

The SAT[®]



Practice Essay #1



SCORE EXPLANATIONS



Student Sample 1

In this article, Paul Bogard talks about the dark. Paul gives many ideas about light and dark. It seems like Paul is a person who likes the dark. He is fascinated in the night skies. He gives many pros and cons about the dark. The dark isn't always dark there could be a little light in the dark to, as Paul says. Paul says that the night sky can be beautiful too. The more dark the less electric bill to pay and easier to deal with. Rise with the sun and rise like the moon. The night sky may be dark, but there always be a little to make it even better.

We can save energy by using the light of the day and the moon from the dark. Paul uses lots of pros and cons to explain his wonderful ideas.

This response scored a 1/1/1.

READING — 1

This response demonstrates little comprehension of the source text. The writer fails to show an understanding of the passage's central idea. Though the writer recognizes that *Paul is a person who likes the dark and is fascinated in the night skies*, this is insufficient to show a grasp of the core of Bogard's argument that artificial light should be reduced and natural darkness preserved. This lack of understanding is further shown in the statement that Bogard *gives many pros and cons about the dark*, as the passage does not raise any detriments of darkness. Additional attempts to describe the purpose of Bogard's argument are equally unclear: *The dark isn't always dark there could be a little light in the dark; Rise with the sun and rise like the moon*. The few references to details from the passage (*Paul says that the night sky can be beautiful too. The more dark the less electric bill to pay and easier to deal with*) are isolated from context and do not refer to the broader purpose of Bogard's passage. This lack of understanding of the argument's central idea shows the writer's inadequate comprehension of the source text.

ANALYSIS — 1

This response displays no understanding of the analytical task. The writer makes no attempt to identify any potential persuasive elements from Bogard's passage. The response instead is focused on attempts to relay textual details (*He is fascinated in the night skies; We can save energy by using the light of the day and the moon from the dark*). Since the response offers no discernible analysis, it shows inadequate skill in this dimension.

WRITING — 1

This response exhibits ineffective language control and little cohesion. There is no recognizable introduction or conclusion, and the writer doesn't provide a central claim or other organizing idea. The response has virtually no progression, as ideas are presented with little apparent connection to earlier ones: *He gives many pros and cons about the dark. The dark isn't always dark there could be a little light; Paul says that the night sky can be beautiful too. The more dark the less electric bill to pay*. Sentences use short and repetitive structures and often contain errors (*The more dark the less electric bill to pay and easier to deal with*) or vague word choices that lack meaning (*Rise with the sun and rise like the moon*). This lack of structure and control of language demonstrates ineffective writing skill.

Student Sample 2

In “Let there be dark,” Paul Bogard talks about the importance of darkness.

Darkness is essential to humans. Bogard states, “Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing, and our bodies need darkness for sleep, sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression and recent research suggests are main cause of “short sleep” is “long light.” Whether we work at night or simply take our tablets, notebooks and smartphones to bed, there isn’t a place for this much artificial light in our lives.” (Bogard 2). Here, Bogard talks about the importance of darkness to humans. Humans need darkness to sleep in order to be healthy.

Animals also need darkness. Bogard states, “The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish and reptiles. Some examples are well known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world’s flora. Ecological light pollution is like the bulldozer of the night, wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems several billion years in the making. Simply put, without darkness, Earth’s ecology would collapse...” (Bogard 2). Here Bogard explains that animals, too, need darkness to survive.

This response scored a 2/1/1.

READING — 2

This response demonstrates some comprehension of Bogard’s text. Although this essay consists almost entirely of two quotations taken directly from the passage, the writer has demonstrated an understanding of two of Bogard’s central points: that darkness is crucial to humans and animals. This understanding is displayed by the writer’s selection of two important lines of the source text and the brief evidence the writer shows of being able to summarize the main idea of these quotations. However, the writer demonstrates no other understanding of the passage beyond the ability to quote these two main ideas, leading to a demonstration of only partial understanding of the source text.

ANALYSIS — 1

The writer demonstrates no understanding of the analytical task. The writer does not attempt to analyze Bogard’s use of evidence, reasoning, or stylistic or persuasive elements. Instead, the writer cites two sentences from the passage and then offers a brief restatement of each point. With no analysis, the response scores a 1.

WRITING — 1

This essay demonstrates little cohesion and inadequate skill in the use and control of language. The essay begins with a very broad central claim *In “Let there Be dark,” Paul Bogard talks about the importance of darkness* but otherwise lacks a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The writer’s two main ideas are separated into two separate paragraphs, but because there is little original writing here, there is no clear evidence of the ability to logically order or develop ideas. There is also little evidence of the writer’s ability to vary sentence structures. Overall, this essay does not provide enough evidence of writing ability to warrant a score higher than a 1.

Student Sample 3

Paul Bogard builds a very persuasive argument to persuade his audience that natural darkness should be preserved. Bogard uses many features such as touch, feeling, seeing or even our own senses. Touching all of these features within Bogard's essay will make his argument stronger on whether natural darkness should be preserved.

One of the senses Bogard uses within his essay is touch. He concludes that many species depend on the darkness. I think that this is an important part to Bogard's essay because it is showing that not only humans depend on this. Darkness tends to evolve all over the world for a variety of things.

Another sense that Bogard uses is feeling. He compares the rhythm into which light and dark days exist. Many medical centers have concluded that our bodies need darkness to produce many different hormones and to continue with processes to keep us alive. Paul shows how many different characteristics affect how important darkness is to a human body.

