



# SAT<sup>®</sup> Practice Essay #2



## ESSAY BOOK

### DIRECTIONS

The essay gives you an opportunity to show how effectively you can read and comprehend a passage and write an essay analyzing the passage. In your essay, you should demonstrate that you have read the passage carefully, present a clear and logical analysis, and use language precisely.

Your essay must be written on the lines provided in your answer booklet; except for the Planning Page of the answer booklet, you will receive no other paper on which to write. You will have enough space if you write on every line, avoid wide margins, and keep your handwriting to a reasonable size. Remember that people who are not familiar with your handwriting will read what you write. Try to write or print so that what you are writing is legible to those readers.

**You have 50 minutes to read the passage and write an essay in response to the prompt provided inside this booklet.**

### REMINDERS:

- Do not write your essay in this booklet. Only what you write on the lined pages of your answer booklet will be evaluated.
- An off-topic essay will not be evaluated.

Practice:  
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This cover is representative of what you'll see on test day.

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As you read the passage below, consider how Leo W. Gerard uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

**Adapted from Leo W. Gerard, “Grading Colleges on Access to the American Dream.” ©2013 by TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. Originally published August 26, 2013.**

- 1 Right now, eager 18-year-olds from across the country are tweeting with bravado photos of their newly postered dorm rooms and scanning with private fear their freshmen class schedules. They’re embarking on a journey to capture their piece of the American Dream. . . .
- 2 To expand access to the dream, President Obama announced . . . that he intends to grade colleges, just as colleges grade students. The U.S. Department of Education will evaluate the affordability of schools based on tuition, scholarships and financial aid. The department will look at outcomes including graduation rates, employment and salaries. Ultimately, Obama would like to reward colleges that earn good grades—those that graduate more students at lower costs. . . . The idea is to restore equal opportunity to attain the American Dream.
- 3 The parents and grandparents of today’s 18-year-olds witnessed diminishing access to the dream. When they were teens, in the 1960s and 1970s, they could buy a year of college with three months’ labor in a factory or mill. Also, a summer in a mill with good union wages and benefits persuaded some that this was the life for them, no college necessary.
- 4 But too many mills are gone now, lost to government’s failure to enforce international trade regulations and to the corporate greed that swapped middle class wages for foreign sweatshop pittance. That means to attain the American Dream, even more youngsters now must get higher education or technical training.
- 5 And now, paying for that additional education is much more difficult. One of those old-time mill jobs—if it were still available—wouldn’t cover a year’s tuition now. Over the past three decades, the average tuition at a public four-year college increased more than 250 percent. Meanwhile, typical family income rose only 16 percent.
- 6 Tuition has risen even faster than health insurance costs. If the current trend continues through 2016, the cost of a public college diploma will have more than doubled in just 15 years.
- 7 Part of the reason for that is dubious expenditures by some schools, including paying coaches and college presidents multi-million dollar salaries and building fancy

dormitories and gymnasiums. But a crucial factor is the withdrawal of state and local support for public institutions—from community colleges and trade schools to state-owned colleges and land grant universities. It dropped 24 percent nationally from 2001 to 2011. Adjusted for inflation, it reached a 25-year low in 2012. . . .

- 8 The result of these cut backs is that governments shifted costs to the 70 percent of students who attend public colleges and universities as tuition skyrocketed.
- 9 For many teenagers, this foreclosed a college degree. It was too daunting to borrow tens of thousands of dollars then graduate into a shaky job market. For other young people, it has meant massive borrowing and debt.
- 10 Just a short time ago in the early 1990s, 45 percent of graduates borrowed money, including from family, banks and the government. Now, the figure is more than 66 percent, and that does not include students who borrow from family. . . .
- 11 Most student debt is to the federal government, which is now owed \$1 trillion. Demos<sup>1</sup> calculates that to be a \$4 trillion lifetime wealth loss for those students. That’s significant both to them and to the economy. They won’t be able to buy as many new cars or refrigerators or infant strollers. So no matter how hard they worked to graduate college and labor on the job, their American Dream is permanently encumbered. In addition, their non-spending impairs the economy. And that diminishes everyone’s American Dream.
- 12 The United States has a long history of accepting education as a public responsibility. Publicly funded colleges and universities gave America teachers, engineers, architects, doctors and lawyers who helped build and care for a strong country. . . . These publicly supported institutions also provided scientists and researchers who discovered cures for dread diseases, put astronauts on the moon and invented the cell phone.
- 13 America cannot afford to return to the days when only the scions of the wealthiest could attend college. The nation is most prosperous when prosperity is most shared. The administration’s plan to grade colleges and encourage resumed state support for public institutions will help restore equal access to the American Dream.

Write an essay in which you explain how Leo W. Gerard builds an argument to persuade his audience that American colleges and universities should be affordable for all students. In your essay, analyze how Gerard uses one or more of the features listed in the box above (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Gerard’s claims, but rather explain how Gerard builds an argument to persuade his audience.