Instructional Practices for the SAT
Essay and Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Sections

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Background

The Statewide ELA SAT Task Force Team developed this document to support students' success on the SAT, and to build the literacy skills that students need for career and college readiness. This document is also part of a larger list of curated SAT resources. These resources focus on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Essay portions of the test, and can be accessed online by visiting this URL: http://bit.ly/GELNSAT.

Our Purpose

This document focuses on classroom practices, embedded across an academic year and across disciplines. We acknowledge the need to explicitly prepare students to navigate the SAT. However, test preparation is only one part of a balanced instructional plan, and so the suggested practices draw from such research-based documents as the Framework for Postsecondary Success in Writing, NCTE's 2016 Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing, and NCTE's 2007 Adolescent Literacy policy research brief. In common across all three documents: *quality instruction*

builds critical literacy skills and dispositions.

The practices listed in this document can be combined with a variety of approaches to literacy instruction. They can also be used with many courses throughout the school day. We have limited the list to four practices, though others may be worthy of attention. In addition, new literacy research could alter or add to the instructional practices recommended here. For these reasons, the practices on this list provide considerable choice for individual districts, schools, and teachers.

The recommended practices should occur throughout the day. They should also be integrated into all disciplines, and not exclusively in an isolated course/block identified as "English Language Arts" or "English." It is important to read this document in relation to the State of Michigan's specific standards for literacy development in science, social studies, and other technical subjects.

The Task Force

This document was developed by the Statewide ELA SAT Task Force, a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators' General Education Leadership Network. MAISA represents Michigan's 56 Intermediate School Districts.

For more information about the new SAT, contact your local ISD. You can find a directory of ISDs online at http://gomaisa.org/directory.

KEY CONSIDERATION

A key consideration for adolescent literacy success: What kind of reader and writer do you hope to create across your course and year?

Practice 1: Explicitly teach critical literacy habits across the disciplines.

Across an academic day, students engage with many different content-laden texts. The practices listed below do not shift learning away from a content-area teacher's ongoing curriculum. Instead, they require teachers to model these strategies within their disciplinary texts.

Teachers:

- ➲ Use comprehension strategies such as think aloud and talking to the text, to support students in making meaning of text
- ➲ Model metacognitive decision-making in reading and writing
- ➲ Name and distinguish the different text structures that authors use in their writing

- ➲ Identify text features, in order to build meaning and analysis
- ➲ Model and practice the process of questioning the author's purpose, style, and content
- ➲ Incorporate collaborative discussion and accountable student talk
- ➲ Model close and critical reading, and provide opportunities for students to practice with feedback

Practice 2: Expose and provide access to content-relevant and authentic texts.

Students encounter disciplinary texts in the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing sections, along with the text excerpt used in the essay prompt. These discipline-based texts are often adapted from authentic primary texts. For example, student readers may be asked to read and analyze an article from a science journal. Here, students will not have embedded reading cues (e.g., focus questions, highlighted key vocabulary, text boxes cuing important information), which so often they find in their classroom textbooks.

Teachers:

- ➲ Use varied types of texts beyond the textbook (e.g., infographics, newspaper articles, blogs, essays, research articles, journals, primary source documents, speeches)
- ➲ Provide daily exposure to texts from multiple disciplines
- ➲ Offer regular opportunities for students to read texts at varied levels, while gathering and comprehending information
- ➲ Choose texts with a variety of voice strengths (i.e., varying points of view and strength of argument)

Practice 3: Develop rhetorical ways of thinking, and rhetorical ways of questioning texts and words within texts.

Moving beyond surface-level comprehension of texts requires the development of rhetorical understanding. Teachers can spur this development for adolescent readers in several ways, including by building readers' habits of analysis of a source's credibility; their consideration of intended audience and purpose; and their reflection on why certain evidence was selected over other possible pieces of evidence.

Teachers:
- Incorporate rhetorical ways of thinking about texts and words within texts
- Incorporate rhetorical ways of asking questions about texts and the choice of words within texts
- Analyze texts from ethos, pathos, and logos lenses
- Explicitly teach vocabulary to support background knowledge of words that cannot be inferred from context (Tier 2 and 3 words), by clearly presenting word meanings and contextual examples and non-examples; and by practicing the use of terms and offering multiple opportunities for review
- Analyze textual structures and why authors chose their structures
- Explicitly teach students to use criteria while determining the validity and reliability of a source, and/or the evidence identified from that source
- Search for evidence to support the author's claim or lack thereof and whether it is effective

Practice 4: Develop a robust approach to writing that ensures frequent cycles of review and revision.

In order to develop strong writing skills, students need many opportunities to write and receive feedback. Students also need opportunities to rewrite, in order to practice recursive writing skills. Students must be exposed to mentor texts and discuss authors' methods to convey their messages.

Students also need opportunities to emulate writing moves that they have studied in mentor texts, paired with timely feedback on their works' overall effectiveness. There are many ways for students to obtain feedback. While the teacher is always an important feedback provider, effective peer-to-peer feedback also leads to deep-level revision. Feedback deserves direct instruction, in order to build effective peer-to-peer feedback practices. By being a peer reviewer, a student practices the language of rhetorical effect.

Teachers:
- Model and think aloud each part of the writing process that students will practice
- Model and practice revision techniques (including how the text sounds)
- Model and practice editing techniques (including how the text looks)
- Use short mentor texts from multiple disciplines, allowing the opportunity to focus on the author's style choices as well as the author's effectiveness
- Have students write frequently, engaging in multiple peer-feedback exchanges across a drafting process
- Emphasize feedback early in the writing process, which increases students' willingness to take on deep-level revision
- Use varied texts beyond the textbook (e.g., infographics, newspaper articles, blogs, essays, research articles, journals, primary source documents, speeches), for research and supporting evidence
- Provide multiple opportunities with scaffolds to practice peer review and feedback for students' writings
- Allow students the opportunity for revision after receiving feedback
- Convene short conferences (30 seconds to five minutes) with students during the robust writing process, in order to provide feedback