plainprep

FREE · SAT SELF-CHECK

Find Your Level

47 questions that show what you already know, topic by topic, and exactly where to start. Starting from zero is fine: this is made for you.

25 Reading and Writing | 22 Math | Answer key | Scoring sheet | Study plan

A self-check written by plainprep: original questions, not real SAT questions, and not a score predictor. plainprep is an independent project and is not affiliated with or endorsed by College Board. SAT is a registered trademark of College Board.

How to use this check

1 · Answer
Choose the best answer. If you do not know, mark "?" on the answer sheet. Do not guess.

2 · Score
Check your answers on one page. You get your level and a list of gaps.

3 · Plan
Each gap points to exact chapters and pages in our PDFs. Start with the gaps marked "Start here".

- Take one section or both. There is no strict timer. Reading and Writing usually takes about 30 minutes and Math about 35.
- For Math, a calculator is allowed. The questions can be solved without one.
- All Math questions are multiple choice. The real test also has questions where you type the answer.
- Questions get harder inside each topic. Do not worry if the last ones in a topic feel hard.
- Do not look at the answers until you finish the section you are working on.

What is inside

TOPIC AREA	QUESTIONS HERE	SHARE OF THE REAL TEST
Reading and Writing		
Craft and Structure	7	28%
Information and Ideas	6	26%
Standard English Conventions	7	26%
Expression of Ideas	5	20%
Math		
Algebra	7	35%
Advanced Math	7	35%
Problem-Solving and Data Analysis	4	15%
Geometry and Trigonometry	4	15%

The questions follow the topic areas of the Digital SAT in about the same proportions. Source for the topic areas and shares: College Board's Digital SAT test specifications.

Also free online: you can take this same check on the plainprep website, where it is scored for you: plainprepsat.com/level.html.

Reading and Writing

25 questions

1 CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

> Although the museum's collection is _____, with only a few dozen pieces on display, it attracts visitors from around the world because nearly every piece is rare.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) sizable
(B) endless
(C) modest
(D) careless

2 CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

> In her review, the critic called the novelist's first book "tentative." The sentences, she explained, feel cautious, as if the writer were unsure whether readers would follow. Her later novels, by contrast, are bold and confident.

As used in the text, what does the word "tentative" most nearly mean?

(A) Hesitant
(B) Temporary
(C) Careless
(D) Unfinished

3 CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

> The mayor's statement was deliberately _____: it sounded like a promise to lower taxes, but it committed the city to nothing specific.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) belated
(B) candid
(C) emphatic
(D) equivocal

4 CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

> Octopuses are famous for solving problems. In one well-known experiment, an octopus unscrewed the lid of a jar to reach a crab inside. In another, octopuses learned to find their way through a simple maze. Some researchers say such behavior shows real intelligence; others caution that it may be only trial and error.

Which choice best describes the overall structure of the text?

(A) It describes a problem and then explains how scientists solved it.

(B) It makes a claim, gives two examples, and then notes a disagreement about what the examples show.

(C) It tells a story in the order the events happened.

(D) It compares two animals and decides which is smarter.

5 CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

> Economists often claim that raising the minimum wage will reduce hiring. In one study of neighboring counties, however, researchers found no such decline. That finding does not settle the debate, but it suggests that the relationship between wages and hiring is more complicated than the standard claim assumes.

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

(A) It gives a personal story that illustrates the claim.

(B) It defines a technical term used later in the text.

(C) It offers evidence that challenges a common claim.

(D) It restates the claim in simpler language.

6 CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

> **Text 1**
> Some city planners argue that rental electric scooters make cities safer. Each scooter trip, they note, replaces a car trip, which means less traffic and less pollution.

> **Text 2**
> A recent survey of hospital emergency rooms found that scooter injuries have risen sharply since rental programs began. The authors say cities should weigh these injuries against any benefit from reduced car use.

Based on the texts, how would the authors of Text 2 most likely respond to the argument in Text 1?

(A) They would accept that scooters may reduce car use but argue that the injuries must also be counted.

(B) They would deny that scooters have ever replaced a car trip.

(C) They would argue that pollution is not a serious problem in cities.

(D) They would agree that scooters have made cities safer.

7 CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Text 1
Historians have long credited the invention of the printing press with driving the Reformation, because it let reformers spread their ideas quickly and cheaply.

Text 2
The printing press mattered, but a growing number of historians stress that reform ideas were already circulating in sermons and handwritten pamphlets. The press, they argue, accelerated a movement that was already under way.

Which choice best describes how Text 2 relates to Text 1?

(A) It shifts to a different topic: the life of the press's inventor.
(B) It rejects Text 1 by arguing that the press played no role in the Reformation.
(C) It repeats Text 1's claim and adds more examples.
(D) It accepts that the press mattered but argues that it sped up a movement that had already begun.

8 INFORMATION AND IDEAS

Honeybees tell each other where to find food with a "waggle dance." The angle of the dance, compared with vertical, shows the direction of the food relative to the sun, and the length of the waggle shows how far to fly. Scientists who decoded the dance were able to predict where bees would forage just by watching the dancers.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

(A) Honeybees depend on the sun more than any other insect does.
(B) Honeybees use a dance that carries information about the direction and distance of food.
(C) Scientists have been unable to decode honeybee communication.
(D) Honeybees dance only when they return to the hive without food.

9 INFORMATION AND IDEAS

For decades, ecologists assumed that predators affect prey mainly by killing them. A growing body of research points to a second effect: the mere presence of a predator can change how prey behave. In one widely discussed example, elk in Yellowstone are thought to spend less time grazing in open valleys where wolves hunt, which may let young trees along streams recover. Some ecologists now argue that such behavioral effects can reshape landscapes as much as killing does.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

(A) Elk numbers in Yellowstone have fallen sharply because of wolves.
(B) Wolves were brought back to Yellowstone to protect young trees.
(C) Predators may shape ecosystems not only by killing prey but also by changing how prey behave.
(D) Ecologists have rejected the idea that predators kill prey.

