



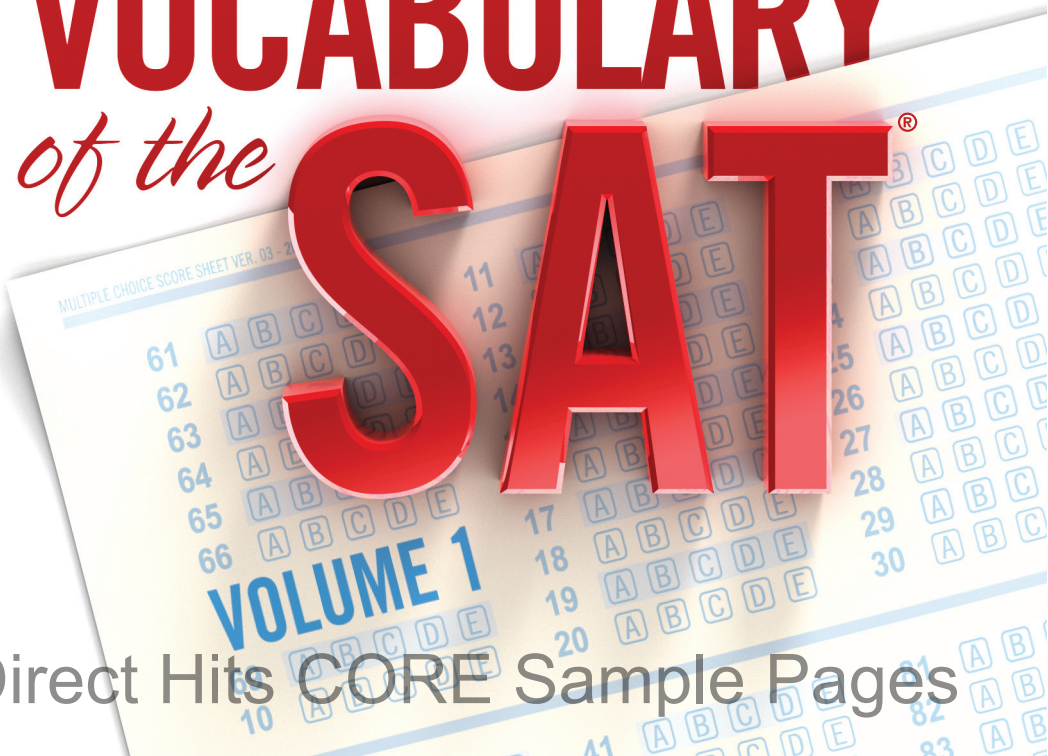
**Direct
Hits™**



**CORE
VOCABULARY**

of the

SAT®



Direct Hits CORE Sample Pages

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	INTRODUCTION	vii
CHAPTER 1	THE CORE VOCABULARY I	
	1–50	1–25
CHAPTER 2	THE CORE VOCABULARY II	
	51–100	27–50
CHAPTER 3	YOU MEET THE MOST INTERESTING PEOPLE ON THE SAT	
	101–130	51–65
CHAPTER 4	EVERY SAT WORD HAS A HISTORY	
	131–155	67–81
CHAPTER 5	THE MIGHTY LITTLE AFFIXES	
	156–205	83–108
CHAPTER 6	NAME THAT TONE/WATCH THAT ATTITUDE	
	206–225	109–119
	FAST REVIEW	121–132
	TESTING YOUR VOCABULARY	133–143
	INDEX	144–153

INTRODUCTION

Why is vocabulary important, you ask?

Words are our tools for learning and communicating. A rich and varied vocabulary enables us to...

Speak more eloquently...

Describe more vividly...

Argue more compellingly...

Articulate more precisely...

Write more convincingly.

Research has proven that a powerful and vibrant vocabulary has a high correlation with success in school, business, the professions, and standardized tests including the PSAT, SAT, SSAT, and AP exams. Yet many students complain that taking the PSAT or SAT is like trying to understand a foreign language. They dread memorizing long lists of seemingly random words.

Their frustration is understandable.

Direct Hits Core Vocabulary of the SAT offers a different approach. Each word is illustrated through relevant examples from popular movies, television, literature, music, historical events, and current headlines.

Students can place the words in a context they can easily understand and remember.

Building on the success of previous editions, the authors of *Direct Hits Core Vocabulary of the SAT* have consulted secondary school teachers, tutors, parents, and students from around the world to ensure that these words and illustrations are exactly on target to prepare you for success on the SAT. You will find that the approach is accessible, effective, and even fun!

Direct Hits offers **selective** vocabulary using **relevant** examples with **vivid** presentation so you can achieve successful **results** on standardized tests and in life.

Let's get started!

CHAPTER 1

Core Vocabulary I

1 – 50

The English language contains just over one million words—the most of any language in human history. If each of these words had an equal chance of being used on the SAT, studying for the test would be a truly impossible task.

Fortunately, the pool of words used by Educational Testing Service (ETS) test writers is actually relatively small. Questions on the test are ranked by level of difficulty from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most difficult. In general, level 3 and 4 questions are missed by over half of the test-takers.