In Bogard's essay he talks about many different religious traditions that value darkness. I think that this topic Bogard uses appeals to emotion to many different religious groups. Giving evidence of a historical artist Van Gogh adds a lot of emotion to this particular essay.

In Bogard's essay he provides information about technologies that are determining different light fixtures. Comparing how cities and towns across the world are changing their ways of light is going to be wasted.

I think that Bogard's essay is particularly strong. He uses a lot of evidence with emotion. Providing a variety of different examples on how darkness should be preserved gives a lot of power to the ideas that are expressed.

This response scored a 2/1/2.

READING — 2

This response demonstrates some understanding of the source text. The writer captures Bogard's central idea by repeating the prompt's summary statement about the importance of preserving natural darkness and includes a few details from the source text that support this central idea. The writer references the fact that *many species depend on the darkness*, that *our bodies need darkness to produce many different hormones*, that *different religious traditions value darkness*, and that Bogard compares how *cities and towns across the world are changing their ways of light*. However, despite citing these details, whenever the writer moves beyond language taken directly from the passage and attempts to summarize a point Bogard has made, the interpretation is often unclear or inaccurate (*Darkness tends to evolve all over the world for a variety of things*; *In Bogard's essay he provides information about technologies that are determining different light fixtures*). Overall, therefore, this essay demonstrates only limited comprehension of Bogard's argument.

ANALYSIS — 1

This writer has an ineffective understanding of the analytical task. The writer identifies Bogard's use of *touch*, *feeling*, *seeing or even our own senses* as aspects that build Bogard's argument. However, the writer is unable to express how Bogard uses these

elements specifically. For example, in the first body paragraph, the writer claims that *One of the senses Bogard uses within his essay is touch*, but none of the ensuing discussion in this paragraph relates to touch at all. Instead, the writer merely goes on to summarize that Bogard *concludes that many species depend on the darkness*. In the ensuing paragraph, the writer tries to address Bogard's use of *feeling*, but again, the discussion does not clearly explain how the examples cited from the source text relate to "feeling." In the fourth paragraph, the writer is on the right track by identifying that Bogard uses emotion to build his argument, but the writer doesn't extend beyond identification: *I think that this topic Bogard uses appeals to emotion to many different religious groups. Giving evidence of a historical artist Van Gogh adds a lot of emotion to this particular essay*. The writer merely identifies these as appeals to emotion but doesn't try to explain the effect these examples have on readers' emotions—how they might be used to influence readers or otherwise build Bogard's argument. All this demonstrates little analysis of the source text.

WRITING — 2

This response demonstrates limited cohesion and skill in the use and control of language. The writer has provided a skeletal organizational structure for the essay, with a brief introduction that sets up the writer's central claim and a standard six-paragraph format that roughly follows the order of the points the writer intends to discuss: *Bogard uses many features such as touch, feeling, seeing or even our own senses*. However, the essay lacks a progression of ideas within paragraphs; instead, ideas are disconnected from one another, so although the essay has the appearance of being ordered into logical paragraphs, the actual content of those paragraphs does not demonstrate cohesion. In many instances, in fact, the writer has separated a single idea into separate sentence/fragment combinations that give the illusion of more robust paragraphs than actually exist (for example, the entirety of the fifth paragraph: *In Bogard's essay he provides information about technologies that are determining different light fixtures. Comparing how cities and towns across the world are changing thier ways of light is going to be wasted*). In this essay, organization and language errors detract from the quality of the writing and often impede understanding, demonstrating limited writing skill.

Student Sample 4

In Paul Bogard’s essay “Let there be Dark” he emphasizes the importance of natural darkness. Bogard begins his argument by first providing a story from his personal experience, appealing to the reader by adding imagery. “I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars.” In this sentence, Bogard depicts the beauty of natural darkness using detail. Bogard continues with comparing his personal perspective of natural darkness in the past to society’s perspective in the present. “Today, though, when we feel the closeness of night fall, we reach quickly for a light switch.” Implying that the times have definitely changed and natural darkness’s value has been lost in society, replaced with artificial light. This example gives Bogard a sense of voice and his use of comparison is definitely effective.

Bogard supports his claims about natural darkness’s underrated value by providing the reader with evidence of health problems that the opposite replacement, artificial light, can cause. “Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing.” Oh, no! Not cancer! Right there is a quick attention grabber to any reader previously bored by Bogard’s constant opinions because now there are facts, and a fact relating to the reader is the best persuasion, especially when it relates to their health or well-being. Cancer, because who wants a terminal illness over an action as simple as flipping a switch on a night light when it’s too dark for your comfort?

This response scored a 2/2/2.

READING — 2

This writer demonstrates some comprehension of the passage. In the first paragraph, the writer conveys the passage’s broad central idea—that Bogard *emphasizes the importance of natural darkness*—and discusses Bogard’s comparison of his personal past to society’s present use of light. Here, the writer offers an interpretation of one of the author’s points: [Bogard implies] *that the times have definitely changed and natural darkness’s value has been lost in society, replaced with artificial light*. In the following paragraph, the writer continues by briefly citing Bogard’s point about the negative health implications of too much natural light. However, this is the last evidence of understanding the writer provides. The essay ends almost immediately after, and with this limited coverage of textual details, the writer demonstrates only partial understanding of the source text.

