Gouda Academy



HARD SAT Questions

Last-Minute Guide

- Key Strategies
- 16 Challenging Questions
- Clear Explanations

November 2026 Edition

YOUR MISSION, GENIUS!

16 hard Digital SAT questions • Clear rules • Simple English • Real practice

What is this guide?

It is a last-minute training book. You will learn how to understand a hard question, find the clue, and remove the wrong answers. You do NOT need to know every difficult word in a passage.

The goal is not to remember letters A, B, C, or D. The goal is to understand WHY the right answer works.

HOW TO USE IT

STEP 1 Read each rule and its easy example first.

STEP 2 Study the vocabulary rescue cards. You will see these ideas in the questions.

STEP 3 Solve Questions 1–16 without looking at the answer key.

STEP 4 Check the full explanation. Read why EACH other answer is wrong.

STEP 5 Try a question again if you guessed correctly but cannot explain your choice.

THE 5-STEP GAME PLAN

Use this simple plan every time a difficult question appears.

1. NAME THE QUESTION TYPE

Look at the question first. Is it asking for a word, a graph fact, the job of a sentence, grammar, or a transition?

Why? Each type needs a different plan. You save time when you know the job.

2. LOOK FOR THE CLUE

Read the passage carefully. Find signal words such as but, yet, although, because, therefore, and not.

Why? A small word can show a change, a reason, or a limit.

3. TEST THE ANSWERS

For word questions, check A–D first, then test each choice in the sentence. For other types, compare each answer with the exact text or data.

Why? An answer can sound smart but still be too strong or about the wrong idea.

THE GAME PLAN: FINISH STRONG

Now use the clues to remove wrong answers and make your choice.

4. REMOVE THE TRAPS

Cross out choices that add facts, change the order, give the opposite meaning, or only tell part of the story.

Why? Many hard SAT questions have two choices that look reasonable.

5. CHECK AND MOVE ON

Ask: What words, graph values, or grammar rule prove my answer? If time is short, make your best choice and continue.

Why? Do not lose several easier questions by staying on one hard one.

8 SAT RULES YOU CAN USE TODAY

No vague instructions: each rule shows what to do, an example, and why it helps.

01 WORDS IN CONTEXT: CHOICES FIRST

What it means: Read the four answer words first. You do NOT have to invent a word before looking at the choices. Read the whole sentence and the sentences around it. Test which answer gives the exact meaning.

Easy example: "The new evidence did not prove the claim false, but it did make the claim less certain." The answer should mean SOFTEN or LIMIT, not REJECT COMPLETELY.

Why it matters: On a hard SAT question, two words may both sound possible. The right one must match how STRONG the writer's idea is. Practice: Questions 1, 2, 9, 10.

02 THE DEGREE TEST: HOW STRONG?

What it means: Ask whether the writer completely rejects an idea, partly limits it, proves it, or simply explains it. These are NOT the same action.

Easy example: "I like the movie, but the ending is weak." The person does not hate the movie. The criticism QUALIFIES the positive opinion; it does not REPUDIATE it.

Why it matters: Answers such as always, never, completely, and proves may be too strong if the passage says some, may, seems, or partly. Practice: Questions 1, 2, 9.

8 SAT RULES YOU CAN USE TODAY

No vague instructions: each rule shows what to do, an example, and why it helps.

03 GRAPH TRIPLE CHECK: BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END

What it means: Check the labels on the graph. Write down the number at the first year, one important middle year, and the final year. For a claim about change, all three points may matter.

Easy example: A value goes 20 → 70 → 60. It finished higher than it started, BUT it fell after reaching 70. The final number alone hides the drop.

Why it matters: A true number is not enough. The answer must PROVE the author's claim. Practice: Questions 3 and 11.

04 TEXT STRUCTURE: MAP THE ORDER

What it means: After reading each sentence or group, name its job in two or three words: gives examples, shows a shared idea, makes a contrast, gives a reason, or reaches a conclusion.

Easy example: "Cats and dogs both make good pets. However, they need different kinds of care." The writer first gives a shared idea, THEN shows a difference.

Why it matters: Wrong choices often change the order, add an argument the writer did not make, or claim that an earlier study was wrong. Practice: Questions 4 and 12.

8 SAT RULES YOU CAN USE TODAY

No vague instructions: each rule shows what to do, an example, and why it helps.

05 SENTENCE FUNCTION: WHAT JOB DOES IT DO?

What it means: For "function of the first sentence," read the whole passage. Ask: Why did the writer put this sentence here? Does it introduce an example, raise a problem, give background, or provide evidence?

Easy example: A passage starts with a wrong number on an old map, then explains why historians learn from it. The first sentence introduces a surprising problem.

