

# Essay Writing for the new SAT

## TakeSAT practice essay topics

Our takeSAT essay topics have been closely modelled on those in the New SAT. You can also do the essays given in the first section of each of the 8 tests in the [Official Study Guide](#).

Each of the topics consists of a prompt and an assignment.

1. Prompt:

"That which we obtain too easily, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only which gives everything its value."

Thomas Paine

Assignment:

Do we value only what we struggle for? Plan your response, and then write an essay to explain your views on this issue. Be sure to support your position with specific points and examples. (You may use personal examples or examples from your reading, observations, or, knowledge of subjects such as history, literature, science.)

2. Prompt:

If we are afraid to reveal our lack of knowledge we will not be able to learn. In order to make progress we must admit where we are now. Such an admission of ignorance is not easy. As Thoreau says, "How can we remember our ignorance which our growth requires, when we are using our knowledge all the time?"

Assignment:

Does the present system of education encourage us to admit our lack of knowledge, or is there too much pressure to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge? Plan your response...

3. Prompt:

"A little inaccuracy saves a world of explanation."

C.E.Ayers

Assignment:

Is it always essential to tell the truth, or are there circumstances in which it is better to lie? Plan your response...

4. Prompt:  
Many societies believe that the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human right. But it is also true that attainment of happiness remains elusive. Perhaps Bertrand Russell had it right when he said, “To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness.”

Assignment:

What gives us more pleasure and satisfaction: the pursuit of our desires or the attainment of them? Plan your response...

5. Prompt:  
“The price of greatness is responsibility.”

Winston Churchill

Assignment:

Do we expect too much from our public figures? Plan your response...

6. Prompt:  
“A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser today than he was yesterday.”

Alexander Pope

Assignment:

Do we learn more from finding out that we have made mistakes or from our successful actions? Plan your response...

7. Prompt:  
“What man calls civilization always results in deserts. Man is never on the square – he uses up the fat and greenery of the earth. Each generation wastes a little more of the future with greed and lust for riches.”

Don Marquis

Assignment:

With our modern awareness of ecology are we likely to make sufficient progress in conservation, or are we still in danger of damaging the earth beyond repair? Plan your response...

8. Prompt:  
A man who waits to believe in action before acting is anything you like, but he is not a man of action. It is as if a tennis player before returning the ball stopped to think about his views of the physical and mental advantages of tennis. You must act as you breathe.

Georges Clemenceau

Assignment:

Is it true that acting quickly and instinctively is the best response to a crisis? Or are there times when an urgent situation requires a more careful consideration and a slower response? Plan your response...

9. Prompt:

There is usually a kernel of truth in the words Oscar Wilde puts in the mouth of his most outrageous characters – they wouldn't be funny otherwise. One such gem that is worth pondering is: *The only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on. It is never of any use to oneself.*

Assignment:

Is it true that when we most need advice we are least willing to listen to it? Or is good advice always welcome? Plan your response...

10. Prompt:

“Independence? That's middle class blasphemy. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.” Bernard Shaw expected to provoke controversy with these words, but I would agree with him that these days there is too much emphasis on independence. While it is certainly true that excessive dependence on others is not a sign of maturity, total independence of others is neither attainable nor desirable: we need to be mature, and unselfish enough to recognize our *interdependence*.

Assignment:

Do we put too much emphasis on self-reliance and independence, and are we afraid of admitting that we need other people in our lives? Plan your response...