

## Answer Explanations

# SAT Practice Test #8

## Section 1: Reading Test

### QUESTION 1

**Choice A is the best answer.** The first paragraph explains the narrator’s love of reading: “Even then my only friends were made of paper and ink. . . . Where my school friends saw notches of ink on incomprehensible pages, I saw light, streets, and people.” The fourth paragraph reiterates this love in its description of the bookshop as a “sanctuary” and “refuge.” The shift in focus occurs in the last six paragraphs, which recount the gift of a book that transforms the narrator’s love of reading into a desire to write: “I did not think there could be a better [book] in the whole world and I was beginning to suspect that Mr. Dickens had written it just for me. Soon I was convinced that I didn’t want to do anything else in life but learn to do what Mr. Dickens had done.” Thus the passage’s overall focus shifts from the narrator’s love of reading to a specific incident that influences his decision to become a writer.

Choice B is incorrect because the passage never focuses on the narrator’s father, who primarily serves to illustrate the narrator’s determination to read books despite all obstacles. Choice C is incorrect because the passage focuses on the narrator’s desire to write rather than on whatever skill he may have as a writer. Choice D is incorrect because the passage doesn’t make the narrator’s childhood hardships its central focus or analyze the effects of those hardships.

### QUESTION 2

**Choice C is the best answer.** In the first paragraph, the third sentence describes the narrator’s love of reading (“where my school friends saw notches of ink on incomprehensible pages, I saw light, streets, and people”), and the fourth sentence describes the role that reading played in the narrator’s life (“a safe haven from that home, those streets, and those troubled days in which even I could sense that only a limited fortune awaited me”). The remainder of the passage recounts incidents in which the narrator’s actions arise from his love of, and dependence on, reading. Thus the third and fourth sentences can be seen as describing a passion that accounts for those actions.

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Choice A is incorrect because although the narrator's "school friends" are mentioned in passing in the third sentence, they aren't introduced as proper characters and make no further appearance in the passage. Choice B is incorrect because the passage doesn't list the difficult conditions of the narrator's childhood until after these sentences. Choice D is incorrect because the narrator's aspirations aren't discussed until the last paragraph of the passage.

### QUESTION 3

**Choice C is the best answer.** The tenth paragraph shows that upon returning home, the narrator hides the gift (the "new friend") that Sempere had given him: "That afternoon I took my new friend home, hidden under my clothes so that my father wouldn't see it." It can be inferred from this sentence that the narrator's concern arises from an awareness that his father would disapprove of the gift.

Choice A is incorrect because although the passage discusses the father's hostility toward the narrator's love of reading, there is no indication that the father is not affectionate to the narrator more generally; indeed, the third paragraph depicts the father's generosity toward the narrator. Choice B is incorrect because the father's generosity toward the narrator, as depicted in the third paragraph, clearly shows that the father encourages unnecessary purchases of such things as candy. Choice D is incorrect because although the first paragraph shows that the father is hostile toward books in general, there is no indication in the passage that Dickens or any other author is a specific object of the father's disdain.

### QUESTION 4

**Choice D is the best answer.** The previous question asks which statement about the narrator's father would the narrator most likely agree with. The answer, that his father wouldn't have approved of Sempere's gift to the narrator, is best supported in the tenth paragraph: "That afternoon I took my new friend home, hidden under my clothes so that my father wouldn't see it." It can be inferred from this sentence that the narrator is aware of his father's likely disapproval of the gift (the "new friend").

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the cited lines don't support the answer to the previous question. Instead, they show the father giving his own gift to the narrator (choice A) and illustrate how the narrator was treated when in Sempere's bookshop (choices B and C).

### QUESTION 5

**Choice A is the best answer.** The last paragraph makes clear the narrator's enthusiasm for Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, and it can be inferred from the last sentence of this paragraph that this enthusiasm motivated the narrator to aspire to a career as a writer: "Soon I was convinced that I didn't want to do anything else in life but learn to do what Mr. Dickens had done."