10 INFORMATION AND IDEAS

A student is writing about sleep and memory. The student makes this claim: "Sleeping after you study helps you remember the material the next day."

Which finding, if true, would most directly support the student's claim?

(A) Students who slept longer on weekends reported better moods.

(B) Students who studied in the morning reported feeling more alert than students who studied at night.

(C) Most students said they prefer studying in the morning.

(D) Students who slept after studying a word list recalled more words the next morning than students who stayed awake for the same period.

11 INFORMATION AND IDEAS

A student is studying how light affects plant growth. The table shows the average growth of bean plants after four weeks.

Light per day (hours)	Average growth (cm)
4	3.1
8	5.8
12	9.4
16	9.5

The student claims that plants grew taller with more light, but only up to a point.

Which choice most effectively uses data from the table to support the student's claim?

(A) Growth rose from 3.1 cm at 4 hours of light to 9.4 cm at 12 hours, but rose only to 9.5 cm at 16 hours.

(B) Plants given 4 hours of light grew an average of 3.1 cm.

(C) Plants given 16 hours of light grew the most.

(D) Growth was measured after four weeks for every group.

12 INFORMATION AND IDEAS

Marcus had planned to spend Saturday hiking. But when he woke up, thick fog covered the valley and a steady drizzle had started. He looked out the window for a moment, put his hiking boots back in the closet, and texted his friend: "Rain check on the trail? Come over and play cards instead."

Which choice is best supported by the text?

(A) Marcus does not enjoy hiking.

(B) Marcus changed his plans because of the weather.

(C) Marcus has never hiked in the valley before.

(D) Marcus is angry with his friend.

13 INFORMATION AND IDEAS

> Archaeologists excavating a village in southern Spain found that the oldest layer of the site held pottery made from local clay. A later layer held pottery made from a clay found only in North Africa, hundreds of miles away, and the pots were decorated in a style common in North Africa. One archaeologist noted that this change is unlikely to reflect a sudden shift in local taste. "More likely," she said, "_____"

Which choice most logically completes the text?

(A) the oldest pottery was of poorer quality than the later pottery.
(B) the villagers found a better source of local clay.
(C) the villagers began trading with, or were joined by, people from North Africa.
(D) North African potters had never traveled to Spain.

14 STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

> The rain finally _____ the children ran outside to play.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) stopped,
(B) stopped;
(C) stopped
(D) stopped:

15 STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

> Zora Neale Hurston, an author and _____ collected folktales across the American South.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) anthropologist
(B) anthropologist:
(C) anthropologist;
(D) anthropologist,

16 STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

> The recipe calls for just three _____ flour, butter and sugar.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) ingredients:
(B) ingredients,
(C) ingredients;
(D) ingredients

17 STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

> The experiment's first results were _____ however, the team later found that the effect disappeared when the trial was repeated.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) promising,
(B) promising:
(C) promising;
(D) promising

18 STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

> The box of old photographs _____ on the shelf in the attic.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) sit
(B) sits
(C) have sat
(D) are sitting

19 STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

> The two _____ lockers were side by side near the gym.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) students
(B) student's
(C) students'
(D) students's

20 STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

> By the time the rescue team arrived, the hikers _____ lost for nearly two days.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

(A) had been
(B) have been
(C) were
(D) are being

21 EXPRESSION OF IDEAS

> The forecast promised sunshine all weekend. _____ it rained on both days.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) Similarly,
(B) Therefore,
(C) For example,
(D) However,

22 EXPRESSION OF IDEAS

> Elena has practiced the piano every day since she was six. _____ she has won three regional competitions.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) In contrast,
(B) Nevertheless,
(C) As a result,
(D) Meanwhile,

23 EXPRESSION OF IDEAS

> The museum did not close during the renovation. _____ it moved its most popular exhibits to a temporary wing so that visitors could still see them.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

(A) Consequently,
(B) Instead,
(C) Likewise,
(D) Similarly,

24 EXPRESSION OF IDEAS

While researching a topic, a student has taken these notes:

- The Ardmore Public Library opened in 1912.
- Its main reading room has forty tall windows.
- The windows face east.
- As a result, morning sunlight fills the room without electric lamps.

The student wants to explain how the building's design helps readers. Which choice most effectively does this?

(A) Because the reading room of the Ardmore Public Library has forty tall east-facing windows, morning sunlight fills it without electric lamps.

(B) Opened in 1912, the Ardmore Public Library has a main reading room.

(C) The Ardmore Public Library's forty windows are tall, and the library opened in 1912.

(D) The Ardmore Public Library is old, and its windows face east.

25 EXPRESSION OF IDEAS

While researching a topic, a student has taken these notes:

- In 2021, a team led by Dr. Kimi Okafor studied 120 backyard gardens.
- Gardens with more native plant species had more pollinating insects.
- The team counted insects during 15-minute observation periods.

The student wants to summarize the study's method and finding for an audience that has not heard of it. Which choice most effectively does this?

(A) Dr. Kimi Okafor led a study in 2021 about backyard gardens and insects.

(B) Gardens with native plants have more pollinators, which are insects.

(C) In 2021, a team counted insects in gardens for 15 minutes.

(D) A team led by Dr. Kimi Okafor counted insects in 120 backyard gardens during 15-minute observations and found that gardens with more native plant species had more pollinators.

Math

22 questions · multiple choice

1 ALGEBRA

If 3x + 7 = 28, what is the value of x?