Why it matters: An answer may describe the sentence correctly but misunderstand its JOB in the passage. Practice: Questions 5 and 13.

06 ONE-IDEA SWAP: FIND THE REAL SUBJECT

What it means: Sometimes the subject is a very long phrase starting with WHETHER or THAT. Replace this whole phrase with "this issue" or "this fact." Then choose a singular verb if it sounds natural.

Easy example: "Whether they win or lose ____ important." Replace the long part: "This issue IS important." So the answer is IS, not ARE.

Why it matters: A plural word inside the subject can trick you into choosing a plural main verb. Practice: Questions 6 and 14.

8 SAT RULES YOU CAN USE TODAY

No vague instructions: each rule shows what to do, an example, and why it helps.

07 PUNCTUATION: REMOVE THE EXTRA PART

What it means: Find the basic list of actions first. If extra words interrupt the last action, remove those words and read the simple sentence. Then put the extra words back between matching commas.

Easy example: "The paper was printed, checked, and, after the teacher approved it, shared." Without the extra words: "printed, checked, and shared."

Why it matters: One missing comma can make an answer wrong. A semicolon does not fix every long sentence. Practice: Questions 7 and 15.

08 TRANSITIONS: NAME THE LINK

What it means: Read the sentence before and after the blank. Decide whether the second gives an opposite idea (HOWEVER), an example (FOR EXAMPLE), extra information (MOREOVER), or a result (ACCORDINGLY).

Easy example: "The experiment found a problem. _____, the team changed its design." The change happened BECAUSE of the problem, so "consequently" or "accordingly" can work.

Why it matters: A transition must show the logical connection. Do not choose a word just because it sounds formal. Practice: Questions 8 and 16.

WHY THE VOCABULARY MATTERS

These words are tools. They help you understand the answer choices and the question.

1. Some words ARE the answers

In Words in Context questions, you may need to choose between words such as circumscribe, contextualize, qualify, and repudiate. Their meanings are close, but not identical.

2. Some words explain the passage

A word like disparity means a difference. A word like vulnerability means being easy to hurt. Knowing these helps you understand what the writer is saying.

3. Some words explain the logic

Accordingly means "as a result." However means "but / in contrast." These tell you HOW two ideas are connected.

4. Learn words in pairs

For each word, read the simple meaning, the easy example, the SAT trap, and the question numbers. The goal is to tell two similar words APART.

12 POWER WORDS: EASY ENGLISH

Words 1–3 of 12 • Meaning + Example + SAT Trap

CIRCUMSCRIBE

MEANING: to limit how much something can do or mean

EXAMPLE: A strict rule circumscribes a student's choices.

SAT USE: Does the writer LIMIT a person's role instead of removing it?

PRACTICE: Q1 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** CONTEXTUALIZE

CONTEXTUALIZE

MEANING: to explain something by adding background or history

EXAMPLE: A teacher contextualizes a poem by explaining its time period.

SAT USE: Adding background is not the same as limiting someone's power.

PRACTICE: Q1 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** CIRCUMSCRIBE

CORROBORATE

MEANING: to support a claim with more proof

EXAMPLE: A second witness corroborates the first witness's story.

SAT USE: This means CONFIRM, not simply describe or limit.

PRACTICE: Q1, Q10 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** EXTRAPOLATE

12 POWER WORDS: EASY ENGLISH

Words 4–6 of 12 • Meaning + Example + SAT Trap

OVERSTATE

MEANING: to say something is bigger, stronger, or more certain than it really is

EXAMPLE: It overstates the danger to say one rainy day proves climate change.

SAT USE: Look for exaggeration; do not confuse with giving careful limits.

PRACTICE: Q1 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** QUALIFY

REPUDIATE

MEANING: to reject a claim completely

EXAMPLE: She repudiated the false rumor and said it was untrue.

SAT USE: COMPLETE rejection is stronger than changing one part.

PRACTICE: Q2 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** QUALIFY

SUBSTANTIATE

MEANING: to prove or support with evidence

EXAMPLE: The scientist substantiated the idea with test results.

SAT USE: Supporting an idea is different from adding a weakness or exception.

PRACTICE: Q2 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** REPUDIATE

12 POWER WORDS: EASY ENGLISH

Words 7–9 of 12 • Meaning + Example + SAT Trap

QUALIFY

MEANING: to make a statement less absolute by adding a limit or exception

EXAMPLE: "The plan is good, BUT expensive" qualifies the praise.

SAT USE: In SAT reading, this often means LIMIT a claim, not "meet requirements."

PRACTICE: Q2 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** REPUDIATE

EPITOMIZE

MEANING: to be a perfect or very clear example of an idea

EXAMPLE: Her kindness epitomizes the school's values.