Choice B is incorrect because the passage doesn't discuss gifts the narrator has received in the past; although the father sometimes gave the narrator money to buy sweets and snacks, these weren't gifts since the narrator made the purchases himself. Choice C is incorrect because although it is clear from the passage that Sempere was kind and even indulgent to the narrator, there is no suggestion that this treatment was inspired by respect for the narrator. Choice D is incorrect because there is no suggestion that the narrator took Sempere's figurative designation of Dickens as a "lifelong friend" in the ninth paragraph to be a literal statement.

## QUESTION 6

**Choice D is the best answer.** The previous question asks why the narrator considers *Great Expectations* to be the greatest gift he ever received. The answer, that the book convinced him to become a writer, is best supported by the last sentence of the last paragraph: "Soon I was convinced that I didn't want to do anything else in life but learn to do what Mr. Dickens had done."

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the cited lines don't support the answer to the previous question. Instead, they explain the narrator's interactions with the bookseller (choice A), describe the book's physical condition (choice B), and indicate the narrator's initial, erroneous assumption that Sempere knew Charles Dickens personally (choice C).

## QUESTION 7

**Choice D is the best answer.** In the fourth paragraph, the narrator explains that although Sempere normally didn't charge him for books, he still left Sempere a few coins as payment: "It was only small change—if I'd had to buy a book with that pittance, I would probably have been able to afford only a booklet of cigarette papers." These lines signal the narrator's awareness that he was paying less for the books than they were worth.

Choice A is incorrect because the passage states that Sempere didn't expect or want the narrator to pay: "He hardly ever allowed me to pay for the books." Choice B is incorrect because the fourth paragraph makes clear that even if Sempere didn't want the narrator's money, the narrator would still "leave the coins I'd managed to collect." Choice C is incorrect because the third paragraph states that the money with which the narrator paid Sempere was originally given to the narrator by his father.

## QUESTION 8

**Choice B is the best answer.** In the fourth paragraph, the narrator describes his reluctance to leave Sempere's bookshop: "When it was time for me to leave, I would do so dragging my feet, a weight on my soul." In this context, "weight" most nearly means burden.

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Choices A, C, and D are incorrect because in the context of the narrator having to do something he doesn't want to, a "weight" he had to carry most nearly means a burden, not a bulk (choice A), force (choice C), or clout (choice D).

## QUESTION 9

**Choice C is the best answer.** When, in the eighth paragraph, the narrator asks Sempere if the author Charles Dickens is a friend of his, Sempere replies, in the ninth paragraph, that Dickens is a "lifelong friend. And from now on, he's your friend too." Sempere designated Dickens a "friend" of both himself and the narrator, who had never heard of the author before. This signals that the use of "friend" in these lines is figurative and emphasizes Sempere's emotional connection to Dickens and, more generally, to reading. It also signals Sempere's hope that the narrator will come to have a similar connection to Dickens.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the word "friend" is used in these lines to emphasize Sempere's connection to reading, rather than his connection to the narrator (choice A), the narrator's relationships or home life (choice B), or the narrator's emotional state or decision making (choice D).

## QUESTION 10

**Choice B is the best answer.** In the ninth paragraph, Sempere describes the author Charles Dickens to the narrator: "A lifelong friend. And from now on, he's your friend too." As the reader can reasonably assume that Sempere doesn't actually know Dickens, this description can be read as signaling Sempere as an avid admirer of Dickens's work.

Choice A is incorrect because the passage describes Sempere as a bookseller, not a writer. Choice C is incorrect because although the passage implies Sempere feels an emotional connection to Dickens, it doesn't suggest that this connection arises from any similarity between Sempere's life and that of Dickens. Choice D is incorrect because even if the passage implies that Sempere admires Dickens's work, Sempere's admiration isn't discussed in relation to that felt by other readers of Dickens, nor is Sempere shown to compare himself to other such readers.