ANALYSIS — 2

The response offers some, but limited, analysis, demonstrating only partial understanding of the analytical task. The writer identifies Bogard’s use of imagery in the story of meteors in the night sky and then asserts that this imagery appeals to the reader but offers no further discussion of Bogard’s use of imagery and how it contributes to his argument. The writer also references the comparison Bogard makes between his youth and now and says that the comparison gives Bogard a *sense of voice* but doesn’t explain why this comparison contributes to Bogard’s voice or how establishing a particular voice works for Bogard’s argument. The writer offers one additional point of analysis, asserting that Bogard’s reference to cancer is a *quick attention grabber* and claims that the use of a *fact relating to the reader is the best*

persuasion, especially when it relates to their health or well-being. However, the writer does not elaborate on this point further or attempt to explain why bringing up health is an effective tactic. In each instance of analysis in this response, the writer identifies the use of evidence or rhetorical features but asserts rather than explains their importance.

WRITING — 2

This response demonstrates limited cohesion and only some skill in the use of language. Although a controlling idea can be found in the topic sentences of the two paragraphs (*Bogard begins his argument by first providing a story; Bogard supports his claims... by providing the reader with evidence*), there is no indication of an introduction or conclusion to frame ideas or any other organizing structure to indicate consistent development. Overall, sentences are clear and there are no problematic issues with conventions of standard written English. However, by the end of this short response, the writer has deviated from a formal style and objective tone: *Oh, no! Not cancer! Right there is a quick attention grabber to any reader previously bored by Bogard's constant opinions.* The essay concludes with a rhetorical question that also strays from a formal tone: *Cancer, because who wants a terminal illness over an action as simple as flipping a switch on a night light when it's too dark for your comfort?* On the whole, therefore, this response shows only partial evidence of cohesion and control of language.

Student Sample 5

Paul Bogard is very persuasive throughout this published work. He explains and persuades that natural darkness should be preserved. In the beginning, he makes his argument by giving a statistic about children born in the United States and how their experiences with a true dark night are different from when he was a child himself. He says, “8 out of 10 children born in the United states will never know a sky dark enough for the Milky Way, I worry we are rapidly losing night’s natural darkness before realizing it’s worth.”

Next, he explains that as soon as night time hits, everyone automatically reaches for a light switch. He explains that the “World Health Organization classifies working the night shift as probable human carcinogen...” He says that humans need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin. Melatonin keeps certain cancers from developing. We also need darkness for sleep. Not having enough sleep leads to other health issues such as diabetes, obesity, and depression. He says that humans have too much artificial light that comes from things like cell phones when we go to bed.

He also tells us that not only do humans rely on natural darkness but so do nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish, and reptiles. So many different species rely on darkness to live like birds that migrate, sea turtles that lay their eggs, and bats that control pests for farmers crops. “Ecological light pollution is like a bulldozer of the night, wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems... without darkness, Earth’s ecology would collapse...”

He says that even though our world is on-going and at such a fast pace, we can still provide “solitude, quiet and stillness.” He questions how could we have such nice things such as Van Gogh’s “Starry Night” without natural darkness?

He talks about our nights are growing brighter and brighter. Back in the 1950’s compared to now, the United States was really dark and now it’s bright and lit up all the time. He says that only a small percentage of people on Earth today know what a true dark night is.

He offers a solution to this problem. He says we can go to what Europe has done to shrink artificial light use. And even what Paris has done: Use LED lights and streetlights and cut off big light/energy users after a certain time.

Paul Bogard has a lot of argumentative statements that prove we are more corrupt people by using more artificial light instead of natural darkness. He says it affects our ecosystems and can be related to diseases that are common in a lot of people.

This response scored a 3/1/3.

READING — 3

The writer shows proficient comprehension of Bogard’s argument. The introduction presents the passage’s central idea (*He explains and persuades that natural darkness should be preserved*) and begins describing the important details used in its support: *a statistic about children born in the United States and how their experiences with a true dark night are different from when he was a child*. The writer continues to bring up Bogard’s main points, addressing the increase in *artificial light that comes from things*

like cell phones when we go to bed and the health risks such as diabetes, obesity, and depression related to poor sleep; the fact that So many different species rely on darkness to live that our "Ecological light pollution is like a bulldozer of the night"; that while in the 1950's compared to now, the United states was really dark and now it's bright and lit up all the time; and that Bogard suggests we can go to what Europe has done to shrink artificial light use by changing streetlights and reducing lighting hours. This coverage of the source text's key points, through competent paraphrase and quotations, demonstrates the writer's effective understanding of the passage.

ANALYSIS — 1

This response offers no analysis of Bogard's argument. Rather than identifying elements from the source text that are persuasive and attempting to describe their importance, the writer merely summarizes the information that Bogard provides in the passage. This can be seen in the way the response recounts points from the source text (*He says that humans need darkness; He says that humans have too much artificial light; even though our world is on-going and at such a fast pace, we can still provide "solitude, quiet and stillness"; He talks about how our nights are growing brighter*) without discussing any aspect of what persuasive effect they might have. Because the response is exclusively summary and does not attempt to evaluate the persuasiveness of Bogard's argument, it displays an inadequate understanding of the analytical task.