SAT USE: A scene showing both good and bad may NOT epitomize only good.

PRACTICE: Q2 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** QUALIFY

TEMPER

MEANING: to make a claim, feeling, or reaction less strong

EXAMPLE: The new fact tempered his excitement.

SAT USE: If the old idea is still partly true, look for SOFTEN, not DESTROY.

PRACTICE: Q9 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** INVALIDATE

12 POWER WORDS: EASY ENGLISH

Words 10–12 of 12 • Meaning + Example + SAT Trap

EXTRAPOLATE

MEANING: to use known facts to guess about a place or time not studied

EXAMPLE: We cannot extrapolate city data to every country without tests.

SAT USE: Do not stretch a small sample too far.

PRACTICE: Q10 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** CORROBORATE

DISPARITY

MEANING: a noticeable difference or gap

EXAMPLE: There is a disparity between the two test scores.

SAT USE: Know that it describes a DIFFERENCE, not a reason for it.

PRACTICE: Q4, Q8 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** SIMILARITY

ACCORDINGLY

MEANING: therefore; for that reason; as a result

EXAMPLE: It rained heavily; accordingly, the picnic was canceled.

SAT USE: This is a RESULT transition, not an example or opposite idea.

PRACTICE: Q8, Q16 | **DO NOT MIX UP WITH:** HOWEVER

EXTRA WORDS THAT HELP

You do not need to memorize a dictionary. Just recognize these words when you see them.

VULNERABILITY
the state of being easy to hurt

TRIUMPHALIST
showing only victory or success

DISCOVERY
finding something new

REVERENCE
deep respect

CONCEPTION
an idea or way of understanding

CONSTITUENCY
a group that an organization serves

INVALIDATION
showing that a claim is wrong

FLUCTUATION
going up and down over time

INFER
use clues to reach a likely answer

CONCLUSIVE
giving a strong sense of an ending or decision

PARALLEL
having the same basic form

REVERSAL
a change in the opposite direction

QUESTION 01 • WORDS IN CONTEXT

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

Accounts of a singer's success can _____ a collaborator's apparent creative agency without omitting that person's contributions. Consider a documentary that credits FINNEAS with devising a Billie Eilish song's distinctive instrumental refrain. Although the film acknowledges that Eilish had neither specified nor anticipated the addition, its narration presents the refrain as the realization of an intention already implicit in her preliminary melody.

THE QUESTION

Which choice completes the passage with the most precise and contextually appropriate word?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. corroborate

B. overstate

C. circumscribe

D. contextualize

QUESTION 02 • WORDS IN CONTEXT

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

At Washington's Korean War Veterans Memorial, nineteen stainless-steel soldiers advance on patrol, their ponchos billowing as though battered by bitter wind and driving rain. The figures' monumental scale gives the patrol something of the grandeur of a victory march, yet their protective clothing draws attention to the soldiers' physical vulnerability. The memorial can thus be read as an effort to _____ a triumphalist conception of military service: its reverence for those who serve accommodates an acknowledgment of the hardships they endure.

THE QUESTION

Which choice completes the text with the clearest and most appropriate word or phrase?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. repudiate

