

Official SAT Practice

Lesson Plans

for Teachers by Teachers

LESSON 2

Reading—Author’s Purpose/Perspective

Focus: Determining the point of view or perspective from which a text is written and a text’s purpose

Objectives:

Students will

- determine the point of view or perspective from which a text is related.
- identify the main or most likely purpose of a text.
- cite textual evidence that best supports a claim or position.

Before the Lesson:

- Preview and print (if necessary) the student materials.

Introductory Activity | 20 minutes

1. In Lesson 1, students focused mainly on reading closely in order to determine what the text explicitly or implicitly said by identifying key or main ideas of the text; this lesson will focus on determining the purpose or perspective of a text. To start, ask students to think about the various reasons and purposes writers have for writing: to inform about ___; to persuade someone to ___; to relate an experience about ___; and so on. Ask students to make a list of the various texts that they have written in the past few days and to consider their purposes for writing them (not counting “for a grade” or “it was homework”). They can include text messages, as well as more formal types of writing.
2. Next, return to the first text that they read in the previous lesson about turtles using the earth’s magnetic field and ask students to identify the author’s likely purpose for writing the piece. What evidence from the text might support this response?

3. Read aloud the descriptions of “Analyzing Purpose” and “Analyzing Point of View” that appear in their student materials and ask students to paraphrase each term with a partner. What are the differences between author’s purpose and perspective?
4. Read aloud the brief excerpt from a speech by Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who was discussing the nature and seriousness of the impeachment of a president in the U.S. political process. Discuss the ways that students could describe Jordan’s perspective toward the issue. Then, consider the question about perspective that follows. That the correct answer is “A” is of less importance than students gaining an understanding of the types of questions that are asked about perspective and point of view of a text.

Rationale:

Explanation: Choice A is the best answer. Jordan helps establish her idealism by declaring that she is an “inquisitor” (line 1) and that her “faith in the Constitution is whole; it is complete; it is total” (lines 3–4). At numerous points in the passage, Jordan sets forth principles (e.g., “The powers relating to impeachment are an essential check in the hands of the body of the legislature against and upon the encroachments of the executive,” lines 17–20) and refers to important documents that do the same, including the U.S. Constitution and *Federalist* No. 65.

Choice B is not the best answer because although Jordan is advocating a position, there is no evidence in the passage that she is seeking a compromise position. Indeed, she notes that she is “not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction, of the Constitution” (lines 4–6), indicating that she is not seeking compromise.

Choice C is not the best answer because Jordan is a participant (“an inquisitor,” line 1) in the proceedings, not a mere observer. Indeed, she notes that she is “not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction, of the Constitution” (lines 4–6).

Choice D is not the best answer because Jordan is identified as a congresswoman and an “inquisitor” (line 1), not a scholar, and because she is primarily discussing events happening at the moment, not researching an unidentified historical controversy. Although she refers to historical documents and individuals, her main emphasis is on the (then) present impeachment hearings.

5. Ask students to return one more time to the article about turtles they read in Lesson 1 and to complete this sentence: “The stance that writer Ed Young takes in this passage could best be described as _____.” Discuss possible responses.

Group/Pair Discussion/Activity | 15 minutes

1. Ask students to read the next passage, “The Great Reset,” in their materials, stopping 2–3 times to compare annotations with a partner. When they finish, ask students to write a brief summary of the passage and compare theirs with those of another pair of students. They should also discuss the author’s purpose and perspective.
2. Then, direct students to answer and discuss the question that follows about the Martin Prosperity Institute by focusing directly on the **evidence from the article that supports the claim**.
3. Last, discuss how the evidence they located to support their answer compares to the rationale provided.

Rationale #1:

Explanation: Choice B is the best answer because details in the third paragraph (lines 28–43) strongly suggest that researchers (“we”) at the Martin Prosperity Institute assume that shorter commutes will lead to more productive time for workers. The author notes that “across the country, commuting wastes 4.2 billion hours of work time annually” and that “the overall cost to the U.S. economy is nearly \$90 billion when lost productivity and wasted fuel are taken into account” (lines 34–38). Given also that those at the institute “calculate that every minute shaved off America’s commuting time is worth \$19.5 billion in value added to the economy” (lines 39–41), it can reasonably be concluded that some of that added value is from heightened worker productivity.