(A) 7
(B) 5
(C) 9
(D) 21

2 ALGEBRA

A taxi company charges a flat fee of $4 plus $2.50 for each mile. A ride costs $24 in total. How many miles was the ride?

(A) 6
(B) 8
(C) 9.6
(D) 11.2

3 ALGEBRA

For which values of x is −2(x − 3) > 10?

(A) $x > -2$
(B) $x > 8$
(C) $x < -8$
(D) $x < -2$

4 ALGEBRA

The function f is defined by f(x) = 4x − 5. What is f(6)?

(A) 1
(B) 24
(C) 19
(D) 29

5 ALGEBRA

A line in the xy-plane passes through the points (2, 5) and (6, 17). What is the y-intercept of the line?

(A) 1
(B) −1
(C) 3
(D) 5

6 ALGEBRA

$x + y = 10$

$x - y = 2$

What is the value of x in the solution to the system of equations above?

(A) 4

(B) 12

(C) 8

(D) 6

7 ALGEBRA

A school sold 120 tickets to a play. Adult tickets cost $8 and student tickets cost $5. The school collected $750 in total. How many student tickets were sold?

(A) 70

(B) 60

(C) 50

(D) 80

8 ADVANCED MATH

Which expression is equivalent to $3(x + 4) - 2x$?

(A) $x + 4$

(B) $5x + 4$

(C) $x + 12$

(D) $5x + 12$

9 ADVANCED MATH

Which expression is equivalent to $(3x^2 + 5x - 2)/(x + 2)$, where $x \neq -2$?

(A) $3x + 1$

(B) $3x - 1$

(C) $3x + 2$

(D) $3x^2 + 3x$

10 ADVANCED MATH

How many real solutions does the equation $x^2 = 36$ have?

(A) 2

(B) 1

(C) 0

(D) 4

11 ADVANCED MATH

What is the sum of the solutions to $x^2 - 5x + 6 = 0$?

(A) −5
(B) 1
(C) 6
(D) 5

12 ADVANCED MATH

The graphs of $y = x^2 - 4$ and $y = x + 2$ intersect at two points. What is the sum of the x-coordinates of the two points?

(A) −6
(B) −1
(C) 1
(D) 5

13 ADVANCED MATH

A population of bacteria doubles every 3 hours. There are 500 bacteria at the start. Which function gives the number of bacteria after t hours?

(A) $500 \cdot 2^{t/3}$
(B) $500 \cdot 2^{3t}$
(C) $500 \cdot 3^{t/2}$
(D) $500 + 2t$

14 ADVANCED MATH

The function $h(t) = -16t^2 + 64t + 5$ gives the height, in feet, of a ball t seconds after it is thrown. What is the maximum height of the ball?

(A) 5
(B) 53
(C) 69
(D) 64

15 PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DATA ANALYSIS

A recipe uses 3 cups of flour for every 2 cups of sugar. How many cups of flour are needed for 10 cups of sugar?

(A) 7
(B) 15
(C) 13
(D) 20

16 PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DATA ANALYSIS

A store lowers the price of a jacket by 20%. A week later it raises the sale price by 20%. The final price is what percent of the original price?

(A) 80%
(B) 104%
(C) 100%
(D) 96%

17 PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DATA ANALYSIS

Consider the data set 2, 5, 5, 8, 20. Which statement about the data set is true?

(A) The mean and the median are equal.
(B) The mean is less than the median.
(C) The mean is greater than the median.
(D) The mean is 5 because 5 appears twice.

18 PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DATA ANALYSIS

A survey asked 100 students whether they play a sport and whether they play a musical instrument.

	Plays an instrument	Does not	Total
Plays a sport	25	15	40
Does not play a sport	20	40	60
Total	45	55	100

One student who plays an instrument is chosen at random. What is the probability that this student also plays a sport?

(A) 5/9
(B) 9/20
(C) 5/8
(D) 1/4

19 GEOMETRY AND TRIGONOMETRY

In triangle ABC, the measure of angle A is 50° and the measure of angle B is 60°. What is the measure of angle C?

(A) 60°
(B) 80°
(C) 70°
(D) 110°

20 GEOMETRY AND TRIGONOMETRY

A cylindrical can with a radius of 3 inches is filled with water to a depth of 8 inches. All of the water is poured into an empty rectangular box with a 6-inch by 4-inch base. How many inches deep is the water in the box?

(A) 3
(B) 9π
(C) 6π
(D) 3π

21 GEOMETRY AND TRIGONOMETRY

In right triangle ABC, the right angle is at C, AC = 8 and BC = 15. What is the value of sin A?

(A) 15/17
(B) 8/17
(C) 15/8
(D) 8/15

22 GEOMETRY AND TRIGONOMETRY

A circle in the xy-plane is given by $x^2 + y^2 - 4x + 6y - 12 = 0$. What are the center and the radius of the circle?

(A) Center (−2, 3), radius 5
(B) Center (2, −3), radius 5
(C) Center (2, −3), radius 25
(D) Center (2, −3), radius √12

Answer sheet

Fill in one circle per question. If you are not sure, fill the dashed circle **?** instead of guessing. That is useful information.

Reading and Writing

R1	A	B	C	D	?	**R2**	A	B	C	D	?
R3	A	B	C	D	?	**R4**	A	B	C	D	?
R5	A	B	C	D	?	**R6**	A	B	C	D	?
R7	A	B	C	D	?	**R8**	A	B	C	D	?
R9	A	B	C	D	?	**R10**	A	B	C	D	?
R11	A	B	C	D	?	**R12**	A	B	C	D	?
R13	A	B	C	D	?	**R14**	A	B	C	D	?
R15	A	B	C	D	?	**R16**	A	B	C	D	?
R17	A	B	C	D	?	**R18**	A	B	C	D	?
R19	A	B	C	D	?	**R20**	A	B	C	D	?
R21	A	B	C	D	?	**R22**	A	B	C	D	?
R23	A	B	C	D	?	**R24**	A	B	C	D	?
R25	A	B	C	D	?						