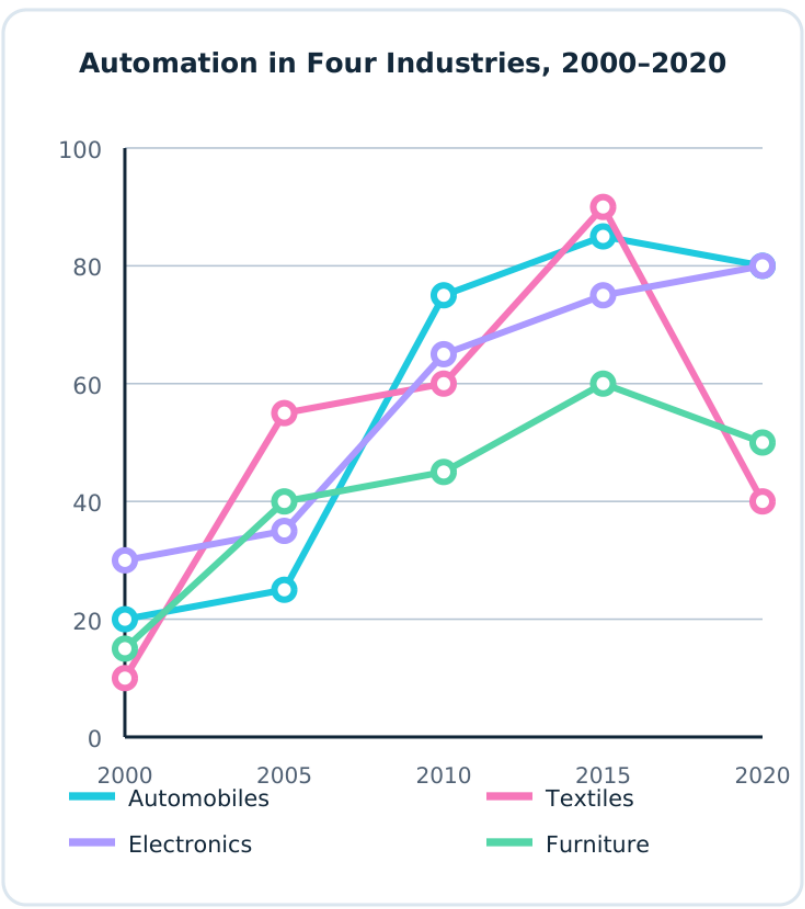
B. substantiate

C. qualify

D. epitomize

QUESTION 03 • GRAPH EVIDENCE

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.



READ THE TEXT

Researchers tracked the percentage of production tasks performed automatically in four industries from 2000 to 2020. They cautioned that, in several industries, comparing the first and last years alone understated how far automation had advanced by 2015. This interpretation is supported by the _____

QUESTION 03 • PICK THE ANSWER

The choices below all look possible. Match each one to the passage or graph.

Which choice best uses evidence from the graph to complete the statement?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. increase of only 5 percentage points in electronics automation from 2015 to 2020, compared with an increase of 30 percentage points from 2005 to 2010.

B. lower automation levels in textiles and furniture than in automobiles and electronics in 2020, even though all four industries ended the period above their 2000 levels.

C. automation levels in automobiles, textiles, and furniture that, in 2020, were above their 2000 levels but below their 2015 levels.

D. widening gap between the highest and lowest industry automation levels, from 30 percentage points in 2015 to 40 percentage points in 2020.

QUESTION 04 • TEXT STRUCTURE

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

At one community-run observatory, residents select celestial events for public viewing sessions; at another, amateur astronomers organize observations around questions raised during neighborhood workshops. Although their procedures differ, both allow local curiosity to determine what merits attention. University observatories generally award telescope time based on a proposed project's likely contribution to ongoing research. This distinction need not reflect a disparity in technical sophistication: a community facility may possess instruments comparable to those of a university. Rather, the facilities answer to different constituencies, whose priorities shape how those instruments are used.

QUESTION 04 • PICK THE ANSWER

The choices below all look possible. Match each one to the passage or graph.

Which option most accurately describes how the passage develops its discussion?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. It describes two ways community observatories involve residents, then draws on university practice to explain why those procedures differ.

B. It identifies a common principle behind two local practices, then explains a broader contrast in how observatories set their priorities.

C. It compares two ways of assigning telescope time, then explains why one provides a stronger foundation for scientific research.

D. It outlines the priorities of different institutions, then explains how access to similar equipment can reduce the influence of those priorities on research decisions.

QUESTION 05 • SENTENCE FUNCTION

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

You may have heard a guard lament taking “an arrow in the knee” or seen a famous scene that moves from sudden chaos to a horse-drawn carriage ride and the greeting “Hey, you. You’re finally awake.” Both moments come from The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, but familiarity with these ubiquitous lines gives only a partial picture of how the game tells its stories. Players who set aside the central quest to explore the city of Riften might discover a letter in a prominent family’s home and learn that its matriarch commissioned an assassination. Beneath Markarth, players can pull a lever in a dwarven ruin and watch mechanical guardians spring to life, revealing how the city’s ancient inhabitants once defended it. These features extend storytelling through exploration and discovery rather than confining it to scripted dialogue.

QUESTION 05 • PICK THE ANSWER

The choices below all look possible. Match each one to the passage or graph.

Which choice best describes the function of the first sentence in the text as a whole?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. It identifies a familiar feature of a game that the text subsequently presents as less essential to its storytelling than exploration and discovery.

B. It introduces evidence of a game's cultural reach that the text attributes to the flexibility of its narrative design.

C. It cites two examples of dialogue whose significance becomes clearer as the text describes what players can discover through exploration.

D. It introduces familiar references to a game that provide a starting point for a broader examination of its narrative design.

QUESTION 06 • SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

Muons—particles produced when cosmic rays strike Earth's atmosphere—can penetrate thick stone, allowing researchers to infer variations in a pyramid's internal density. Whether the anomalous readings recorded by detectors beneath a sealed corridor indicate previously unknown chambers or merely reflect differences in the composition of the surrounding masonry _____ a question that additional measurements, rather than further scrutiny of the existing data, must resolve.