These crucial mid-level words, the level 3 and 4 words, form the core **LEXICON** or special vocabulary you need to know to score well on the Critical Reading portion of the SAT. After a careful analysis of recent tests, we have identified 100 Core Vocabulary Words. The first 50 of these words are in Chapter 1, and the second 50 are in Chapter 2. The division is arbitrary. Each word is a high-frequency word that you absolutely must know.

1 | **AMBIVALENT**

Having mixed or opposing feelings at the same time

In *The Avengers*, Tony Stark, Steve Rogers, Bruce Banner, and Thor are initially **AMBIVALENT** about joining S.H.I.E.L.D.'s Avenger Initiative. While they know it is necessary to recover the Tesseract from Loki, they fear that their contrasting personalities will be detrimental to the group's success. Thor's **AMBIVALENCE** about working with the Avengers comes from the fact that he is **CONFLICTED** (uncertain, torn) about fighting his brother Loki.

In the movie *The Notebook*, Allie has to choose between Noah and Lon. She is emotionally torn by her **AMBIVALENT** feelings as she tells Noah, "There is no easy way; no matter what I do, somebody gets hurt." She later reiterates her **AMBIVALENT** feelings when she tells Lon, "When I'm with Noah, I feel like one person, and when I'm with you, I feel like someone totally different."

KNOW YOUR ROOTS

LATIN PREFIX:

AMBI | both

AMBIDEXTROUS

able to use both hands with equal ease, skillful, versatile

AMBIGUOUS (Word 21)

having two or more possible meanings, doubtful, dubious, EQUIVOCAL (Word 210)

AMBIVALENT

being simultaneously of two minds

2 | **ANOMALY**

Deviation from the norm or what is expected

ANOMALOUS

ATYPICAL, full of ANOMALIES

The Big Bang Theory is a television show that follows the trials and tribulations of an **ATYPICAL** group of friends in Pasadena, California. The group consists of Leonard, an experimental physicist; Sheldon, a theoretical physicist; Howard, an aerospace engineer; Raj, a particle astrophysicist; and Penny, a waitress at The Cheesecake Factory. Can you guess who the **ANOMALY** is? Penny's presence in the group is **ANOMALOUS** for many

reasons; besides being a girl, she is trendy and popular and a little **NAÏVE** (Word 44), whereas the men are geeky, **RECLUSIVE** (Word 113), and **VERY ASTUTE** (perceptive, shrewd). It's humorous to see these **DIVERSE** (of various kinds) friends spend time together because of their continual disagreements.

3 | **SARCASTIC, SARDONIC, SNIDE**

Mocking; derisive; taunting; stinging

Winston Churchill was famous for his **SARCASTIC** and **SARDONIC** comments. Here are two well-known examples:

Bessie Braddock: Sir, you are a drunk.

Churchill: Madame, you are ugly. In the morning I shall be sober, and you will still be ugly.

Nancy Astor: Sir, if you were my husband, I would give you poison.

Churchill: If I were your husband, I would take it.

In the movie *Avatar*, Dr. Grace Augustine tells Jake, "Just relax and let your mind go blank. That shouldn't be too hard for you." This **SNIDE** remark reveals Grace's initial contempt for Jake.

4 | **DEARTH, PAUCITY**

A scarcity or shortage of something

Critics and moviegoers alike have observed that there is an overall **DEARTH** of respect for animated features in the Academy Awards. Despite the recent technological and artistic advances in animation, only three animated films have ever been nominated for the **COVETED** (Word 32) Best Picture title: *Beauty and the Beast*, *Up*, and *Toy Story 3*. None of them won the award. Critics were shocked that the phenomenal Pixar film *WALL-E* was not nominated for Best Picture. Though the Academy honors animation through the Best Animated Feature award, industry members speculate that the Best Animated Feature category will perpetuate the **PAUCITY** of animated films nominated for the Best Picture award.

5 PRATTLE

To speak in a foolish manner; to babble incessantly

Tip for a Direct Hit

The word “rattle” is hidden inside of PRATTLE. If you remember the baby toy, it can help you to remember how babies PRATTLE when they are young: “goo goo, gaa gaa.”

Michael Scott of *The Office* served as the regional manager of the Scranton branch of Dunder Mifflin Paper Company. He was most notable, however, for his **INCOHERENT** (Word 185) rambling and often inappropriate remarks. Here is an example of Michael Scott’s **PRATTLING** as he discusses his relationship with his employees:

“My philosophy is basically this. And this is something that I live by. And I always have. And I always will. Don’t ever, for any reason, do anything to anyone, for any reason, ever, no matter what. No matter ... where. Or who, or who you are with, or where you are going, or ... or where you’ve been ... ever. For any reason, whatsoever.”

6 WRY, DROLL

Dry; humorous with a clever twist and a touch of irony

Tip for a Direct Hit

A WRY sense of humor is different from a JOCULAR sense of humor. A WRY joke appeals to your intellect and often produces a knowing smile. In contrast, a JOCULAR joke appeals to your funny bone and produces a belly laugh.