Math

M1	A	B	C	D	?	**M2**	A	B	C	D	?
M3	A	B	C	D	?	**M4**	A	B	C	D	?
M5	A	B	C	D	?	**M6**	A	B	C	D	?
M7	A	B	C	D	?	**M8**	A	B	C	D	?
M9	A	B	C	D	?	**M10**	A	B	C	D	?
M11	A	B	C	D	?	**M12**	A	B	C	D	?
M13	A	B	C	D	?	**M14**	A	B	C	D	?
M15	A	B	C	D	?	**M16**	A	B	C	D	?
M17	A	B	C	D	?	**M18**	A	B	C	D	?
M19	A	B	C	D	?	**M20**	A	B	C	D	?
M21	A	B	C	D	?	**M22**	A	B	C	D	?

STEP 1 OF 3

Check your answers and get your level

Put your answer sheet next to this page. In each row, count how many you got right, then multiply. A question you left as "?" or got wrong counts as 0.

Reading and Writing

WORTH	CORRECT ANSWERS	YOUR COUNT
1 point each	R1 **C** · R4 **B** · R8 **B** · R10 **D** · R12 **B** · R14 **B** · R18 **B** · R21 **D**	☐ right × 1 = ☐
2 points each	R2 **A** · R5 **C** · R6 **A** · R9 **C** · R11 **A** · R15 **D** · R16 **A** · R19 **C** · R22 **C** · R24 **A**	☐ right × 2 = ☐
3 points each	R3 **D** · R7 **D** · R13 **C** · R17 **C** · R20 **A** · R23 **B** · R25 **D**	☐ right × 3 = ☐
Your points		☐ of 49

Math

WORTH	CORRECT ANSWERS	YOUR COUNT
1 point each	M1 **A** · M4 **C** · M6 **D** · M8 **C** · M10 **A** · M15 **B** · M19 **C**	☐ right × 1 = ☐
2 points each	M2 **B** · M11 **D** · M13 **A** · M16 **D** · M17 **C** · M21 **A**	☐ right × 2 = ☐
3 points each	M3 **D** · M5 **B** · M7 **A** · M9 **B** · M12 **C** · M14 **C** · M18 **A** · M20 **D** · M22 **B**	☐ right × 3 = ☐
Your points		☐ of 46

Your level

Find your points in the table. Took only one section? Use its column. Took both? Add the two totals and use the last column.

LEVEL	READING AND WRITING (OF 49)	MATH (OF 46)	BOTH (OF 95)
1 · Starting out You are at the beginning. That is a good place to start.	0–14	0–13	0–28
2 · Building the base You know some basics. A few clear gaps are holding you back.	15–26	14–25	29–52
3 · Getting solid Most of the basics are in place.	27–39	26–36	53–75
4 · Ready to polish Your base is strong. Hard practice will find the last gaps.	40–49	37–46	76–95

This level describes this check only. It is not a prediction of your SAT score. Want to know why an answer is right? The explanations start on the next page. Read the ones you missed.

Explanations

For every question: the right answer and why. Read the ones you missed first. “If you missed it” tells you where to read about it in the plainprep PDFs.

Reading and Writing

#	SKILL	ANSWER	WHY
R1	Words in Context	**C**	**Modest.** The clue is “only a few dozen pieces”: the collection is small. “Sizable” and “endless” mean large, and “careless” says nothing about size. *Rule: find the clue, predict a word, then match it.*
R2	Words in Context	**A**	**Hesitant.** “Cautious” and “unsure” explain the word, and the later books are “bold and confident,” the opposite. “Temporary” is another meaning of “tentative,” but it does not fit this context. *Rule: the context decides the meaning, not the first definition you know.*
R3	Words in Context	**D**	**Equivocal** means deliberately unclear, open to more than one reading. The statement “sounded like” a promise but promised nothing. “Candid” and “emphatic” describe the opposite, and “belated” means late. *Rule: after a colon, the second half usually explains the missing word.*
R4	Text Structure and Purpose	**B**	**The correct choice** matches each part: claim (famous for solving problems), two examples (jar, maze), and a disagreement (intelligence vs. trial and error). The others describe structures the text never uses. *Rule: label each part of the text before you read the choices.*
R5	Text Structure and Purpose	**C**	**Evidence that challenges the claim.** “However” turns against the first sentence, and the sentence reports a study with a different result. Nothing is defined, no personal story appears, and the claim is not repeated. *Rule: a word like “however” tells you the sentence pushes back.*
R6	Cross-Text Connections	**A**	**The correct choice.** Text 2 does not attack the car-use benefit; it says to “weigh” the injuries against it. The other choices say things Text 2 never says. *Rule: decide whether Text 2 agrees, adds, qualifies or rejects Text 1.*
R7	Cross-Text Connections	**D**	**It qualifies Text 1.** “The printing press mattered” shows Text 2 does not reject Text 1, and “accelerated a movement that was already under way” limits how much credit the press gets. *Rule: “qualifies” is different from “rejects”: look for what Text 2 still accepts.*
R8	Central Ideas and Details	**B**	**The correct choice** covers the whole passage. The other choices are unsupported, contradicted (scientists did decode the dance), or invented. *Rule: the main idea covers the whole passage, not one detail.*
R9	Central Ideas and Details	**C**	**The correct choice.** The passage adds a “second effect” to the old view; it does not replace it (so “ecologists rejected” is wrong), and it never says why wolves were returned or that elk numbers fell. *Rule: be careful with choices that are about the topic but not about the point.*
R10	Command of Evidence	**D**	**The correct choice** compares sleeping and not sleeping after studying, and measures memory the next day: exactly the claim. The others are about alertness, preference and mood. *Rule: the evidence must match every part of the claim.*