THE QUESTION

Which option correctly completes the sentence according to standard English grammar and usage?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. remain

B. remaining

C. remains

D. have remained

QUESTION 07 • PUNCTUATION

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

For a horror film set in an abandoned hospital, the effects crew created facial prosthetics whose apparent injuries had to remain convincing in close-up. The pieces were sculpted from clay, cast in _____ painted by hand to reproduce the mottled appearance of damaged skin. Subtle variations in pigmentation helped prevent the injuries from appearing uniform under the harsh studio lighting.

THE QUESTION

Which choice completes the passage in accordance with standard English conventions?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. silicone; and, once the material had cured,

B. silicone, and once the material had cured;

C. silicone, and, once the material had cured

D. silicone, and, once the material had cured,

QUESTION 08 • TRANSITIONS

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

Consider a listening experiment in which two versions of a musical passage end with the same chord, played at the same volume and for the same duration. One version reaches that chord directly; the other delays its arrival through a series of dissonant harmonies. Listeners consistently judge the second version's ending more conclusive. Because the final chord is identical across versions, its acoustic properties alone cannot account for the disparity between these judgments. The difference in perceived finality must, _____, stem at least in part from what listeners hear before the final chord.

THE QUESTION

Which transition most precisely connects the final sentence to the reasoning that precedes it?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. however

B. for instance

C. alternatively

D. accordingly

QUESTION 09 • WORDS IN CONTEXT

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

Although the museum displayed the artist's sketches as evidence of a spontaneous breakthrough, newly uncovered correspondence suggested years of planning. The letters did not overturn the exhibit's account entirely, but they did _____ its emphasis on sudden inspiration.

THE QUESTION

Which choice completes the text with the most precise word?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. invalidate

B. temper

C. replicate

D. dramatize

QUESTION 10 • WORDS IN CONTEXT

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

Researchers found a surprising correlation between bird migration patterns and artificial lights in two coastal cities. But because the sample included no inland locations, the team was reluctant to _____ the finding to inland populations until additional studies could test whether the same relationship held there.

THE QUESTION

Which choice completes the text with the most precise word?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. extrapolate

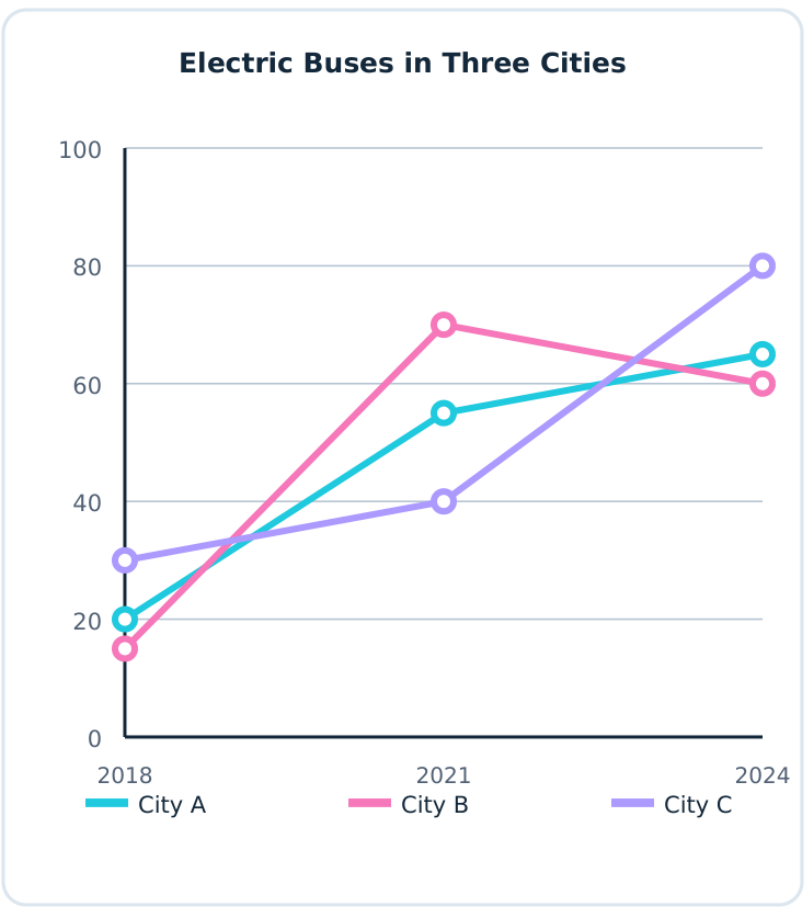
B. corroborate

C. obscure

D. attribute

QUESTION 11 • GRAPH EVIDENCE

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.