## QUESTION 11

**Choice B is the best answer.** The first paragraph describes the widespread practice of not reporting null results, or results in which researchers fail to see an effect that should be detectable. The second through sixth paragraphs discuss a study that examined how scientists have dealt with null results. The seventh and eighth paragraphs discuss the negative consequences that null results pose for future research and the possible creation of a registry for all data produced by research studies, reported and unreported alike, as a remedy for those

consequences. Therefore, the purpose of the passage as a whole is to explain a common practice in the reporting of research studies and summarize a study that provides support for a change to that practice.

Choice A is incorrect because the passage doesn't dispute a widely held belief about the publication of social science research; rather, it suggests a solution to deal with a long-debated problem. Choice C is incorrect because while the passage hints at possible shortcomings in research trials, it doesn't describe them in detail; because it addresses other kinds of research besides medical trials; and because it doesn't call for a government database, specifically. Choice D is incorrect because the passage calls for changes to the reporting of research results, rather than to research methodology itself, and because it doesn't address the publishers of research at all.

## QUESTION 12

**Choice D is the best answer.** The second paragraph states that “TESS allows scientists to order up Internet-based surveys.” In the context of the service that the TESS program provides to scientists, “allows” most nearly means enables.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of the passage's discussion of TESS, “allows” most nearly means enables, not admits (choice A), tolerates (choice B), or grants (choice C).

## QUESTION 13

**Choice D is the best answer.** The fifth paragraph of the passage addresses the “statistical strength” of certain scientific findings. In this context, “strength” most nearly means significance, or importance.

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because in the context of the statistical importance of scientific findings, “strength” most nearly means significance, not attribution (choice A), exertion (choice B), or toughness (choice C).

## QUESTION 14

**Choice A is the best answer.** The seventh paragraph discusses the negative consequences of not publishing null results, emphasizing that “worse, if researchers publish significant results from similar experiments in the future, they could look stronger than they should because the earlier null studies are ignored.” In other words, failing to document null results means that the results of later, related studies will not be as accurate as they appear.

Choices B, C, and D are incorrect because the passage does not indicate that failing to document null results can cause promising areas of research to be overlooked (choice B), cause errors in data collection practices that lead to null results being overlooked (choice C), or lessen bias against null results (choice D).

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## QUESTION 15

**Choice D is the best answer.** The previous question asks what the passage indicates could result from failing to document null results. The answer, that the results of future studies will be misleading, is best supported in the seventh paragraph: “Worse, if researchers publish significant results from similar experiments in the future, they could look stronger than they should because the earlier null studies are ignored.”

Choices A, B, and C are incorrect because the cited lines don’t support the answer to the previous question. Instead, choice A suggests how the findings of a study about null results may affect existing beliefs about such results; choice B explains how infrequently null results had been written up, according to Malhotra’s study; and choice C illustrates a problem resulting from the failure to document null results, but one that is unrelated to the fact that this documentation failure may make the results of future, related studies appear more valid than they are.

## QUESTION 16

**Choice B is the best answer.** The last two sentences of the seventh paragraph identify a particular research scenario that Malhotra uncovered in his study: “Even more troubling to Malhotra was the fact that two scientists whose initial studies ‘didn’t work out’ went on to publish results based on a smaller sample. ‘The non-TESS version of the same study, in which we used a student sample, did yield fruit,’ noted one investigator.” Since Malhotra especially objected to these researchers’ suppression of data that produced null results and their subsequent publication of related data that were statistically significant, it can be inferred that the hypothetical situation to which he would most strongly object is one in which researchers publish their study results in a journal but exclude the portion of data that produced null results.

Choices A and D are incorrect because the seventh paragraph, which identifies a research scenario that Malhotra disapproved of, provides no basis for an inference that he would especially object to a team’s insisting on publishing null results in a top journal only (choice A) or a team’s expanding the scope of a study that had produced null results (choice D). Choice C is incorrect because although the first sentence of the seventh paragraph indicates Malhotra’s concern that failing to publish null results can mean that other researchers unwittingly replicate strategies that produced null results in prior studies, the paragraph goes on to identify other scenarios as being “worse” and “even more troubling” from Malhotra’s perspective.