WRITING — 3

This mostly cohesive response demonstrates proficient use and control of language. While the introduction does not offer a central claim and instead launches directly into discussion of Bogard's points, the response does follow an implicit controlling idea as the writer addresses these points in the order in which they appear in the passage. This creates a clear progression of ideas as the writer moves from Bogard's personal anecdote to the health effects of artificial light on humans and animals, to the loss of sights like Van Gogh's "Starry Night" in a brightening world, and then to Bogard's suggested solutions. The writer's sentences are clear and free of significant errors, though a few use a slightly repetitive structure (*He says that humans need darkness; He says that humans have too much artificial light; He talks about our nights*). As a whole, the response displays the writer's effective use of language.

Student Sample 6

Paul Bogard’s essay about the necessity of darkness captures the reader’s attention. He brilliantly gave examples of why darkness is essential and how darkness can benefit human life. His use of syntax also supports his essay to have very reasonable and valid points.

Bogard starts out by giving one example from his own personal experience at his family’s cabin on a Minnesota lake. He describes the Milky Way and the night sky in all of its brilliance. He then portrays how 8 out of 10 children born in the United States will never know a sky dark enough for the Milky Way. By this point, Bogard is building up pathos within his essay. The reader begins to feel pity for those 8 in 10 children who will never get the chance to see the sky in its truest and most real form. Bogard then explains how much turning a light switch on and off is taken for granted. This is an example of logos because the reader can sense that that is what life has come down to. It is evident that the world today is dependent upon electricity, and Bogard does a fabulous job gathering evidence for this argument that darkness has been undermined.

Some other examples that Bogard gives are the issues of light pollution and nocturnal animals. He explains that our bodies need darkness to produce certain hormones which can prevent certain diseases and illnesses. Also, he claims how animals are dependent upon the darkness and without darkness, “Earth’s ecology would collapse.” Then he goes on to talk about the previous centuries and how they did not rely on electricity to live their everyday lives.

One of the most famous paintings in history was done centuries ago and was called “Starry Night,” by Vincent Van Gogh. Bogard explains how the night sky can be inspiring which causes more pathos to build up within the reader, causing them to think about the importance of the darkness and beauty of nighttime.

After giving examples of how darkness is taken for granted, Bogard provides a solution. This is logos. He tells the reader that the over usage of light and electricity doesn’t have to be that way and by making a few minor changes, the world can be different. Giving examples of everyday life and providing a solution, Bogard brilliantly portrayed the need and importance of darkness in everyday life.

This response scored a 3/2/3.

READING — 3

This response shows an effective understanding of the passage. The writer demonstrates comprehension of the argument’s central idea by noting that Bogard writes *about the necessity of darkness* and *portrayed the need and importance of darkness in everyday life*. This understanding is supported by the writer’s use of important details from the source text, like citing Bogard’s *family’s cabin on a Minnesota lake* where *He describes the Milky Way and the night sky, which 8 out of 10 children born in the United States won’t ever see*. The writer also discusses how *our bodies need darkness to produce certain hormones which can prevent certain diseases*, brings up *how animals are dependent upon the darkness and without darkness, “Earth’s ecology would collapse,”* references “Starry Night” as an example of *how the night sky can be*

inspiring, and briefly mentions *how much turning a light switch on and off is taken for granted* and that people in *the previous centuries...did not rely on electricity to live their everyday lives*. This demonstration of appropriate paraphrasing and quoting from the source text, along with the writer's understanding of the central idea, demonstrates the writer's proficient reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 2

This response offers limited analysis of Bogard's argument. The writer identifies a few persuasive elements from the passage, like the use of *pathos* and *evidence*, but only provides an unexplained claim about how *pathos* influences readers. The writer states that the passage *is building up pathos* in the discussion of *how 8 out of 10 children... will never know a sky darky enough for the Milky Way* and asserts *The reader begins to feel pity for those 8 in 10 children who will never get the chance to see the sky in its truest and most real form*. The response then moves on without elaborating on this idea, though, and does not try to explain why readers would feel *pity* because of this statistic or how generating this feeling would lead them to agree with Bogard's argument to preserve darkness. The writer's other analytical attempts are ineffective, as they do not develop a claim about what effect the features have on the audience: *Bogard does a fabulous job gathering evidence for this argument; the night sky can be inspiring which causes more pathos...causing them to think about the importance of the darkness and beauty of nighttime*. However, because the writer has asserted the effect of *pity*, the response does show a partial understanding of the analytical task.

WRITING — 3

This response is mostly cohesive and exhibits proficient language control. The introduction presents a central claim (*He brilliantly gave examples of why darkness is essential; His use of syntax also supports his essay*) that the response mostly follows, and the writer uses transitions to clearly signal how Bogard's ideas develop: *Bogard starts out by giving one example; He then portrays how; By this point, Bogard is building; Some other examples that Bogard gives are; Then he goes on to talk about*. Some sentences show variation in their structures (*It is evident that the world today is dependent upon electricity, and Bogard does a fabulous job gathering evidence for this; After giving examples of how darkness is taken for granted, Bogard provides a solution*), and the writer occasionally uses precise word choices: *brilliantly; inspiring; necessity*. These features are marks of effective organization and language use, demonstrating proficient writing skill.

Student Sample 7

Paul Bogard, author of “Let There be Dark” has structurely emphasized why darkness is beneficial, and he also recognizes some individuals who are depleting our darkness. Whether an individual loves being baked by the sun, or loves the cool night breeze, dark will always accompany us in our world.