#	SKILL	ANSWER	WHY
R11	Command of Evidence	**A**	**The correct choice** shows both parts of the claim: a big rise from 4 to 12 hours and almost no rise from 12 to 16. “Grew the most” is true but misses “only up to a point.” *Rule: use numbers that show the whole claim, including its limit.*
R12	Inferences	**B**	**The correct choice** is stated almost directly: fog and drizzle, boots put away, new plan. The other choices guess at feelings or history the text never gives. *Rule: choose what the text supports, not what could be true.*
R13	Inferences	**C**	**The correct choice** explains both clues: clay that comes only from North Africa and a North African style. A “better local clay” cannot explain imported clay, quality is not discussed, and “North African potters never traveled to Spain” goes against the evidence. *Rule: the best inference explains all the clues.*
R14	Boundaries (punctuation)	**B**	**stopped;** Both sides are complete sentences. A comma alone cannot join them (comma splice) and no punctuation makes a run-on. A colon needs the second part to explain the first. A semicolon joins two related sentences. *Rule: complete sentence ; complete sentence.* **If you missed it:** Punctuation Card · Ch. 2 Joining Two Sentences, pp. 5–7
R15	Boundaries (punctuation)	**D**	**anthropologist,** “an author and anthropologist” is extra information that began with a comma, so it must end with a comma. Without the second comma, the phrase is left open. *Rule: extra information needs a comma on both sides.* **If you missed it:** Punctuation Card · Ch. 6 Extra Information, pp. 12–14
R16	Boundaries (punctuation)	**A**	**ingredients:** A complete sentence followed by a list that names the items takes a colon. A semicolon needs a complete sentence on both sides, and the list is not one. *Rule: complete sentence : list or explanation.* **If you missed it:** Punctuation Card · Ch. 4 Colons & Dashes, pp. 9–10
R17	Boundaries (punctuation)	**C**	**promising;** “However” is not a conjunction, so it cannot join two sentences with a comma. Put a semicolon before it and a comma after it. *Rule: ; however , = a safe way to join two sentences.* **If you missed it:** Punctuation Card · Ch. 3 Semicolons, pp. 7–8
R18	Form, Structure and Sense (grammar)	**B**	**sits.** The subject is “box,” not “photographs.” “Of old photographs” is only a description, so the verb is singular. *Rule: cross out the “of ...” phrase to find the subject.* **If you missed it:** Punctuation Card · Ch. 9 Subject–Verb Agreement, pp. 17–19
R19	Form, Structure and Sense (grammar)	**C**	**students’** “Two” shows there is more than one student, and the lockers belong to them: plural possessive, with the apostrophe after the s. *Rule: plural noun + s, then the apostrophe.* **If you missed it:** Punctuation Card · Ch. 8 Apostrophes & Possessives, pp. 16–17
R20	Form, Structure and Sense (grammar)	**A**	**had been** Two past moments are in the sentence: being lost came before the arrival. The earlier action takes the past perfect (had + verb). *Rule: “by the time ... arrived” + earlier action = had + verb.* **If you missed it:** Punctuation Card · Ch. 10 Verb Tense & Forms, pp. 19–21

#	SKILL	ANSWER	WHY
R21	Transitions	**D**	**However,** The second sentence is the opposite of what was promised: contrast. *Rule: name the relationship, then pick the word.* **If you missed it:** Transitions Card · Ch. 2 Contrast & Concession, pp. 5–8
R22	Transitions	**C**	**As a result,** Years of practice lead to wins: cause and effect. "In contrast" and "nevertheless" signal opposition, and "meanwhile" signals a separate event at the same time. *Rule: practice → wins = result.* **If you missed it:** Transitions Card · Ch. 3 Result & Reason, pp. 8–10
R23	Transitions	**B**	**Instead,** The museum did one thing (closing) and chose another (moving exhibits). "Consequently" suggests the first sentence caused the second; "likewise" and "similarly" mean the two are alike. *Rule: "not X. Instead, Y."* **If you missed it:** Transitions Card · Ch. 2 Contrast & Concession, pp. 5–8
R24	Rhetorical Synthesis	**A**	**The correct choice** connects the design (forty tall east-facing windows) to the benefit (morning light without lamps). The others use notes that do not meet the goal. *Rule: start from the goal, then pick the notes it needs.*
R25	Rhetorical Synthesis	**D**	**The correct choice** gives the method (counting insects in 120 gardens, 15-minute observations) and the finding. The others leave out the finding, the method, or who and what was studied. *Rule: check the goal for every piece it asks for.*

