**The PSAT – An Overview**

**5 Sections**

* Two 25 minute Critical Reading sections
* Two 25 minute Math sections
* One 30 minute Writing section

**Total Time**: 2 hours, 10 minutes

**Critical Reading:**

Two 25 minute critical reading sections = 48 questions

* + 13 sentence completions (a.k.a. “vocabulary”)
  + 35 Critical Reading questions

**Writing:**

One 30 minute Writing section = 39 questions

* Identifying sentence errors
* Improving sentences
* Improving paragraphs

**Math:**

* 28 Multiple Choice
* 10 Student Responses or Grid-ins

4 Math Categories:

* + Numbers and Operations
  + Algebra and Functions
  + Geometry and Measurement
  + Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability

**Timing:** Move steadily through each section. Do not stress over a difficult question. Move on. Come back to it if you finish the section with time to spare. Do NOT go back to a previous section once you’ve moved on.

**Guessing:** When you can eliminate at least 2 of the 5 choices. Do not guess when you cannot eliminate any of the choices. You are penalized .25 for an incorrect answer; therefore, you should not guess blindly.

Visit the website below and sign up for the SAT question of the day, or just answer some practice questions.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html>

**Sentence Completion**

* Try to fill in missing word(s) **before** looking at choices
* Look for positive/negative connotations
* Look for context clues
* Watch for introductory or connecting words and phrases like "but," "not," "because," etc.
* In sentences with two blanks, make sure the words for **both** blanks make sense in the sentence.
* Use process of elimination (POE)
* Before you mark your answer, read the complete sentence with your choice filled in.

**TIPS:**

* Avoid spending more than 30 seconds per sentence completion.
* It’s the only part of the Critical Reading that goes from easiest to most difficult
* If there are fewer sentence completions, you know there’s more reading to following and vice versa

**SAMPLES OF SENTENCE COMPLETIONS:**

Here are some general hints for answering Sentence Completion questions.

Each sentence below has one or two blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Beneath the sentence are five words or sets of words labeled A through E. Choose the word or set of words that, when inserted in the sentence, best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

1. A discerning publishing agent can ------- promising material from a mass of submissions, separating the good from the bad.

(A) supplant  
(B) dramatize  
(C) finagle  
(D) winnow  
(E) overhaul

2. The practice of storytelling for entertainment and instruction was at one time so widespread that it was virtually --\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-- .

**(A)** rigorous  
**(B)** universal  
**(C)** elevating  
**(D)** uncommon  
**(E)** unknown

3. Although some think the terms "bug" and "insect" are ---- , the former term actually refers to ---- group of insects.

**(A)** parallel . . an identical  
**(B)** precise . . an exact  
**(C)** interchangeable . . a particular  
**(D)** exclusive . . a separate  
**(E)** useful . . a useless

4. The advertised property, which ---- vast and unspoiled stretches, will undoubtedly ---- potential buyers who yearn for seclusion.

**(A)** spans . . interfere with  
**(B)** abuts . . appeal to  
**(C)** overlooks . . infuriate  
**(D)** precludes . . assemble  
**(E)** erodes . . inspire

5. The novel's protagonist, a pearl diver, naïvely expects that the buyers will compete among themselves to pay him the best price for his pearl, but instead they ---- to ---- him.

**(A)** venture . . reward  
**(B)** pretend . . praise  
**(C)** conspire . . reimburse  
**(D)** refuse . . cheat  
**(E)** collude . . swindle

6. The addition of descriptive details to the basic information serves to ---- the book by producing a fuller account.

**(A)** invalidate  
**(B)** objectify  
**(C)** incite  
**(D)** celebrate  
**(E)** enrich