READ THE TEXT

A transportation analyst noted that comparing the first and last years alone could conceal a temporary reversal in the expansion of electric bus fleets.

QUESTION 11 • PICK THE ANSWER

The choices below all look possible. Match each one to the passage or graph.

Which choice best supports the analyst's warning?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. All three cities had a larger electric bus share in 2024 than in 2018, with City C recording the largest overall gain.

B. City A increased its share of electric buses in both intervals shown.

C. City C's share exceeded City A's in both 2018 and 2024.

D. City B rose from 15% in 2018 to 70% in 2021, then declined to 60% in 2024.

QUESTION 12 • TEXT STRUCTURE

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

To estimate urban pollinator health, some ecologists count bees seen in city parks; others examine the diversity of pollen gathered near apartment balconies. The methods generate different kinds of data, but both depend on observation within a single season. A research team instead compiled records from ten consecutive summers. The team's method did not invalidate the shorter studies; it addressed a question those studies could not easily settle: whether fluctuations reflect long-term change or ordinary yearly variation.

QUESTION 12 • PICK THE ANSWER

The choices below all look possible. Match each one to the passage or graph.

Which choice best describes how the passage is organized?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. It identifies flaws in two methods, then rejects both as incapable of yielding reliable evidence.

B. It contrasts two study settings, then argues that technological improvements eliminated their differences.

C. It presents two forms of short-term observation, then introduces a longer-term method that addresses another question.

D. It traces a series of discoveries that proves urban bee populations have declined in every city.

QUESTION 13 • SENTENCE FUNCTION

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

An eighteenth-century map of the Amazon places a mountain range where none exists. The cartographer had relied on travelers' reports that mixed geographic observations with local legends. Later surveyors corrected the map, but historians now study the error as evidence of how information circulated when direct measurement was limited. The imaginary mountains thus make the map more valuable as a record of knowledge-making, not less.

QUESTION 13 • PICK THE ANSWER

The choices below all look possible. Match each one to the passage or graph.

Which choice best describes the function of the first sentence in the text as a whole?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. It establishes an apparent error that the passage later reinterprets as historically informative.

B. It offers an example meant to disprove the value of travel accounts in present-day mapping.

C. It introduces the claim that the map is worthless because its geography is inaccurate.

D. It contrasts the goals of early cartographers with those of present-day geographers.

QUESTION 14 • SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

That the ancient texts contain contradictory dates, despite researchers' repeated attempts to reconcile them, _____ historians cautious about assigning a single year to the event.

THE QUESTION

Which choice completes the sentence according to standard English grammar?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. make

B. makes

C. making

D. have made

QUESTION 15 • PUNCTUATION

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

After the museum acquired the fragile scroll, it was scanned at high resolution, placed in a protective case _____ displayed under low light.

THE QUESTION

Which choice completes the text according to standard English conventions?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. ; and, after the conservators had approved the conditions,

B. , and after the conservators had approved the conditions;

C. , and, after the conservators had approved the conditions

D. , and, after the conservators had approved the conditions,

QUESTION 16 • TRANSITIONS

Read the whole passage. Find one clue before you choose an answer.

READ THE TEXT

An engineer designing a concert hall initially assumed that thicker wall panels would reduce all unwanted echoes. Tests showed that the panels absorbed high-frequency sound but left low-frequency reverberation nearly unchanged. The team _____ added tuned resonators specifically designed to absorb lower frequencies.

THE QUESTION

Which transition most logically completes the text?

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

A. nevertheless

B. instead

C. consequently

D. similarly

ANSWER KEY

Try all 16 questions before checking. A correct guess still needs a clear reason.

QUESTION 01 C	QUESTION 02 C	QUESTION 03 C	QUESTION 04 B
QUESTION 05 D	QUESTION 06 C	QUESTION 07 D	QUESTION 08 D
QUESTION 09 B	QUESTION 10 A	QUESTION 11 D	QUESTION 12 C
QUESTION 13 A	QUESTION 14 B	QUESTION 15 D	QUESTION 16 C

If you missed a question, do not only read the letter. Go to its full explanation. Find the evidence, read why the wrong options fail, and try to explain the strategy in your own words.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 01

WORDS IN CONTEXT • RIGHT ANSWER: C

1. FIND THE CLUE

The account gives FINNEAS credit, BUT it says the key idea was already in Eilish's melody.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Circumscribe means LIMIT. The account does not remove his work; it limits how independent his creative role seems.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: corroborate = prove; it does not prove his independence.

B: overstate = exaggerate; the account makes his role LESS independent.