Math

#	SKILL	ANSWER	WHY
M1	Linear equations and inequalities	**A**	Subtract 7: 3x = 21. Divide by 3: x = 7. *Rule: undo the operations in reverse order.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 2 Linear Equations, pp. 9–13
M2	Linear equations and inequalities	**B**	4 + 2.5m = 24, so 2.5m = 20 and m = 8. (9.6 comes from forgetting the $4 fee; 11.2 from adding it instead of subtracting.) *Rule: flat fee + rate × amount = total.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 2 Linear Equations, pp. 9–13
M3	Linear equations and inequalities	**D**	Divide both sides by −2 and flip the sign: x − 3 < −5, so x < −2. Test x = −3: −2(−6) = 12, which is greater than 10. *Rule: multiplying or dividing by a negative flips the inequality.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 3 Inequalities & Absolute Value, pp. 14–17
M4	Linear functions	**C**	Replace x with 6: 4(6) − 5 = 24 − 5 = 19. *Rule: f(6) means "put 6 where x is."* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 7 Functions & Polynomials, pp. 31–34
M5	Linear functions	**B**	Slope = (17 − 5)/(6 − 2) = 3. Use y = 3x + b with (2, 5): 5 = 6 + b, so b = −1. *Rule: find the slope first, then the intercept.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 2 Linear Equations, pp. 9–13
M6	Systems of linear equations	**D**	Add the equations: 2x = 12, so x = 6 (and y = 4). *Rule: add the equations when the y terms are opposites.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 2 Linear Equations, pp. 11–13
M7	Systems of linear equations	**A**	Let a = adult and s = student tickets. a + s = 120 and 8a + 5s = 750. Substitute a = 120 − s: 960 − 8s + 5s = 750, so s = 70. Check: 50(8) + 70(5) = 750. *Rule: two unknowns need two equations.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 2 Linear Equations, pp. 11–13
M8	Equivalent expressions	**C**	Distribute: 3x + 12 − 2x = x + 12. *Rule: multiply the bracket by every term, then combine like terms.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 8 Polynomials 2, pp. 35–38

#	SKILL	ANSWER	WHY
M9	Equivalent expressions	**B**	Factor the top: $3x^2 + 5x - 2 = (3x - 1)(x + 2)$. Cancel $(x + 2)$: the result is $3x - 1$. *Rule: factor, then cancel the common factor.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 9 Functions 2 & Rational Expressions, pp. 39–43
M10	Nonlinear equations and systems	**A**	Both 6 and −6 square to 36, so there are two solutions. *Rule: x^2 = positive number gives a positive and a negative root.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 4 Quadratics & Parabolas, pp. 18–21
M11	Nonlinear equations and systems	**D**	Factor: $(x - 2)(x - 3) = 0$, so the solutions are 2 and 3, and the sum is 5. (6 is their product; −5 is the sign trap.) *Rule: for $x^2 + bx + c$, the sum of the solutions is $-b$.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 4 Quadratics & Parabolas, pp. 18–21
M12	Nonlinear equations and systems	**C**	Set them equal: $x^2 - 4 = x + 2$, so $x^2 - x - 6 = 0$ and $(x - 3)(x + 2) = 0$. The x-coordinates are 3 and −2, and their sum is 1. *Rule: for an intersection, set the two y-expressions equal.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 10 Equation Techniques, pp. 44–46
M13	Nonlinear functions	**A**	Doubling is a factor of 2, and it happens once every 3 hours, so the exponent is t/3. Check t = 3: $500 \cdot 2^1 = 1000$. *Rule: start × factor$^{(time \div period)}$.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 6 Exponential Growth & Percents, pp. 27–30
M14	Nonlinear functions	**C**	The vertex is at $t = -64/(2 \cdot -16) = 2$. Then $h(2) = -64 + 128 + 5 = 69$ feet. (53 is the height at t = 1; 5 is the starting height.) *Rule: a parabola's maximum is at its vertex, $x = -b/2a$.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 4 Quadratics & Parabolas, pp. 18–21
M15	Ratios, rates, percentages and units	**B**	$3/2 = x/10$, so x = 15. (13 comes from adding instead of scaling.) *Rule: keep the same ratio on both sides.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 12 Ratios, Proportions & Special Equations, pp. 50–52

#	SKILL	ANSWER	WHY
M16	Ratios, rates, percentages and units	**D**	Multiply: 0.80 × 1.20 = 0.96, so the final price is 96% of the original. The 20% increase is taken from the smaller sale price, so it does not undo the drop. *Rule: successive percent changes multiply.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 6 Exponential Growth & Percents, pp. 27–30
M17	Data, probability and statistics	**C**	The mean is (2 + 5 + 5 + 8 + 20)/5 = 8 and the median (middle value) is 5. The big value 20 pulls the mean up. "The mean is 5" confuses the mean with the mode. *Rule: an unusually large value raises the mean more than the median.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 11 Mean & Median, pp. 48–49
M18	Data, probability and statistics	**A**	We are told the student plays an instrument, so only the 45 instrument players count. Of them, 25 also play a sport: 25/45 = 5/9. (5/8 uses the sport group as the denominator.) *Rule: for "given that," the denominator is the given group.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 13 Probability & Statistics, pp. 53–55
M19	Area, volume, lines and angles	**C**	The angles of a triangle add up to 180°: 180 − 50 − 60 = 70°. (110° is the sum of A and B.) *Rule: triangle angles total 180°.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 15 Geometry, p. 65
M20	Area, volume, lines and angles	**D**	Water volume = $\pi \cdot 3^2 \cdot 8 = 72\pi$ cubic inches. In the box: $6 \cdot 4 \cdot h = 72\pi$, so $h = 3\pi$ inches. *Rule: the volume stays the same when the shape changes.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 15 Geometry, pp. 65–66
M21	Right triangles, trigonometry and circles	**A**	The hypotenuse is $\sqrt{(8^2 + 15^2)} = 17$. Sine is opposite over hypotenuse; the side opposite angle A is BC = 15, so sin A = 15/17. *Rule: SOH: sine = opposite ÷ hypotenuse.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 16 Trigonometry, pp. 73–74
M22	Right triangles, trigonometry and circles	**B**	Complete the square: $(x - 2)^2 - 4 + (y + 3)^2 - 9 - 12 = 0$, so $(x - 2)^2 + (y + 3)^2 = 25$. Center (2, −3), radius $\sqrt{25} = 5$. *Rule: $(x - h)^2 + (y - k)^2 = r^2$: the center signs flip, and r is the square root.* **If you missed it:** Math Formula Card · Ch. 15 Geometry, pp. 67–68

STEP 2 OF 3

Find your gaps

Every skill has 2 to 4 questions. Count how many of them you got right and write the number in the box. Then find that number in the same row: the column tells you where you stand.