## QUESTION 17

**Choice C is the best answer.** The previous question asks about which hypothetical situation Malhotra would most strongly object to. The answer, that he would most strongly object to researchers' reporting their findings but failing to disclose the null results, is best supported at the end of the seventh paragraph: "Even more troubling to Malhotra was the fact that two scientists whose initial studies 'didn't work out' went on to publish results based on a smaller sample. 'The non-TESS version of the same study, in which we used a student sample, did yield fruit,' noted one investigator."

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because the cited lines don't support the answer to the previous question about which situation Malhotra would most strongly object to. Instead, they cite another researcher's attitude toward null results from his or her own study (choice A), compare the publication rate for studies that produce null results with that for studies that produce statistically significant results (choice B), and describe the recommendation by Malhotra and his team for the creation of a database to remedy problems resulting from the nonpublication of null results (choice D).

## QUESTION 18

**Choice B is the best answer.** After describing problems that could arise from the failure to report null results, the passage shifts in the last paragraph to a potential solution to such problems: "A registry for data generated by all experiments would address these problems, the authors argue." The paragraph goes on to imply that a registry could solve such problems by deterring the suppression of null results.

Choice A is incorrect because the last paragraph proposes a "registry for data" rather than a future research project. Choice C is incorrect because the summary of the results of Malhotra's study occurs in the fifth paragraph, not in the last. Choice D is incorrect because the last paragraph of the passage does not mention reexamining results already obtained in social science trials.

## QUESTION 19

**Choice C is the best answer.** The far left bar of the graph pertains to social science studies that produced strong results. This bar shows that approximately 20 percent (or two full increments of 10 percent) of such studies were published in a top journal.

Choice A is incorrect because the graph shows that approximately 5 percent of social science studies that produced strong results were unwritten, rather than over 50 percent. Choice B is incorrect because the graph shows that about 30 percent of social science studies that produced strong results were unpublished but written, rather than 50 percent. Choice D is incorrect because the graph shows that slightly over 40 percent of social science studies that produced strong results were published in a non-top journal, rather than almost 80 percent.



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## QUESTION 20

**Choice A is the best answer.** The middle bar of the graph pertains to social science studies that produced mixed results. The top 50 percent of this bar represents studies that were published. The bottom 50 percent of this bar represents studies that were either unpublished or went unwritten. Since each of the two categories accounts for 50 percent of the total, it can be said that studies with mixed results were just as likely to be published as they were to be left either unpublished or unwritten.

Choice B is incorrect because the graph indicates that roughly 42 percent of social science studies produced strong results and roughly 22 percent produced null results; together, these two percentages far exceed the 36 percent accounted for by studies that produced mixed results. Choice C is incorrect because the graph shows that roughly 12 percent of studies that produced mixed results were published in top journals, well less than the percentage published in non-top journals (approximately 38 percent). Choice D is incorrect because the graph indicates that studies that produced strong results accounted for approximately 42 percent of all studies, while those that produced mixed results only accounted for around 36 percent of all studies.

## QUESTION 21

**Choice C is the best answer.** The first sentence of the fifth paragraph states, “Not unexpectedly, the statistical strength of the findings made a huge difference in whether they were ever published.” This statement is supported by the graph, which shows that more than 60 percent of social science studies that produced strong results were published, while only about 50 percent of studies with mixed results and about 20 percent of studies with null results were published.

Choices A, B, and D are incorrect because none of the cited lines contain information that is represented by the data in the graph. Instead, they recount scientists’ explanations for why they didn’t publish their null results (choices A and B) and highlight claims about the importance of Malhotra’s study (choice D).

## QUESTION 22

**Choice A is the best answer.** The first paragraph explains that in the nanoworld, salt can be seen “stretching like taffy.” The third paragraph notes that while this elasticity was expected in metals, it wasn’t imagined for salt: “But scientists don’t expect this superplasticity in a rigid, crystalline material like salt.” The rest of the passage explores this unexpected behavior of salt. Therefore it can be said that one of the central ideas of the passage is that materials don’t always behave as scientists might expect them to.