D: contextualize = give background; this is weaker than actually limiting the role.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

When you see "without omitting," the writer still gives credit. But the rest of the text puts a LIMIT on that credit.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 02

WORDS IN CONTEXT • RIGHT ANSWER: C

1. FIND THE CLUE

The memorial shows a victory march, YET it also shows pain and danger.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Qualify means to add a limit or exception to an idea. The memorial honors the soldiers AND reminds us that service is hard. It does not completely reject the honor.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: repudiate means reject completely; too strong.

B: substantiate means prove or support; the hardship imagery adds a complication.

D: epitomize means be the perfect example; the monument includes two different sides.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

The SAT loves the difference between PARTLY CHANGE and COMPLETELY REJECT. See "yet"? Read both sides.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 03

GRAPH EVIDENCE • RIGHT ANSWER: C

1. FIND THE CLUE

The claim says that looking only at the first and last years hides how HIGH some industries reached in 2015.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

The graph shows start < 2020 < 2015 for automobiles (20, 80, 85), textiles (10, 40, 90), and furniture (15, 50, 60). The middle year is higher than the final year.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: About electronics changes, not the hidden peak in several industries.

B: The 2020 ranking is true but does not show what happened in 2015.

D: Comparing the biggest and smallest industries is not the requested rise-and-fall pattern.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

To prove a hidden peak, write three numbers: FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST. The middle must be the largest.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 04

TEXT STRUCTURE • RIGHT ANSWER: B

1. FIND THE CLUE

First: two community observatory examples. Next: the shared idea that local curiosity guides them. Then: university priorities. Last: why priorities differ.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Choice B matches the whole order: two local examples share a rule; then the writer explains a broader contrast between community and university groups.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: University practice does not explain why the two local groups chose different methods.

C: No claim that one approach is scientifically better.

D: Similar equipment does NOT remove differences in priorities.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

For text structure, tell the story in verbs: EXAMPLES → SAME IDEA → DIFFERENCE → EXPLANATION.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 05

SENTENCE FUNCTION • RIGHT ANSWER: D

1. FIND THE CLUE

The first sentence gives familiar lines. The passage then says those lines show only part of how the game tells stories.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

The opening is a hook. It begins with something the reader may know, then moves to a wider explanation of storytelling through exploration.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: The writer never says the familiar lines are less important.

B: The passage does not prove the game's popularity came from its design.

C: The passage does not explain what the quoted dialogue means.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

FUNCTION means why the author PUT a sentence there. Ask what its job is in the WHOLE passage.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 06

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT • RIGHT ANSWER: C

1. FIND THE CLUE

The subject starts with WHETHER. The whole "whether...or..." part is one unresolved question.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Replace the entire long subject with "this issue": "This issue remains a question." That subject is singular, so REMAINS is correct.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: remain matches the plural word "readings," not the complete subject.

B: remaining cannot stand alone as this main verb.

D: have remained is plural and does not agree with the whole subject.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Do not chase the nearest noun. Replace the WHOLE subject clause with "this issue."

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 07

PUNCTUATION • RIGHT ANSWER: D

1. FIND THE CLUE

The main list is: "sculpted," "cast," and "painted." The time phrase "once the material had cured" interrupts the list.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Choice D keeps the parallel list and puts a comma before AND and a comma after the interrupting time clause.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: A semicolon incorrectly divides one list of actions.

B: The semicolon after "cured" breaks the sentence.

C: It starts the extra phrase with a comma but never closes it.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

First read the sentence WITHOUT the extra time phrase: "sculpted, cast, and painted." Then put it back with two commas.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 08

TRANSITIONS • RIGHT ANSWER: D

1. FIND THE CLUE

Both versions finish with the SAME chord, but listeners feel *a* DIFFERENT ending. The writer must explain the difference.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Accordingly means THEREFORE. Since the final chord is the same, the earlier music must help explain why the endings feel different.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: however signals an opposite idea, not *a* conclusion here.

B: for instance signals an example.

C: alternatively signals another possible choice, not *a* result proved by the reasoning.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Say BECAUSE…THEREFORE… in your mind. If that fits, you need *a* RESULT transition.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 09

WORDS IN CONTEXT • RIGHT ANSWER: B

1. FIND THE CLUE

The letters did NOT completely overturn the museum’s story, BUT they changed the strong idea of sudden inspiration.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Temper means SOFTEN or make less strong. Years of planning make the "sudden" story less certain, not totally wrong.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: invalidate means make false; too strong.

C: replicate means copy, not change.

D: dramatize means make more dramatic, the opposite of softening.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Words like "not entirely" signal a middle position: not full agreement, not full rejection.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 10

WORDS IN CONTEXT • RIGHT ANSWER: A

1. FIND THE CLUE

The study examined only TWO coastal cities. It had no information about inland places.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Extrapolate means use what you know to guess what is true BEYOND the studied group. The scientists do not want to make that bigger claim yet.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

B: corroborate means confirm a claim, not extend it to a new place.