SKILL	QUESTIONS	RIGHT	START HERE	BUILDING	SOLID
Reading and Writing					
Words in Context	R1, R2, R3	☐ of 3	0–1	2	3
Text Structure and Purpose	R4, R5	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Cross-Text Connections	R6, R7	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Central Ideas and Details	R8, R9	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Command of Evidence	R10, R11	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Inferences	R12, R13	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Boundaries (punctuation)	R14, R15, R16, R17	☐ of 4	0–1	2–3	4
Form, Structure and Sense (grammar)	R18, R19, R20	☐ of 3	0–1	2	3
Transitions	R21, R22, R23	☐ of 3	0–1	2	3
Rhetorical Synthesis	R24, R25	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Math					
Linear equations and inequalities	M1, M2, M3	☐ of 3	0–1	2	3
Linear functions	M4, M5	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Systems of linear equations	M6, M7	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Equivalent expressions	M8, M9	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Nonlinear equations and systems	M10, M11, M12	☐ of 3	0–1	2	3
Nonlinear functions	M13, M14	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Ratios, rates, percentages and units	M15, M16	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Data, probability and statistics	M17, M18	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Area, volume, lines and angles	M19, M20	☐ of 2	0	1	2
Right triangles, trigonometry and circles	M21, M22	☐ of 2	0	1	2

What the columns mean. Start here: this skill is a gap. Work on it first. **Building:** you have some of it. **Solid:** fine for now. Write down your "Start here" skills: that is your study list for Step 3.

STEP 3 OF 3

Your plan

1. **Pick your "Start here" skills.** Work on up to three at a time. If you have more, begin with the skills that carry the most weight on the real test: Algebra and Advanced Math (35% each), then Craft and Structure (28%), then the rest.
2. **Find each skill below and do its lines in order:** read the chapter, try the questions, then practice.
3. **Check again later.** After you have worked through your skills, retake this check on the plainprep website, where it is scored for you.

Fastest, free is my own card or guide for that skill: where I made one, it is the quickest way to learn it. Six Reading and Writing skills have no card, on purpose. They are learned by reading and practice, so start with Khan Academy. **Free:** the cards, the 100-word guides, Khan Academy, College Board. **Paid:** the question banks. "+3 more" means more chapters in the card's contents. Page numbers are PDF pages (page 1 is the cover).

SKILL	WHAT TO DO
Reading and Writing	
Words in Context	Cover the blank and predict a word from the clues in the sentence before you read the choices. Wrong choices are often real words that fit the topic but not the clue. **Fastest, free** — **100 Essential SAT Words**: Sets 1–5 (20 words each, with a self-test and practice) (pp. 3–27) · Confusable pairs (pp. 28–29) · +1 more **Also** — My study notes (website)
Text Structure and Purpose	Ask what each sentence does (claims, gives an example, contrasts, explains), not only what it says. Name the job of each sentence in two or three words. **Learn, free** — Khan Academy: Digital SAT Reading and Writing course · My study notes (website) **Practice, free** — College Board Question Bank, filter by skill
Cross-Text Connections	Sum up Text 1 in one line. Then ask what Text 2 does to it: agrees, adds to it, qualifies it, or rejects it. **Learn, free** — Khan Academy: Digital SAT Reading and Writing course · My study notes (website) **Practice, free** — College Board Question Bank, filter by skill
Central Ideas and Details	Look for the point the whole passage supports, not a single detail. Wrong main-idea choices are often true but too narrow. **Learn, free** — Khan Academy: Digital SAT Reading and Writing course · My study notes (website) **Practice, free** — College Board Question Bank, filter by skill
Command of Evidence	Reread the claim first. The right choice does not just share the topic: it proves the exact claim, including limits like "only" or "up to a point". **Learn, free** — Khan Academy: Digital SAT Reading and Writing course · My study notes (website) **Practice, free** — College Board Question Bank, filter by skill
Inferences	The answer must follow from the text, not from your opinion. Choose what the text forces you to accept, and avoid choices that go further than the passage. **Learn, free** — Khan Academy: Digital SAT Reading and Writing course · My study notes (website) **Practice, free** — College Board Question Bank, filter by skill