Bogard points out the people who take “[their] tablets, notebooks and smartphones to bed,” because he knows that our world is technologically advanced and a majority of people use it 24/7. As a reader, one may feel guilty after reading this paragraph because they know that they are an individual who brings technology to bed. Bogard knows that this will interest readers because it applies to their daily life. One may argue that taking a tablet to bed doesn’t get rid of darkness, it only enlightens them on the latest gossip. This is one example of how we’re letting technology and social media run our lives. Bogard clearly embedded this fact into his story because he knows that it will affect a lot of Americans.

Most people wouldn’t consider lighting up a dark room as light pollution, but Bogard gives this activity a name. Bogard mentions tourist attractions, Europe and Paris, to persuade readers to quit the emission of light. Even though Paris is “the [famous] city of lights,” they are willing to turn off the monument lights, shop & offices lighting, and also public building lights in order to combat light pollution. The reductions in lighting will not only save energy, but also help with the light pollution problem; turning off lights can be beneficial in many different ways. Bogard uses famous places to prove that this is a world-wide issue.

Bogard uses emotional appeal when he mentions the different types of species that benefit from darkness. Most people are more sensitive towards animals, rather than just plain facts and figures. Bogard uses the fourth paragraph to describe how animals and farmers will be affected by light pollution. The species on our planet are our responsibility because they have nobody to tell us what is right or wrong for them. Bogard makes it obvious that light pollution is not only affecting our citizens, but our animals.

Bogard also uses emotion to persuade the reader when he asks, “Who knows what this vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us?” This could be emotional for some people or parents because Bogard is mainly stating that without the night sky, many of us would not have some advanced thoughts. Everybody in this world wants to succeed at something, and this question may make people think about how light pollution can affect their future. Bogard’s stylistic approach to hook the reader in was achieved at this point. Not all people may care how light pollution may affect the animals around us, but most people care about themselves and their loved ones around them.

Bogard also explains how “darkness [produces] the hormone melatonin.” Many people may be shocked by this because they realize that light pollution and bringing tablets to bed is something that will affect their health. Melatonin is key to everyone’s healthy sleep habits. This part incorporates reasoning and emotion. Without the darkness that is created naturally, none of us would be able to sleep, resulting in sleep disorders.

With the use of emotion, and facts, Bogard has completely involved the reader in an issue that they may not think is apparent.

This response scored a 3/3/3.

READING — 3

This response exhibits effective comprehension of the source text. The writer opens by describing the passage's central idea (*Bogard...has structurely emphasized why darkness is beneficial, and he also recognizes some individuals who are depleting our darkness*) and then proceeds to address key details from the source text. These details include the rise in artificial light for *people who take "[their] tablets, notebooks and smartphones to bed,"* which is *something that will affect their health* because *"darkness [produces] the hormone melatonin,* and that Paris is reducing light pollution (*Even though Paris is "the [famous] city of lights," they are willing to turn off the monument lights, shop & offices lighting, and also public building lights*). The writer also brings up *how animals and farmers will be affected by light pollution* and Bogard's mention of what the *"vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us."* These references to the source text's important details, captured through effective quotation and paraphrasing, demonstrate the writer's proficient comprehension of Bogard's argument.

ANALYSIS — 3

The writer provides proficient analysis of Bogard's argument in this response. The most clearly developed point of analysis is the writer's evaluation of how Bogard's question about *"what this vision of the night sky might inspire"* in the viewer serves to *hook the reader in.* After asserting that *This could be emotional for some people* in that *Everybody...wants to succeed at something, and this question may make people think about how light pollution can affect their future,* the writer offers justification for why this would be persuasive: *Not all people may care how light pollution may affect the animals...but most people care about themselves and their loved ones.* Other analytical attempts in the response only reach the level of assertion as the writer does not attempt to elaborate on these points (*As a reader, one may feel guilty...because they know that they are an individual who brings technology to bed; Most people are more sensitive towards animals, rather than just plain facts*). However, the writer's effective analysis of Bogard's *hook,* which presents a persuasive effect (making readers *think about how light pollution can affect their future*) and explains how it functions (*most people care about themselves*), is sufficient to demonstrate a proficient understanding of the analytical task.

WRITING — 3

This response is mostly cohesive and shows the writer's effective use of language. The brief introduction presents the source text's central idea and provides an entry into the writer's points. Though it does not offer an explicit central claim or thesis, the response's conclusion does point out the two main elements the writer focuses on: *With the use of emotion, and facts, Bogard has completely involved the reader.* Topic sentences and other transitions between paragraphs (*Bogard uses emotional appeal when he mentions; Bogard also uses emotion to persuade the reader when he asks; Bogard also explains how*) show a progression of ideas in the response, as does the internal development within those paragraphs: *Bogard points out the people... As a reader, one may feel guilty... Bogard knows that this will interest readers because... This is one example....* The writer also utilizes some more complex sentence constructions (*The reductions in lighting will not only save energy, but also help with the light pollution problem; turning off lights can be beneficial in many different ways*) and a few precise word choices (*Whether an individual loves being baked by the sun, or loves the cool night breeze, dark will always accompany us in our world; One may argue that taking a tablet to bed doesn't get rid of darkness, it only enlightens them on the latest gossip*). Overall, these features demonstrate effective writing skill and proficient language control.

Student Sample 8

Paul Bogard, a respected and passionate writer, offers a convincing argument on the importance of allowing more darkness to fill the earth for distinct health and ecological reasons. With light providing as such a huge factor in daily life, we sometimes forget that darkness can have more healing abilities, and allows nature to return to a nonartificial, primitive state. Bogard uses personal observation for credibility, stirring feelings, and startling facts to deliver a powerful argument.

