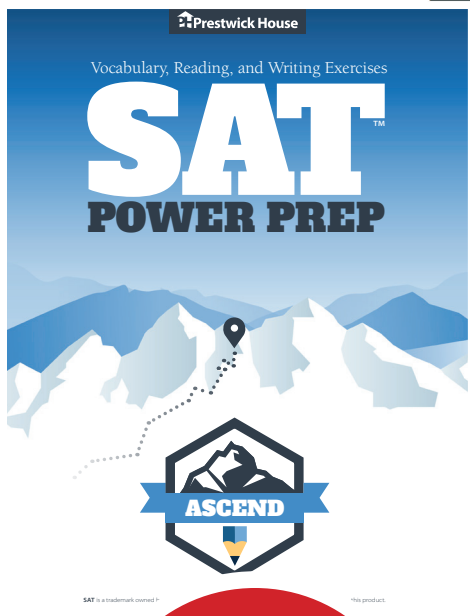




Vocabulary, Reading,
and Writing Exercises
SAT Power Prep

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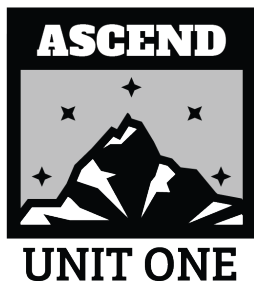
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Reading Test

Each passage or pair of passages, some of which are accompanied by graphics such as maps, charts, or graphs, is followed by a set of questions. Read the passage and then choose the best answer to each of the questions.

Lesson 1

Questions 1–10 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, published 1869, translated 1915.

But for all this, the question remains,—what are the novelists to do with commonplace people, and how are they to be presented to the reader in such a form as to be in the least degree interesting? They cannot be left out altogether, for commonplace people meet one at every turn of life, and to leave them out would be to destroy the whole reality and probability of the story. To fill a novel with typical characters only, or with merely strange and uncommon people, would render the book unreal and improbable, and would very likely destroy the interest. In my opinion, the duty of the novelist is to seek out points of interest and instruction even in the characters of commonplace people.

For instance, when the whole essence of an ordinary person's nature lies in his **perpetual** and unchangeable commonplaceness; and when in spite of all his endeavors to do something out of the common, this person ends, eventually, by remaining in his unbroken line of routine. I think such an individual really does become a type of his own—a type of commonplaceness which will not for the world, if it can help it, be **contented**, but strains and **yearns** to be something original and independent, without the slightest possibility of being so. To this class of commonplace people belong several characters in this novel;—characters which—I admit—I have not drawn very vividly up to now for my reader's benefit.

Such were, for instance, Varvara Ardalionovna Ptitsin, her husband, and her brother, Gania.

30 There is nothing so annoying as to be fairly rich, of a fairly good family, pleasing presence, average education, to be “not stupid,” kind-hearted, and yet to have no talent at all, no originality, not a single idea of one's own—to be, in fact, “just like everyone else.”

35 Of such people there are countless numbers in this world—far more even than appear. They can be divided into two classes as all men can—that is, those of limited intellect, and those who are much cleverer. The former of these classes is the happier.

40 To a commonplace man of limited intellect, for instance, nothing is simpler than to imagine himself an original character, and to revel in that belief without the slightest misgiving.

Many of our young women have thought fit to cut their hair short, put on blue spectacles and call themselves **Nihilists**. By doing this they have been able to persuade themselves, without further trouble, that they have acquired new **convictions** of their own. Some men have but felt some little **qualm** of kindness towards their fellow-men, and the fact has been quite enough to persuade them that they stand alone in the van of enlightenment and that no one has such humanitarian feelings as they. Others have but to read an idea of somebody else's, and they can immediately **assimilate** it and believe that it was a child of their own brain. The “**impudence** of ignorance,” if I may use the expression, is developed to a wonderful extent in such cases;—unlikely as it appears, it is met with at every turn.

This confidence of a stupid man in his own talents has been wonderfully depicted by Gogol in the amazing character of Pirogoff. Pirogoff has not the slightest doubt of his own genius,—nay, of his superiority of genius,—so certain is he of it that he never questions it. How many Pirogoffs have there not been among our writers—scholars, **propagandists**?





Lesson 1 continued:

I say “have been,” but indeed there are plenty of them at this very day.