Choice A is not the best answer because there is no evidence in the passage that researchers at the Martin Prosperity Institute assume that employees who work from home are more valuable to their employers than employees who commute. Although the passage does criticize long commutes, it does not propose working from home as a solution.

Choice C is not the best answer because there is no evidence in the passage that researchers at the Martin Prosperity Institute assume that employees can conduct business activities, such as composing memos or joining conference calls, while commuting. The passage does discuss commuting in some detail, but it does not mention activities that commuters can or should be undertaking while commuting, and it generally portrays commuting time as lost or wasted time.

Choice D is not the best answer because there is no evidence in the passage that researchers at the Martin Prosperity Institute assume that employees who have lengthy commutes tend to make more money than employees who have shorter commutes. The passage does not draw any clear links between the amount of money employees make and the commutes they have.

Individual Application | 15 minutes

1. Ask students to read Passage 1 and annotate the text, specifically focusing on the author’s purpose.
2. Students should select the best answer to Question 19 and to write an explanation about why it is the best choice of the ones presented focusing on evidence from the text.
3. Students should compare their answers and rationales to the one provided below.

Rationale #19:

Explanation: Choice B is the best answer. Passage 1 opens with an explanation of Morgan’s canon and continues with a discussion of people’s expectations regarding animal intelligence. Taken together, the first two paragraphs indicate that despite cautions to the contrary, people still tend to look for humanlike levels of intelligence in many animals, including birds. These two paragraphs provide a framework in which to assess the work of Gray and Hunt, presented in the rest of the passage. The passage’s characterization of the experiment Gray and Hunt conduct, in which they observe a crow’s tool-making ability and to which Gray responds by trying and failing to mimic the bird’s behavior (“I had a go, and I couldn’t do it,” line 34), suggests that Shettleworth, quoted in the second paragraph, is at least partially correct in her assessment that “we somehow want to prove [birds] are as ‘smart’ as people” (lines 6–7).

Choice A is not the best answer because while the reference to Morgan’s canon in the first paragraph offers a sort of historical background (given that the canon was published in 1894), the second paragraph describes people’s continuing expectations regarding animal intelligence. Furthermore, the fact that Gray and Hunt may share with other people the tendency to look for humanlike intelligence in many animals does not by itself establish that the main purpose of the first two paragraphs is to question the uniqueness of Gray and Hunt’s findings.

Choice C is not the best answer because while the reference to Morgan’s canon in the first paragraph does introduce a scientific principle, the discussion in the second paragraph of people’s expectations regarding animal intelligence, as well as the passage’s characterization of Gray and Hunt’s experiment and how the researchers interpret the results, primarily suggest that people tend to violate the canon by attributing humanlike levels of intelligence to many animals.

Choice D is not the best answer because although the first two paragraphs do present different perspectives, they are not seemingly or genuinely contradictory. The second paragraph, particularly the quotation from Shettleworth, serves mainly to qualify (not contradict) the position staked out in the first paragraph by suggesting that while Morgan’s canon is probably a sound principle, people still tend to project humanlike levels of intelligence onto many animals. Moreover, the experiment depicted in the rest of the passage primarily bears out Shettleworth’s claim that “We somehow want to prove [birds] are as ‘smart’ as people” (lines 6–7) and thus does not reconcile the perspectives found in the opening paragraphs.

4. Ask students to write a reflection on their current strengths and weaknesses with regard to identifying the author’s purpose and perspective.