Throughout the passage, Bogard remains nostalgic about his childhood: “At my family’s cabin on a Minnesota lake, I knew woods so dark that my hands disappeared before my eyes. I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars....This winter solstice, as we cheer the days’ gradual movement back toward light, let us also remember the irreplaceable value of darkness.” The description of nature and the stunningly beautiful imagery creates a feeling of deep respect for the darkness. We share in Bogard’s view and as a result, Bogard has undeniable credibility. Bogard knows the power of darkness and through his childhood memories, we lean our ears to listen to him.

Even though credibility makes many appearances throughout the passage, it would have no real meaning without evoking emotion. Bogard strikes the people who disagree with him when he says, “Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing and our bodies need darkness for sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression, and recent research suggests one main cause of ‘short sleep’ is ‘long light.’” Bogard’s statement dissolves any doubt, but builds up new feeling. We finally see the true importance of allowing our world to temporarily succumb to darkness. Through the emotion Bogard evokes, we suddenly feel defensive in preserving the darkness for the sake of our mental and physical health. Bogard even makes us think about the future generations: “In a world awash with electric light...how would Van Gogh have given the world his ‘starry night’? Who knows what this vision of the night sky must inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?”

In order to achieve proper credibility and stir emotion, undeniable facts must reside in passage. Bogard has completed his research, and uses it to further his case: “The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish, and reptiles. Some examples are well known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world’s flora.” Using the facts about animals, Bogard extends the argument beyond humans, allowing us to see that darkness does not only have an impact on us, but all of nature. Bogard then says, “In the United States and Western Europe, the amount of light in the sky increases an average of about 6% every year.... Much of this light is wasted energy, which means wasted dollars. Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights.” However, Bogard extends the facts to offer various solutions to wasted and excessive light, such as changing LED streetlights and reducing the use of lights in public buildings and homes during the night. Bogard builds up our world, and then breaks it down in our minds with his writing: “Simply put, without darkness, Earth’s ecology would collapse....”

We can still save our world according to Bogard. We must see the strength and beauty in the darkness, and remember how our world survived without lights. Light can be acceptable, but too much of it can prove worse than permanent darkness.

This response scored a 4/3/4.

READING — 4

This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of Bogard's text. The writer captures the central idea of the source passage (*the importance of allowing more darkness to fill the earth for distinct health and ecological reasons*) and accurately quotes and paraphrases many important details from the passage that support Bogard's argument. Moreover, the writer demonstrates an understanding of how these details interrelate. In the third body paragraph, for example, the writer not only presents details from Bogard's text about the effects of darkness upon nature but also indicates comprehension of how those facts relate to both research on humans and proposed solutions to the problem (*Using the facts about animals, Bogard extends the argument beyond humans; Bogard extends the facts to offer various solutions...such as changing LED streetlights...“Simply put, without darkness, Earth's ecology would collapse”*). This technique of describing how different details in Bogard's text relate to each other is also evident in the second body paragraph where the writer connects concerns about our well-being with that of future generations: fear-inducing facts about *the sake of our mental and physical health* and anxiety for *our children or grandchildren*. In addition, the response is free of any errors of fact and interpretation, and the writer makes skillful use of textual evidence throughout the response. Overall, then, this response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 3

The writer demonstrates an understanding of the analytical task by analyzing three ways Bogard builds his argument (*personal observation for credibility, stirring feelings, and startling facts to deliver a powerful argument*). Throughout the course of the response, the writer discusses Bogard's use of these three elements and is able to move past asserting their significance to arrive at an effective analysis of the effects of these techniques on Bogard's audience. In the second body paragraph, for example, the writer states, *Bogard's statement dissolves any doubt, but builds up new feeling. We finally see the true importance of allowing our world to temporarily succumb to darkness. Through the emotion Bogard evokes, we suddenly feel defensive in preserving the darkness for the sake of our mental and physical health*. Effective analysis is also evident in the first body paragraph where the writer discusses the audience's possible reaction to reading about Bogard's experience with darkness as a child (*The description of nature and the stunningly beautiful imagery creates a feeling of deep respect...as a result, Bogard has undeniable credibility. Bogard knows the power of darkness and through his childhood memories, we lean our ears to listen to him*). These points of analysis would have been stronger had the writer perhaps elaborated more on how or why they build Bogard's argument. However, the writer nevertheless competently evaluates Bogard's use of personal observation, emotions, and facts and provides relevant and sufficient support for each claim, demonstrating effective analysis.

WRITING — 4

The writer demonstrates highly effective use and command of language in this cohesive response. The response includes a precise central claim (*Bogard uses personal observation for credibility, stirring feelings, and startling facts to deliver a powerful argument*), and each of the subsequent paragraphs remain focused on the topics set forth in that central claim. There is a deliberate progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the response. Moreover, the response demonstrates precise word choice and sophisticated turns of phrase (*temporarily succumb to darkness; remains nostalgic about his childhood; dissolves any doubt*). The concluding paragraph is skillful for its precise word choice and complex sentence structures (*We must see the strength and beauty in the darkness, and remember how our world survived without lights. Light can be acceptable, but too much of it can prove worse than permanent darkness*). Overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing skill.

Student Sample 9

In response to our world’s growing reliance on artificial light, writer Paul Bogard argues that natural darkness should be preserved in his article “Let There be dark”. He effectively builds his argument by using a personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions.