Our friend, Gania, belonged to the other class—to the “much cleverer” persons, though he was from head
 70 to foot **permeated** and saturated with the longing to be original. This class, as I have said above, is far less happy. For the “clever commonplace” person, though he may possibly imagine himself a man of genius and originality, nonetheless has within his heart the deathless
 75 worm of suspicion and doubt; and this doubt sometimes brings a clever man to despair. (As a rule, however, nothing tragic happens;—his liver becomes a little damaged in the course of time, nothing more serious. Such men do not give up their **aspirations** after
 80 originality without a severe struggle,—and there have been men who, though good fellows in themselves, and even benefactors to humanity, have sunk to the level of **base** criminals for the sake of originality).

Gania was a beginner, as it were, upon this road. A
 85 deep and unchangeable consciousness of his own lack of talent, combined with a vast longing to be able to persuade himself that he was original, had **rankled** in his heart, even from childhood.

He seemed to have been born with **overwrought**
 90 nerves, and in his passionate desire to excel, he was often led to the brink of some rash step; and yet, having resolved upon such a step, when the moment arrived, he invariably proved too sensible to take it. He was ready, in the same way, to do a base action in order to obtain
 95 his wished-for object; and yet, when the moment came to do it, he found that he was too honest for any great baseness. (Not that he objected to acts of petty meanness—he was always ready for them.) He looked with hate and loathing on the poverty and downfall of his
 100 family, and treated his mother with **haughty** contempt, although he knew that his whole future depended on her character and reputation.

1

Choose the answer that best describes the purpose of this passage.

- A) an argument against plain characters
- B) commentary on Nihilists
- C) writing advice from an author
- D) an analysis of Pirogoff’s morality

2

Which phrase from the passage provides the best evidence for your answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 7-11 (“To fill...interest”)
- B) Lines 14-19 (“For instance...routine”)
- C) Lines 24-27 (“To this...benefit”)
- D) Lines 40-43 (“To a commonplace...misgiving”)

3

In paragraph 1, the author implies that the traditional approach to portraying common people is to

- A) ensure they are especially unremarkable.
- B) make the boring characters interesting.
- C) use common characters for main characters.
- D) keep the boring character scenes to a minimum.

4

According to paragraph 2, the trait that makes a common person (character) most interesting is

- A) the character’s ultimate success.
- B) that character’s inability to change.
- C) the knowledge that he or she can change.
- D) knowing that he or she will never change.

5

The author suggests that “commonplace” people can be divided into two classes, and that the happier class can be described as having

- A) more opportunities than the other has.
- B) everything handed to it.
- C) reasons for maintaining the status quo.
- D) less intelligence than the other has.





Lesson 1 continued:

6

Choose the statement most closely paraphrases the sentence in lines 40-43 (“To a...misgiving”).

- A) People of limited intellect are frustrated by it.
- B) Ignorance is bliss.
- C) The simple solution is usually the correct one.
- D) Intellectuals have easier lives.

7

The author suggests that there are three classifications of people of “limited intellect.” Choose the answer that is *not* one of the three classifications.

- A) those who become experts in a subject
- B) those who simply copy the beliefs of others
- C) those whose common feelings lead them to believe they are unique
- D) those who pretend to be something and then begin to believe it

8

As it is used in line 74, *deathless* suggests that a clever person’s despair is

- A) tolerable.
- B) amplified.
- C) permanent.
- D) ancient.

9

As it is used in line 83, the word *base* most nearly means

- A) remarkable.
- B) bitter.
- C) questionable.
- D) evil.

10

The author of the passage would agree with which one of the following statements?

- A) To create a boring character, simply delve deeper into a character’s personality.
- B) There’s no such thing as an uninteresting person.
- C) The most uninteresting character is one smart enough to know that he or she is not special.
- D) The best novels are filled with strange, uncommon characters.



Lesson 1 continued:

Vocabulary: Context Answers

The following sentences contain vocabulary words used in the reading passage. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence. There may be more than one technically correct answer, but one will better exemplify the italicized vocabulary word than the others will.