Homework | 20–30 minutes

- Remind students to link their College Board and Khan Academy® accounts for more personalized practice. If students do not have score information in their College Board accounts, students should take Diagnostic Quiz 2—Reading.
- As students continue to practice on Official SAT® Practice on Khan Academy, they should make note of questions that ask about author’s purpose and perspective. Teachers may want to ask students to save screenshots of these questions or to write them down for in-class discussion.
- Now is a good time to direct students to the SAT Reading Test Strategies portion of the Tips and Strategies tab on Official SAT Practice.

Student Materials—Lesson 2

Introductory Activity

Analyzing Purpose

Questions about analyzing purpose are like questions about text structure in that you’ll have to think abstractly about the text—not just understanding what the text says but also what the author is trying to achieve. In Analyzing Purpose questions, you’ll consider the main purpose or function of the whole passage or of a significant part of the passage, generally one or more paragraphs. The word “purpose” or “function” is often used in such questions, while the answer choices often begin with or include rhetorically focused verbs such as “criticize,” “support,” “present,” or “introduce.”

Analyzing Point of View

When the Reading Test asks you to consider point of view, it’s not usually simply a matter of understanding what’s often called “narrative point of view”—whether a passage is told from, say, a first person or a third person omniscient perspective. This can be part of it, but in the world of the Reading Test, “point of view” is a broader term that also includes idea of the stance or perspective of the author, narrator, or speaker. This is kind of like the attitude (or sometimes the bias) that the author, narrator, or speaker shows towards the subject. In this way, point of view questions are found not just with literary passages but also with informational passages of all sorts.

It is wrong, I suggest, it is a misreading of the Constitution for any member here to assert that for a member to vote for an article of impeachment means that that member must be convinced that the President should be removed from office.

The division between the two branches of the legislature, the House and the Senate, assigning to the one the right to accuse and to the other the right to judge—the framers of this Constitution were very astute.

The drawing of political lines goes to the motivation behind impeachment; but impeachment must proceed within the confines of the constitutional term “high crime[s] and misdemeanors.”

Congress has a lot to do: appropriations, tax reform, health insurance, campaign finance reform, housing, environmental protection, energy sufficiency, and mass transportation.

The stance Jordan takes in the passage is best described as that of

- A) an idealist setting forth principles.
- B) an advocate seeking a compromise position.
- C) an observer striving for neutrality.
- D) a scholar researching a historical controversy.

Pair/Group Activity

This passage is adapted from Richard Florida, *The Great Reset*. ©2010 by Richard Florida.

In today’s idea-driven economy, the cost of time is what really matters. With the constant pressure to innovate, it makes little sense to waste countless collective hours commuting. So, the most efficient and productive regions are those in which people are
5 thinking and working—not sitting in traffic.

The auto-dependent transportation system has reached its limit in most major cities and megaregions. Commuting by car is among the least efficient of all our activities—not to mention among the least enjoyable, according to detailed research by the Nobel Prize-winning
10 economist Daniel Kahneman and his colleagues. Though one might think that the economic crisis beginning in 2007 would have reduced traffic (high unemployment means fewer workers traveling to and from work), the opposite has been true. Average commutes have lengthened, and congestion has gotten worse, if anything. The
15 average commute rose in 2008 to 25.5 minutes, “erasing years of decreases to stand at the level of 2000, as people had to leave home earlier in the morning to pick up friends for their ride to work or to catch a bus or subway train,” according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which collects the figures. And those are average figures. Commutes
20 are far longer in the big West Coast cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco and the East Coast cities of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. In many of these cities, gridlock has become the norm, not just at rush hour but all day, every day.

The costs are astounding. In Los Angeles, congestion eats up
25 more than 485 million working hours a year; that’s seventy hours, or nearly two weeks, of full-time work per commuter. In D.C., the time cost of congestion is sixty-two hours per worker per year. In New York it’s forty-four hours. Average it out, and the time cost across America’s thirteen biggest city regions is fifty-one hours per worker
30 per year. Across the country, commuting wastes 4.2 billion hours of work time annually—nearly a full workweek for every commuter. The overall cost to the U.S. economy is nearly \$90 billion when lost productivity and wasted fuel are taken into account. At the Martin Prosperity Institute, we calculate that every minute shaved off
35 America’s commuting time is worth \$19.5 billion in value added to the economy. The numbers add up fast: five minutes is worth \$97.7 billion; ten minutes, \$195 billion; fifteen minutes, \$292 billion.