Bogard starts his article off by recounting a personal story – a summer spent on a Minnesota lake where there was “woods so dark that [his] hands disappeared before [his] eyes.” In telling this brief anecdote, Bogard challenges the audience to remember a time where they could fully amass themselves in natural darkness void of artificial light. By drawing in his readers with a personal encounter about night darkness, the author means to establish the potential for beauty, glamour, and awe-inspiring mystery that genuine darkness can possess. He builds his argument for the preservation of natural darkness by reminiscing for his readers a first-hand encounter that proves the “irreplaceable value of darkness.” This anecdote provides a baseline of sorts for readers to find credence with the author’s claims.

Bogard’s argument is also furthered by his use of allusion to art – Van Gogh’s “Starry Night” – and modern history – Paris’ reputation as “The City of Light”. By first referencing “Starry Night”, a painting generally considered to be undoubtedly beautiful, Bogard establishes that the natural magnificence of stars in a dark sky is definite. A world absent of excess artificial light could potentially hold the key to a grand, glorious night sky like Van Gogh’s according to the writer. This urges the readers to weigh the disadvantages of our world consumed by unnatural, vapid lighting. Furthermore, Bogard’s alludes to Paris as “the famed ‘city of light’”. He then goes on to state how Paris has taken steps to exercise more sustainable lighting practices. By doing this, Bogard creates a dichotomy between Paris’ traditionally alluded-to name and the reality of what Paris is becoming – no longer “the city of light”, but moreso “the city of light...before 2 AM”. This furthers his line of argumentation because it shows how steps can be and are being taken to preserve natural darkness. It shows that even a city that is literally famous for being constantly lit can practically address light pollution in a manner that preserves the beauty of both the city itself and the universe as a whole.

Finally, Bogard makes subtle yet efficient use of rhetorical questioning to persuade his audience that natural darkness preservation is essential. He asks the readers to consider “what the vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?” in a way that brutally plays to each of our emotions. By asking this question, Bogard draws out heartfelt ponderance from his readers about the affecting power of an untainted night sky. This rhetorical question tugs at the readers’ heartstrings; while the reader may have seen an unobscured night skyline before, the possibility that their child or grandchild will never get the chance sways them to see as Bogard sees. This strategy is definitively an appeal to pathos, forcing the audience to directly face an emotionally-charged inquiry that will surely spur some kind of response. By doing this, Bogard develops his argument, adding gutthral power to the idea that the issue of maintaining natural darkness is relevant and multifaceted.

Writing as a reaction to his disappointment that artificial light has largely permeated the prescence of natural darkness, Paul Bogard argues that we must preserve true, unaffected darkness. He builds this claim by making use of a personal anecdote, allusions, and rhetorical questioning.

This response scored a 4/4/4.

READING — 4

This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text through skillful use of paraphrases and direct quotations. The writer briefly summarizes the central idea of Bogard's piece (*natural darkness should be preserved; we must preserve true, unaffected darkness*) and presents many details from the source text that support Bogard's argument, such as referencing the personal anecdote that opens the passage and citing Bogard's use of *Paris' reputation as "The City of Light."* Although there are few long direct quotations from the source text, the writer is able to succinctly and accurately capture the entirety of Bogard's argument and is able to articulate how details in the source text interrelate (*Van Gogh's "Starry Night"...urges the readers to weigh the disadvantages of...unnatural, vapid lighting...He then goes on to state how Paris has taken steps to exercise more sustainable lighting practices*) and support Bogard's central claim. The response is also free of errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the source text and illustrates advanced reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 4

This response offers an insightful analysis of the source text and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the analytical task. In the analysis of Bogard's use of *personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions*, the writer is able to explain carefully and thoroughly how Bogard builds his argument over the course of the passage. For example, the writer offers a possible reason for why Bogard chose to open his argument with a personal anecdote (*In telling this brief anecdote, Bogard challenges the audience to remember a time where they could fully amass themselves in natural darkness void of artificial light*) and is also able to describe the overall effect of that choice on his audience: *By drawing in his readers with a personal encounter...the author means to establish the potential for beauty, glamour, and awe-inspiring mystery that genuine darkness can possess...reminiscing for his readers...proves the "irreplaceable value of darkness."* *This anecdote provides a baseline of sorts for readers to find credence with the author's claims.* Although each of these sentences by itself may appear to be based on assertions, the way that the writer builds this analysis indicates an understanding of the overall effect of Bogard's personal narrative, both in terms of its function in Bogard's argument (boosting the readers' *credence with the author's claims*) and in terms of how it affects his audience (convincing them to *fully amass themselves in darkness's potential for beauty, glamour, and awe-inspiring mystery*). Therefore, the writer has offered a thorough and well-considered evaluation of Bogard's choices and decisions in building his argument. This type of insightful analysis is evident throughout the response and indicates advanced analytical skill.

WRITING — 4

The response is cohesive and demonstrates highly effective use and command of language. The response contains a precise central claim (*He effectively builds his argument by using personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions*), and each body paragraph is tightly focused on those three elements of Bogard's text. There is a clear, deliberate progression of ideas within paragraphs and throughout the response as a whole. The writer's brief introduction and conclusion are skillfully written (*Writing as a reaction to his disappointment that artificial light has largely permeated the presence of natural darkness*) and perfectly encapsulate both the main ideas of Bogard's piece as well as the overall structure and argument of the writer's analysis. There is a consistent use of both precise word choice and insightful turns of phrase that illustrate the writer's advanced writing skill (*the natural magnificence of stars in a dark sky is definite; our world consumed by unnatural, vapid lighting; the affecting power of an untainted night sky*). Moreover, the response features a wide variety in sentence structures and many examples of complex sentences: *By doing this, Bogard creates a dichotomy between Paris' traditionally alluded-to name and the reality of what Paris is becoming – no longer 'the city of light', but moreso 'the city of light'...before 2 AM.* Overall, the response demonstrates a strong command of the conventions of written English and exemplifies advanced writing proficiency.