- 1) Fish that swim _____ live in *perpetual* darkness.
 - A. underneath fishing piers
 - B. in the deepest trenches of the ocean
 - C. in the Pacific Ocean
 - D. around the perimeter of coral reefs
 - E. in the kelp forests of Southern California

- 2) _____, Emily gave a *contented* sigh.
 - A. After scheduling her dentist appointment
 - B. Standing outside in the drizzle
 - C. Reclining by the hotel's pool
 - D. Before starting her speech
 - E. Looking through the jewelry store window

- 3) Walter *yearns* _____ as he sits in the dreary waiting room.
 - A. because of the crying child
 - B. on the cushioned bench
 - C. that the doctor is late
 - D. for the summer breeze
 - E. yet does not complain

- 4) The judge believes _____ does not align with his moral *convictions*.
 - A. telling the truth
 - B. running for mayor
 - C. accepting bribes
 - D. donating to local charities
 - E. taking a day off

- 5) _____, Ben has no *qualms* about copying his friend's essay.
 - A. Afraid of failing the class
 - B. Under the guidance of his friends
 - C. Even though his grades are satisfactory
 - D. Although the paper is due next week
 - E. Despite the threat of punishment

- 6) Because Heather _____, she needed to *assimilate*.
 - A. received detention
 - B. wanted good grades
 - C. did not study for the math exam
 - D. left her textbooks at home
 - E. transferred to a new school

SAT Power Prep: Ascend



Lesson 1 continued:

- 7) Roger spoke with *impudence*, his voice _____.
A. shaking with fear
B. defiant and strong
C. quiet from embarrassment
D. loud and uncertain
E. stern and commanding
- 8) Rain from the heavy storm *permeated* _____.
A. the hard soil
B. the truck's roof
C. my plastic umbrella
D. the backyard deck
E. the large lake
- 9) Since Ricky _____, he has *aspirations* of becoming an actor.
A. understands the basics of movie making
B. has stage fright
C. grew up watching movies
D. did not get the leading role
E. drove his friend to the audition
- 10) Learning _____ is one of the more *base* lessons of mathematics.
A. long division
B. algebra
C. volume and mass
D. addition
E. multiplication
- 11) Lori was clearly *overwrought* when she discovered _____.
A. her pet cat was missing
B. her brother was coming home for Thanksgiving
C. her favorite team won the football tournament
D. she forgot to do the laundry
E. she was chosen as class president
- 12) Jackie's *haughty* remarks _____ her supervisor during the company meeting.
A. amused
B. irritated
C. inspired
D. helped
E. informed



Lesson 1 continued:

Writing Practice

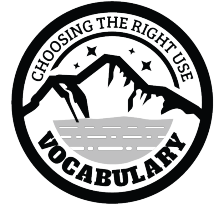
The underlined portion of each sentence possibly contains a flaw related to pronoun use. Select the answer that best corrects the flaw. Select NO CHANGE if the underlined portion is correct.

- 1) If anyone dislikes my music, they can go somewhere else.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. they can goes
 - C. he or she can go
 - D. they go
- 2) The teacher said that either girl could write her answer on the board.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. could write their
 - C. can write their
 - D. write her
- 3) We saw the stars on the badge and remembered that each symbolize a precept of the organization.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. it each symbolizes a precept of the organization
 - C. each symbolizes a precept of the organization
 - D. each of the stars symbolize the organization's precept
- 4) Neither Janet nor Laurie drives their car to school.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. drive her
 - C. drive their
 - D. drives her
- 5) Dad said that if anything is not returned to their proper place, we will be in trouble.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. its
 - C. everything's
 - D. one's
- 6) Party planners praised the decorating committee because it has worked so hard.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. they have worked
 - C. they worked
 - D. it have worked



Lesson 1 continued:

- 7) Every tech company wants to retain their innovative employees.
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. its
 - C. it's
 - D. one's
- 8) Helena confided in her sister that something about their dad's actions seem off.
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. seems
 - C. seem to be
 - D. were seemingly
- 9) When trekking through the desert, a hiker knows that they have to carry a lot of water to stay hydrated.
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. anybody has
 - C. they need
 - D. he or she has
- 10) People who notice the missing number in the puzzle receives a prize.
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. notice the missing numbers in the puzzles receives a prize.
 - C. notice the missing number in the puzzle receive a prize.
 - D. notices the missing number in the puzzle receives a prize.



Lesson 1 continued:

Vocabulary: Choosing the Right Use

The following sentences contain vocabulary words used in the reading passage. Identify the sentence or sentences that use the italicized vocabulary word properly. We have changed the form of some vocabulary words to provide new contexts; for example, some adjectives and verbs have been used as nouns.

- 1)
 - A. In the weeks following his daughter’s accident, Brandon was in a *perpetual* state of worry about her safety.
 - B. The *perpetual* length of the speech allowed the spectators enough time to take photos of all the guest speakers afterwards.
 - C. In the vacuum of space, absent of air to create friction, the planet will revolve around the sun *perpetually*.
 - D. The *perpetual* snowstorm we had yesterday means that school will probably be in session today.

