9 of the passage ("Every . . . showers") to highlight the

- regularity with which people shop for gifts.
- recent increase in the amount of money spent on gifts.
- anxiety gift shopping causes for consumers.
- number of special occasions involving gift-giving.

12

In line 10, the word "ambivalent" most nearly means

- unrealistic.
- conflicted.
- apprehensive.
- supportive.

13

The authors indicate that people value gift-giving because they feel it

- functions as a form of self-expression.
- is an inexpensive way to show appreciation.
- requires the gift-recipient to reciprocate.
- can serve to strengthen a relationship.

14

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

- Lines 10-13 ("Many . . . peers")
- Lines 22-23 ("People . . . own")
- Lines 31-32 ("Research . . . perspectives")
- Lines 44-47 ("Although . . . unfounded")

15

The "social psychologists" mentioned in paragraph 2 (lines 17-34) would likely describe the "deadweight loss" phenomenon as

- predictable.
- questionable.
- disturbing.
- unprecedented.

16

The passage indicates that the assumption made by gift-givers in lines 41-44 may be

- insincere.
- unreasonable.
- incorrect.
- substantiated.

17

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

- Lines 53-55 ("Perhaps . . . consideration")
- Lines 55-60 ("According . . . relationship")
- Lines 63-65 ("As . . . consideration")
- Lines 75-78 ("In . . . relations")

18

As it is used in line 54, "convey" most nearly means

- transport.
- counteract.
- exchange.
- communicate.

19

The authors refer to work by Camerer and others (line 56) in order to

- offer an explanation.
- introduce an argument.
- question a motive.
- support a conclusion.

20

The graph following the passage offers evidence that gift-givers base their predictions of how much a gift will be appreciated on

- the appreciation level of the gift-recipients.
- the monetary value of the gift.
- their own desires for the gifts they purchase.
- their relationship with the gift-recipients.

21

The authors would likely attribute the differences in gift-giver and recipient mean appreciation as represented in the graph to

- an inability to shift perspective.
- an increasingly materialistic culture.
- a growing opposition to gift-giving.
- a misunderstanding of intentions.

Role	less expensive gift	more expensive gift
giver	~5.5	~6.2
recipient	~6.0	~5.9

17

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Tips on Reading the Passage First – Then Answering the Questions

Now step 1 in
ANNOTATING
the passage.

Questions 11-21 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Francis J. Flynn and Gabrielle S. Adams, "Money Can't Buy Love: Asymmetric Beliefs about Gift Price and Feelings of Appreciation." ©2008 by Elsevier Inc.

Every day, millions of shoppers hit the stores in full force—both online and on foot—searching frantically for the perfect gift. Last year, Americans spent over \$30 billion at retail stores in the month of December alone. Aside from purchasing holiday gifts, most people regularly buy presents for other occasions throughout the year, including weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and baby showers. This frequent experience of gift-giving can engender ambivalent feelings in gift-givers. Many relish the opportunity to buy presents because gift-giving offers a powerful means to build stronger bonds with one's closest peers. At the same time, many dread the thought of buying gifts; they worry that their purchases will disappoint rather than delight the intended recipients.

Anthropologists describe gift-giving as a positive social process, serving various political, religious, and psychological functions. Economists, however, offer a less favorable view. According to Waldfogel (1993), gift-giving represents an objective waste of resources. People buy gifts that recipients would not choose to buy on their own, or at least not spend as much money to purchase (a phenomenon referred to as "the deadweight loss of Christmas"). To wit, givers are likely to spend \$100 to purchase a gift that receivers would spend only \$80 to buy themselves. This "deadweight loss" suggests that gift-givers are not very good at predicting what gifts others will appreciate. That in itself is not surprising to social

spend with how much recipients will appreciate the gift (the more expensive the gift, the stronger a gift-recipient's feelings of appreciation). Although a link between gift price and feelings of appreciation might seem intuitive to gift-givers, such an assumption may be unfounded. Indeed, we propose that gift-recipients will be less inclined to base their feelings of appreciation on the magnitude of a gift than givers assume.

Why do gift-givers assume that gift price is closely linked to gift-recipients' feelings of appreciation? Perhaps givers believe that bigger (i.e., more expensive) gifts convey stronger signals of thoughtfulness and consideration. According to Camerer (1988) and others, gift-giving represents a symbolic ritual, whereby gift-givers attempt to signal their positive attitudes toward the intended recipient and their willingness to invest resources in a future relationship. In this sense, gift-givers may be motivated to spend more money on a gift in order to send a "stronger signal" to their intended recipient. As for gift-recipients, they may not construe smaller and larger gifts as representing smaller and larger signals of thoughtfulness and consideration.