SAT Essay Scoring Rubric

Score	Reading	Analysis	Writing
4 Advanced	<p>The response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text.</p> <p>The response shows an understanding of the text’s central idea(s) and of most important details and how they interrelate, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the text.</p> <p>The response is free of errors of fact or interpretation with regard to the text.</p> <p>The response makes skillful use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating a complete understanding of the source text.</p>	<p>The response offers an insightful analysis of the source text and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the analytical task.</p> <p>The response offers a thorough, well-considered evaluation of the author’s use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements, and/or feature(s) of the student’s own choosing.</p> <p>The response contains relevant, sufficient, and strategically chosen support for claim(s) or point(s) made.</p> <p>The response focuses consistently on those features of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.</p>	<p>The response is cohesive and demonstrates a highly effective use and command of language.</p> <p>The response includes a precise central claim.</p> <p>The response includes a skillful introduction and conclusion. The response demonstrates a deliberate and highly effective progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay.</p> <p>The response has a wide variety in sentence structures. The response demonstrates a consistent use of precise word choice. The response maintains a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a strong command of the conventions of standard written English and is free or virtually free of errors.</p>
3 Proficient	<p>The response demonstrates effective comprehension of the source text.</p> <p>The response shows an understanding of the text’s central idea(s) and important details.</p> <p>The response is free of substantive errors of fact and interpretation with regard to the text.</p> <p>The response makes appropriate use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating an understanding of the source text.</p>	<p>The response offers an effective analysis of the source text and demonstrates an understanding of the analytical task.</p> <p>The response competently evaluates the author’s use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements, and/or feature(s) of the student’s own choosing.</p> <p>The response contains relevant and sufficient support for claim(s) or point(s) made.</p> <p>The response focuses primarily on those features of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.</p>	<p>The response is mostly cohesive and demonstrates effective use and control of language.</p> <p>The response includes a central claim or implicit controlling idea.</p> <p>The response includes an effective introduction and conclusion. The response demonstrates a clear progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay.</p> <p>The response has variety in sentence structures. The response demonstrates some precise word choice. The response maintains a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a good control of the conventions of standard written English and is free of significant errors that detract from the quality of writing.</p>

(continued)

Score	Reading	Analysis	Writing
2 Partial	<p>The response demonstrates some comprehension of the source text.</p> <p>The response shows an understanding of the text’s central idea(s) but not of important details.</p> <p>The response may contain errors of fact and/or interpretation with regard to the text.</p> <p>The response makes limited and/or haphazard use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating some understanding of the source text.</p>	<p>The response offers limited analysis of the source text and demonstrates only partial understanding of the analytical task.</p> <p>The response identifies and attempts to describe the author’s use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements, and/or feature(s) of the student’s own choosing, but merely asserts rather than explains their importance,</p> <p>Or one or more aspects of the response’s analysis are unwarranted based on the text.</p> <p>The response contains little or no support for claim(s) or point(s) made.</p> <p>The response may lack a clear focus on those features of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.</p>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no cohesion and limited skill in the use and control of language.</p> <p>The response may lack a clear central claim or controlling idea or may deviate from the claim or idea over the course of the response.</p> <p>The response may include an ineffective introduction and/or conclusion. The response may demonstrate some progression of ideas within paragraphs but not throughout the response.</p> <p>The response has limited variety in sentence structures; sentence structures may be repetitive. The response demonstrates general or vague word choice; word choice may be repetitive. The response may deviate noticeably from a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a limited control of the conventions of standard written English and contains errors that detract from the quality of writing and may impede understanding.</p>
1 Inadequate	<p>The response demonstrates little or no comprehension of the source text.</p> <p>The response fails to show an understanding of the text’s central idea(s), and may include only details without reference to central idea(s).</p> <p>The response may contain numerous errors of fact and/or interpretation with regard to the text.</p> <p>The response makes little or no use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating little or no understanding of the source text.</p>	<p>The response offers little or no analysis or ineffective analysis of the source text and demonstrates little or no understanding of the analytical task.</p> <p>The response identifies without explanation some aspects of the author’s use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements, and/or feature(s) of the student’s choosing,</p> <p>Or numerous aspects of the response’s analysis are unwarranted based on the text.</p> <p>The response contains little or no support for claim(s) or point(s) made, or support is largely irrelevant.</p> <p>The response may not focus on features of the text that are relevant to addressing the task,</p> <p>Or the response offers no discernible analysis (e.g., is largely or exclusively summary).</p>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no cohesion and inadequate skill in the use and control of language.</p> <p>The response may lack a clear central claim or controlling idea.</p> <p>The response lacks a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The response does not have a discernible progression of ideas.</p> <p>The response lacks variety in sentence structures; sentence structures may be repetitive. The response demonstrates general and vague word choice; word choice may be poor or inaccurate. The response may lack a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a weak control of the conventions of standard written English and may contain numerous errors that undermine the quality of writing.</p>