

WRITING ON THE SAT/PSAT **skills and suggestions for improvement***

Being precise and clear

How to improve: Learn to recognize sentence elements that are ambiguous and confusing. In your writing, choose words carefully and connect them for clear meaning.

Following conventions in writing

How to improve: Review the chapters in a grammar book that cover grammatical conventions, such as word choice, use of noun and prepositional phrases, and sentence construction. Work with your teacher to become more familiar with the conventions of standard written English.

Recognizing logical connections within sentences and passages

How to improve: Use the writing process to help you revise your draft essays. Work with classmates and teachers to clarify meaning in your writing.

Using verbs correctly

How to improve: Make sure that you can identify the subject and verb of a sentence. Make sure you understand subject and verb agreement.

Recognizing improper pronoun use

How to improve: Learn to understand the distinction between informal, spoken pronoun usage and standard written pronoun usage. Review the way you use pronouns in your own writing. Ask your teacher to help you identify and correct pronoun errors in your own writing.

Understanding the structure of sentences with unfamiliar vocabulary

How to improve: Read material that contains unfamiliar vocabulary. Look for context clues to help you guess at the meaning of unfamiliar words as you read.

Understanding complicated sentence structures

How to improve: Refer to a grammar book to identify various sentence patterns and their effective use. Vary the sentence patterns in your own writing.

Understanding the structure of long sentences

How to improve: As you read, break long sentences into smaller units of meaning.

Understanding the structure of sentences with abstract ideas

How to improve: Read newspapers, magazines, and books that deal with subjects such as politics, economics, history, or philosophy.

Understanding the structure of sentences that relate to science or math

How to improve: Focus on how something is said as well as on what is said. Write about the things you are learning in math and science classes. Read articles in the science section of newspapers and magazines so that you will feel more comfortable

- “How to improve” taken from the college board website link to Maine standards alignment at http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/counselors/psat/Maine.pdf

with scientific or math content.

Understanding the structure of sentences that relate to the arts

How to improve: Focus on how something is said as well as on what is said. Read articles in newspapers and magazines about the arts so that you will feel more comfortable with these subjects.

Resources for teaching writing skills:

<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting/> A free resource for teachers and students. Exercises online coincide with the Hacker handbook.

<http://www.literacyforme.org/Element4.html> Writing resources from the Universal Elements website.

Protocol for peer edit: <http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ela/9to12.html> . This is the Maine Department of Education's website, for ELA grade 9-12.

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