The notion of gift-givers and gift-recipients being unable to account for the other party's perspective seems puzzling because people slip in and out of these roles every day, and, in some cases, multiple times in the course of the same day. Yet, despite the extensive experience that people have as both givers and receivers, they often struggle to transfer information gained from one role (e.g., as a giver) and apply it in another, complementary role (e.g., as a receiver). In theoretical terms, people fail to utilize information about their own preferences and experiences in order to produce more efficient outcomes in their exchange relations. In practical

The Main Problem with Method #2 – Reading the Questions First

- On the majority of sections, at least half of the questions do not contain a line reference.
- You are going to miss the main idea, the big picture, the overarching theme.

HOWEVER, when critically reading the passage, DO NOT drown in the details.

Don't Ignore Passage Introductions

- Introductory blurb contains valuable information, and if you skip it, you could miss out on easy points.
- At the very least, passage introductions give you context for what you're about to read so you aren't too confused about who's who or where the passage is set.

Introductory blurbs could provide the name of a **character**, a **conflict**, **context** of a passage, or a note of **comparison** between the two passages on the double passage.

My emotions are complicated and not readily verifiable. I feel a vast yearning that is simultaneously a pleasure and a pain. I am certain of the consummation of this yearning, but I don't know yet what form it will take, since I do not understand quite what it is that the yearning desires. For the first time there is borne in upon me the full truth of what I myself said to the doctor only an hour ago: that my motives in this undertaking are not entirely clear. For years, for a lifetime, the machinery of my destiny has worked in secret to prepare for this moment; its clockwork has moved exactly toward this time and place and no other. Rising slowly from the earth that bore me and gave me sustenance, I am carried helplessly toward an uninhabited and hostile, or at best indifferent, part of the earth, littered with the bones of explorers and the wrecks of ships, frozen supply caches, messages scrawled with chilled fingers and hidden in cairns that no eye will ever see. Nobody has succeeded in this thing, and many have died. Yet in freely willing this enterprise, in choosing this moment and no other when the south wind will carry me exactly northward at a velocity of eight knots, I have converted the machinery of my

Does this introduction help?

Questions 1-10 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from MacDonald Harris, *The Balloonist*. ©2011 by The Estate of Donald Heiney. During the summer of 1897, the narrator of this story, a fictional Swedish scientist, has set out for the North Pole in a hydrogen-powered balloon.

Don't Let the Answer Choices Sway You

Test creators hope that every test taker looks at answer choices like a lunch menu!

- When possible, try and predict your answer choice before looking at the four options.
- Every answer choice should have something appealing in it ---it may be a phrase or just a word or two.
- Try to narrow it down to two choices.
- As you practice on Khan Academy and complete practice exams, analyze why answer choices are wrong.
 - Opposite answer distractor
 - Not relevant/not accurate
 - Half right is all wrong
 - Too extreme
 - Too narrow
 - Accurate statement but does not answer the question

Tackling the Evidence Based Questions

1

Over the course of the passage, the narrator's attitude shifts from

- A) fear about the expedition to excitement about it.
- B) doubt about his abilities to confidence in them.
- C) uncertainty of his motives to recognition of them.
- D) disdain for the North Pole to appreciation of it.

2

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

- A) Lines 10-12 ("For . . . moment")
- B) Lines 21-25 ("Yet . . . will")
- C) Lines 42-44 ("And . . . stand on")
- D) Lines 56-57 ("What . . . myself")

3

As used in lines 1-2, "not readily verifiable" most

- D) emphasize the length of time during which the narrator has prepared for his expedition.

5

The narrator indicates that many previous explorers seeking the North Pole have

- A) perished in the attempt.
- B) made surprising discoveries.
- C) failed to determine its exact location.
- D) had different motivations than his own.

6

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

- A) Lines 20-21 ("Nobody . . . died")
- B) Lines 25-27 ("All . . . out")
- C) Lines 31-34 ("The . . . newspaper")
- D) Lines 51-53 ("Behind . . . bedsteads")

Interact with the Passage - ANNOTATE

- No right or wrong way to annotate
- Research based and proven to improve comprehension
- Underline, circle, symbols
- Write in the margins
 - Key words
 - Phrases
 - BRIEF summaries

Get Interested in the Passage!!!!!!!

- Treat this as a learning experience, not a chore, and you'll find it much easier to remember what happened in the passage. If the passage is about "amphibians in crisis", imagine that you love salamanders and toads, and you want to ensure their survival.
- If your brain is in "wow, interesting" mode rather than "blah, blah, just have to get to the questions" mode, you'll have a more pleasant experience on the test and a better time answering the questions overall.