George Bernard Shaw once sent Winston Churchill some tickets for the first night of one of his plays. Churchill then sent Shaw a **WRY** response, “Cannot come first night. Will come second night if you have one.”

Shaw’s response was equally **WRY**: “Here are two tickets for the second night. Bring a friend if you have one.”

Even though he did not win, Top Chef contestant Hugh Acheson’s **DROLL** one-liners have helped him to become a guest judge on the new TV show *Just Desserts*. He says “I’ve got youth and **PANACHE** (Word 81) and one eyebrow on my side,” referring to his famous trademark unibrow.

FAST REVIEW

Quick Definitions

Volume 1 contains 225 words, each of which is illustrated with vivid pop culture, historic, and literary examples. The Fast Review is designed to provide you with an easy and efficient way to review each of these words. We recommend that you put a check beside each word that you know. That way you can quickly identify the words you are having trouble remembering. Focus on each hard-to-remember word by going over its definition, reviewing its examples, and trying to come up with your own memory tip.

Good luck with your review. Don't expect to learn all of these words at once. Frequent repetition is the best way to learn and remember new words.

CHAPTER 1: CORE VOCABULARY I

1. **AMBIVALENT**—Having mixed or opposing feelings at the same time
2. **ANOMALY**—Deviation from the norm or what is expected
ANOMALOUS—ATYPICAL, full of ANOMALIES
3. **SARCASTIC, SARDONIC, SNIDE**—Mocking; derisive; taunting; stinging
4. **DEARTH, PAUCITY**—A scarcity or shortage of something
5. **PRATTLE**—To speak in a foolish manner; to babble incessantly
6. **WRY, DROLL**—Dry; humorous with a clever twist and a touch of irony
7. **UNCONVENTIONAL, UNORTHODOX**—Not ordinary or typical; characterized by avoiding customary conventions and behaviors
8. **METICULOUS, PAINSTAKING, FASTIDIOUS**—Extremely careful; very EXACTING
9. **AUDACIOUS**—Fearlessly, often recklessly daring; very bold
10. **INDIFFERENT, APATHETIC**—Marked by a lack of interest or concern; NONCHALANT
11. **DIFFIDENT, SELF-EFFACING**—Hesitant due to a lack of self-confidence; unassertive; shy; retiring
12. **PRAGMATIC**—Practical; sensible; NOT idealistic or romantic
13. **EVOCATION**—An imaginative re-creation of something; a calling forth
14. **PRESUMPTUOUS**—Taking liberties; brashly overstepping one's place; impertinently bold; displaying EFFRONTERY
15. **RECALCITRANT**—Stubbornly resistance and defiant; OBSTINATE; OBDURATE; REFRACTORY; disobedient
16. **BOON**—A timely benefit; blessing
BANE—A source of harm and ruin
17. **CLANDESTINE, SURREPTITIOUS**—Secret; covert; not open; NOT ABOVEBOARD
18. **AFFABLE, AMIABLE, GENIAL, GREGARIOUS**—Agreeable; marked by a pleasing personality; warm and friendly
19. **AUSTERE**—Having no adornment or ornamentation; bare; not ORNATE
AUSTERITY—Great self-denial, economy, discipline; lack of adornment
20. **ALTRUISM**—Unselfish concern for the welfare of others
21. **AMBIGUITY**—The quality or state of having more than one

TESTING YOUR VOCABULARY

Each SAT contains 19 sentence completion questions that are primarily a test of your vocabulary. Each sentence completion will always have a key word or phrase that will lead you to the correct answer. The following 30 sentence completion questions are designed to give you practice using your knowledge of the core vocabulary in Volume 1. Each sentence completion will have a key word or phrase that will lead you to the correct answer. Make sure to circle your answer. You'll find answers and explanations on pages 142–145.

1. Paradoxically, this successful politician is sometimes very sociable and other times very _____.
A aloof
B genial
C trite
D pragmatic
E naïve
2. Uncertainty is an unavoidable part of the stock market; investors should, therefore, learn to accept doubt and tolerate _____.
A futility
B pragmatism
C diffidence
D ambiguity
E sarcasm
3. Paleontologists like China's Xu Xing now find themselves in the _____ situation of using state-of-the-art equipment to analyze prehistoric fossils.
A futile
B nostalgic
C coveted
D paradoxical
E banal
4. General MacArthur's bold disregard for popular conventions and time-honored military strategies earned him a reputation for _____.
A acquiescence
B audacity
C prudence
D indifference
E ambivalence
5. The scientist was both _____ and _____: she was always careful to test each hypothesis and cautious not to jump to conclusions.
A painstaking .. despondent
B nostalgic .. sentimental
C clandestine .. unconventional
D recalcitrant .. presumptuous
E meticulous .. prudent
6. Serena Williams is often described as having _____ that is apparent in both her dazzling tennis performances and her flamboyant athletic-wear designs.
A an equanimity
B a panache
C a superficiality
D a nonchalance
E a subtlety