C: obscure means hide.

D: attribute means give a cause or quality, not extend the research to new people.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Ask: Does the answer move from STUDIED places to UNSTUDIED places? That is extrapolation.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 11

GRAPH EVIDENCE • RIGHT ANSWER: D

1. FIND THE CLUE

The warning says first and last numbers can HIDE a temporary drop. The graph needs an UP-THEN-DOWN pattern.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

City B went from 15% in 2018 to 70% in 2021, then down to 60% in 2024. It grew overall, but it also declined in the middle-to-end period.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: It shows overall growth only.

B: City A keeps increasing, so no reversal.

C: Comparing City C and City A does not show one city going up and then down.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Whenever the claim says "hide," "conceal," or "temporary reversal," check the middle year.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 12

TEXT STRUCTURE • RIGHT ANSWER: C

1. FIND THE CLUE

Two methods look at only ONE season. Then a new study looks at TEN summers.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Choice C matches the order. The writer describes short-term studies, then explains how a longer study answers a different question: real long-term change or ordinary year-to-year variation.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: The passage says the long study did NOT invalidate the short studies.

B: There is no new technology mentioned.

D: The writer never says bees are falling in every city.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Different methods may answer different questions. A new method does not automatically make the old one bad.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 13

SENTENCE FUNCTION • RIGHT ANSWER: A

1. FIND THE CLUE

The first sentence shows a map with a mountain that is not real. The ending says the mistake is useful to historians.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Choice A matches the writer's turn: what first looks like a mistake becomes valuable evidence of how people shared information in the past.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

B: The passage does not discuss modern travel accounts.

C: The passage says the map is MORE useful historically, not worthless.

D: It does not compare the goals of past and present mapmakers.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Track the writer's change: FIRST IT LOOKS WRONG → LATER IT TEACHES US SOMETHING.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 14

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT • RIGHT ANSWER: B

1. FIND THE CLUE

The subject is the entire "That the ancient texts contain contradictory dates..." clause.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Replace the subject with "this fact": "This fact MAKES historians cautious." One fact is singular, so the correct verb is makes.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: make agrees with the plural word "texts," but that is not the true subject.

C: making cannot be the main verb here.

D: have made is plural and does not agree.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

THAT + a whole statement can act like one singular subject. Use "this fact" to test it.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 15

PUNCTUATION • RIGHT ANSWER: D

1. FIND THE CLUE

The actions are "scanned, placed, and displayed." The phrase "after the conservators had approved the conditions" interrupts them.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Choice D keeps the list parallel and uses commas on BOTH sides of the extra time clause.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: A semicolon splits one shared-verb list incorrectly.

B: A semicolon breaks the list after the extra words.

C: It is missing the second comma after "conditions."

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

The easy sentence is "scanned, placed, and displayed." Put the interruption back inside two commas.

EXPLAINED: QUESTION 16

TRANSITIONS • RIGHT ANSWER: C

1. FIND THE CLUE

Tests found a problem: thick panels did NOT remove the low-frequency echoes. The team then added a special device to fix them.

2. WHY THE RIGHT ANSWER WORKS

Consequently means AS A RESULT. The new device is a response to the problem discovered during the tests.

3. WHY THE OTHER CHOICES ARE WRONG

A: nevertheless means "even so" and suggests contrast.

B: instead sounds like the team replaced its first step; the text says it added a fix.

D: similarly means "in the same way," not a result.

THE GOUDA GENIUS MOVE

Sentence 2 = PROBLEM. Sentence 3 = RESPONSE. Choose a cause-and-effect transition.

FINAL 2-MINUTE REVIEW

One final check before the Digital SAT. Keep it simple. Follow the evidence.

WORDS IN CONTEXT

Look at the choices first. Check strong vs. weak meaning. Find one clue in the text.

GRAPH QUESTIONS

Read the title and labels. Check start, middle, end. Is the evidence for the EXACT claim?

STRUCTURE

Say the job of each section in order. Do not choose an answer that changes the sequence.

SENTENCE FUNCTION

Ask why this sentence appears in the whole text, not only what the sentence says.

FINAL REVIEW: DO NOT PANIC

Last-minute checklist, part 2.

SUBJECT-VERB

For a long THAT/WHETHER clause, try "this fact" or "this issue" to find the verb.

PUNCTUATION

Read the basic sentence first. Put interrupting words between matching commas.

TRANSITIONS

Name the link: difference, example, addition, or result.

BEFORE YOU CLICK

Can you point to a specific text clue, graph value, or grammar rule? If yes, move on!

YOU GOT THIS, GOUDA GENIUS!