It’s ironic that so many people still believe the main remedy for traffic congestion is to build more roads and highways, which of
40 course only makes the problem worse. New roads generate higher levels of “induced traffic,” that is, new roads just invite drivers to drive more and lure people who take mass transit back to their cars. Eventually, we end up with more clogged roads rather than a long-term improvement in traffic flow.

45 The coming decades will likely see more intense clustering of jobs, innovation, and productivity in a smaller number of bigger cities and city-regions. Some regions could end up bloated beyond the capacity of their infrastructure, while others struggle, their promise stymied by inadequate human or other resources.

1

The passage most strongly suggests that researchers at the Martin Prosperity Institute share which assumption?

- A) Employees who work from home are more valuable to their employers than employees who commute.
- B) Employees whose commutes are shortened will use the time saved to do additional productive work for their employers.
- C) Employees can conduct business activities, such as composing memos or joining conference calls, while commuting.
- D) Employees who have longer commutes tend to make more money than employees who have shorter commutes.

Individual Practice

Passage 1 is adapted from Susan Milius, “A Different Kind of Smart.” ©2013 by Science News. Passage 2 is adapted from Bernd Heinrich, *Mind of the Raven: Investigations and Adventures with Wolf-Birds*. ©2007 by Bernd Heinrich.

Passage 1

In 1894, British psychologist C. Lloyd Morgan published what’s called Morgan’s canon, the principle that suggestions of humanlike mental processes behind an animal’s behavior should be rejected if a simpler explanation will do.

5 Still, people seem to maintain certain expectations, especially when it comes to birds and mammals. “We somehow want to prove they are as ‘smart’ as people,” zoologist Sara Shettleworth says. We want a bird that masters a vexing problem to be employing humanstyle insight.

10 New Caledonian crows face the high end of these expectations, as possibly the second-best toolmakers on the planet.

Their tools are hooked sticks or strips made from spikeedged leaves, and they use them in the wild to winkle grubs out of crevices. Researcher Russell Gray first saw the process on a cold morning in a mountain forest in New Caledonia, an island chain east of Australia. Over the course of days, he and crow researcher Gavin Hunt had gotten wild crows used to finding meat tidbits in holes in a log. Once the birds were checking the log reliably, the researchers placed a spiky tropical pandanus plant beside the log and hid behind a blind.

A crow arrived. It hopped onto the pandanus plant, grabbed the spiked edge of one of the long straplike leaves and began a series of ripping motions. Instead of just tearing away one long strip, the bird ripped and nipped in a sequence to create a slanting stair-step edge on a leaf segment with a narrow point and a wide base. The process took only seconds. Then the bird dipped the narrow end of its leaf strip into a hole in the log, fished up the meat with the leaf-edge spikes, swallowed its prize and flew off.

25 “That was my ‘oh wow’ moment,” Gray says. After the crow had vanished, he picked up the tool the bird had left behind. “I had a go, and I couldn’t do it,” he recalls. Fishing the meat out was tricky. It turned out that Gray was moving the leaf shard too forcefully instead of gently stroking the spines against the treat.

The crow’s deft physical manipulation was what inspired Gray and Auckland colleague Alex Taylor to test other wild crows to see if they employed the seemingly insightful stringpulling solutions that some ravens, kea parrots and other brainiac birds are known to employ. Three of four crows passed that test on the first try.

19

Within Passage 1, the main purpose of the first two paragraphs (lines 1–10) is to

- A) offer historical background in order to question the uniqueness of two researchers’ findings.
- B) offer interpretive context in order to frame the discussion of an experiment and its results.
- C) introduce a scientific principle in order to show how an experiment’s outcomes validated that principle.
- D) present seemingly contradictory stances in order to show how they can be reconciled empirically.