Boundaries (punctuation)	Find the complete sentences first (a subject and a verb that can stand alone). Then pick the punctuation that matches how they connect: period, semicolon, comma + FANBOYS word, colon or dash. **Fastest, free** — Punctuation Card: Ch. 1 Basic Terms (p. 4) · Ch. 2 Joining Two Sentences (pp. 5–7) · +5 more | Transitions Card: Ch. 8 Punctuation Around Connectors (pp. 17–19) **Try it, free** — Punctuation Card: questions 1–10 (p. 26) · answers pp. 27–28 **Practice, $3.99** — Punctuation & Grammar Bank: Ch. 2 Joining Two Sentences, questions 1–36 (pp. 5–9) · +4 more | Transitions & Connectors Bank: Ch. 8 Punctuation Around Connectors, questions 163–192 (pp. 30–34)
Form, Structure and Sense (grammar)	Find the subject before you choose the verb, match every pronoun to its noun, and let the time clues decide the tense. **Fastest, free** — Punctuation Card: Ch. 7 Participles & Modifiers (pp. 14–16) · Ch. 8 Apostrophes & Possessives (pp. 16–17) · +5 more | Transitions Card: Ch. 9 Conjunctions Inside a Sentence (pp. 19–21) · Ch. 10 Relative Connectors (pp. 21–23) **Try it, free** — Punctuation Card: questions 11–22 (pp. 26–27) · answers pp. 27–28 **Practice, $3.99** — Punctuation & Grammar Bank: Ch. 7 Participles & Modifiers, questions 123–150 (pp. 24–28) · +5 more | Transitions & Connectors Bank: Ch. 9 Conjunctions Inside a Sentence, questions 193–222 (pp. 35–38) · +1 more
Transitions	Name the relationship between the two sentences first (contrast, result, addition, example). Then pick the word that says exactly that. **Fastest, free** — Transitions Card: Ch. 1 How Transition Questions Work (pp. 4–5) · Ch. 2 Contrast & Concession (pp. 5–8) · +6 more **Try it, free** — Transitions Card: questions 1–15 (pp. 26–27) · answers p. 28 **Practice, $3.99** — Transitions & Connectors Bank: Ch. 2 Contrast & Concession, questions 1–40 (pp. 5–10) · +5 more
Rhetorical Synthesis	Start from the goal in the question. Cross out choices that leave out a note the goal needs, then choose the one that fits the goal and the audience. **Learn, free** — Khan Academy: Digital SAT Reading and Writing course · My study notes (website) **Practice, free** — College Board Question Bank, filter by skill
Math	
Linear equations and inequalities	Do the same thing to both sides. Flip the inequality sign whenever you multiply or divide by a negative number. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 2 Linear Equations (pp. 9–13) · Ch. 3 Inequalities & Absolute Value (pp. 14–17) · +1 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 1–4 (p. 90) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 1 Linear Equations & Systems, questions 1–50 (pp. 3–12)
Linear functions	In y = mx + b, m is the change per step and b is the starting value. Say what each one means in the story before you answer. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 2 Linear Equations (pp. 9–13) · Ch. 7 Functions & Polynomials (pp. 31–34) · +1 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 1–2, 11–12 (p. 90) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 1 Linear Equations & Systems, questions 1–50 (pp. 3–12)

Systems of linear equations	Add or subtract the equations to cancel one variable, or substitute one equation into the other. Check your answer in both equations. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 2 Linear Equations (pp. 9–13) · Ch. 10 Equation Techniques (pp. 44–47) · +1 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 1–2, 17–18 (pp. 90–91) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 1 Linear Equations & Systems, questions 1–50 (pp. 3–12) · +1 more
Equivalent expressions	Expand or factor, then compare with the choices. With a fraction, factor the top and the bottom and cancel the common factor. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 5 Exponents & Radicals (pp. 22–26) · Ch. 7 Functions & Polynomials (pp. 31–34) · +3 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 7–8, 11–16 (pp. 90–91) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 3 Polynomials & Graph Shifts, questions 101–150 (pp. 22–31) · +1 more
Nonlinear equations and systems	Move everything to one side, then factor or use the quadratic formula. For a line and a parabola, set the two y-expressions equal. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 4 Quadratics & Parabolas (pp. 18–21) · Ch. 10 Equation Techniques (pp. 44–47) · +1 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 5–6, 17–18 (pp. 90–91) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 2 Quadratics & Parabolas, questions 51–100 (pp. 13–21) · +1 more
Nonlinear functions	Know the shapes. Exponential means repeated multiplying; a parabola has a highest or lowest point at its vertex. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 4 Quadratics & Parabolas (pp. 18–21) · Ch. 6 Exponential Growth & Percents (pp. 27–30) · +2 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 5–6, 9–10, 15–16 (pp. 90–91) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 2 Quadratics & Parabolas, questions 51–100 (pp. 13–21) · +2 more
Ratios, rates, percentages and units	Set up a proportion with matching units. For back-to-back percent changes, multiply by (1 ± the percent) once for each step. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 6 Exponential Growth & Percents (pp. 27–30) · Ch. 12 Ratios, Proportions & Special Equations (pp. 50–52) · +2 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 9–10, 21–22, 25–26 (pp. 90–91) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 7 Ratios, Units & Rates, questions 301–350 (pp. 61–71)
Data, probability and statistics	For conditional probability, shrink the group first: the denominator is only the group you are told about. **Fastest, free** — Math Formula Card: Ch. 11 Mean & Median (pp. 48–49) · Ch. 13 Probability & Statistics (pp. 53–61) · +1 more **Try it, free** — Math Formula Card: questions 19–20, 23–24 (p. 91) · answers pp. 92–93 **Later, $7.99** — Math Hard Question Bank: Section 8 Statistics & Probability, questions 351–400 (pp. 72–84)

Area, volume, lines and angles	Draw the figure and label what you know. Angles in a triangle add up to 180°, and volume is base area times height.	
	Fastest, free	Math Formula Card: Ch. 15 Geometry (pp. 65–72) · Ch. 18 Geometry 2 (pp. 79–86) · +1 more
	Try it, free	Math Formula Card: questions 27–28, 33–34 (p. 92) · answers pp. 92–93
	Later, $7.99	Math Hard Question Bank: Section 9 Geometry: Area & Volume, questions 401–450 (pp. 85–98)
Right triangles, trigonometry and circles	SOH-CAH-TOA: sine is opposite over hypotenuse. For a circle, complete the square to reach $(x - h)^2 + (y - k)^2 = r^2$.	
	Fastest, free	Math Formula Card: Ch. 15 Geometry (pp. 65–72) · Ch. 16 Trigonometry (pp. 73–74) · +3 more
	Try it, free	Math Formula Card: questions 27–34 (p. 92) · answers pp. 92–93
	Later, $7.99	Math Hard Question Bank: Section 10 Circles, Trigonometry & Coordinates, questions 451–500 (pp. 99–108)

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