- 2)
 - A. Trudy hoped her ripe and *contented* tomatoes would at least make her a finalist at the county fair competition.
 - B. Even though he had really wanted the promotion, Jared remained *content* with his current position.
 - C. The sun’s rays shone *contentedly* through the clouds.
 - D. After a long day, Janie *contented* herself with a bubble bath.

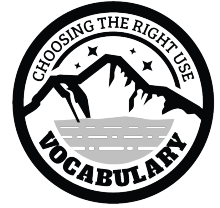
- 3)
 - A. Although he tries to hide it, we all know that Tim *yearns* for a chance to play as the team’s quarterback.
 - B. Courtney takes the *yearning* back roads when she wants to go to Sarah’s house.
 - C. The door creaks loudly whenever it *yearns* open.
 - D. The child cries whenever he is hungry or *yearns* for his mother.

- 4)
 - A. Martin’s *convictions* about standing up for himself faded immediately when he was caught off-guard and forced to open the bank vault at gunpoint.
 - B. After the autopsy, the coroner noted his *conviction* that the death was not accidental.
 - C. Mary believes her neighbors have standing *convictions* against them, as they are very private people.
 - D. Todd’s *convictions* with the Florida summer season led him to buy a house in Alaska.

- 5)
 - A. When the *qualm* between Jeff and Nick became physical, both of them were sent to the principal’s office.
 - B. The mechanic told me he would not be able to fix the *qualms* with my car until next week.
 - C. Because Judy had proven herself able to handle stressful situations, her boss had no *qualms* about increasing her workload.
 - D. The house looks good overall, but potential buyers may voice some *qualms* over the outdated electricity.

- 6)
 - A. Although Ted had never left his home country before, he had no problem *assimilating* into other cultures.
 - B. If you want to do well in the class, you must *assimilate* to the course material.
 - C. Jason thought he had copied Tara’s homework secretly, but the teacher caught the *assimilation* right away.
 - D. If you want to *assimilate* to a new lifestyle, it might be a good idea to do some research about it first.

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Lesson 1 continued:

- 7) A. Lily is a nice girl, but her *impudence* makes it difficult to trust her.
B. I thought I had taken the right precautions, but I guess I was *impudent* to think I could paint my nails without making a mess.
C. Harry thought he could convince his guests to stay if he exhibited some *impudence*.
D. Customers who behave with *impudence* will receive excellent service.
- 8) A. Because someone left the fog machine on all night, our house is in a *permeated* haze.
B. The scent of the roses Jill's husband bought her *permeated* the room.
C. When Tina found out her cookies won first place, she was *permeated* with joy.
D. The teacher taught so well that her love for the subject *permeated* the entire class.
- 9) A. The suddenness of the deer in front of her car surprised Darla so much that she was still *rankled* long after she arrived home.
B. When Bess arrived at work late and *rankled*, her boss called her into his office.
C. *Rankled* by her noisy roommates, Lindsey closed her door and turned on her music.
D. Because Joe had allowed his emotions to *rankle* inside him, he had become bitter and disagreeable.
- 10) A. Everyone could tell by Julie's continuous pacing before the award ceremony that she was *overwrought* with anxiety.
B. The bride was *overwrought* when she realized she fit into her wedding dress.
C. Investigators determined that the bridge had collapsed because it had been *overwrought* by rust.
D. The three cups of coffee did nothing to help the prospective employee's *overwrought* nerves.
- 11) A. Sam's *haughty* attitude at the soup kitchen made her unpopular among the other volunteers.
B. Ned's position as the school's star athlete made him popular, but his peers loved him even more for his *haughty* behavior.
C. Her flirtatious but *haughty* expression sent mixed signals to all the guys at the party.
D. An effective commercial for the ASPCA would have a famous, *haughty* celebrity who is holding a puppy.

Lesson 1 continued:

Synonyms and Antonyms

Match the word with its *antonym*.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1) perpetual | A. calm |
| 2) content | B. politeness |
| 3) yearn | C. short-lived |
| 4) overwrought | D. modest |
| 5) haughty | E. reject |
| 6) impudence | F. displeased |

Match the word with its *synonym*.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 7) assimilate | A. misgiving |
| 8) permeate | B. dream |
| 9) rankle | C. pervade |
| 10) qualm | D. integrate |
| 11) conviction | E. anger |
| 12) aspiration | F. judgment |