

The SAT[®]



Practice Essay #2



SCORE EXPLANATIONS



Student Sample 1

Dana Gioia builds an argument designed and commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts. Americans declined for eight of the nine major forms that are measured. College attendance ballooned, and access to information increased enormously.

Some of the younger kids showed in the arts and espically literature actually diminished. The significane of reading has become a persistent theme in the business world. The magazine issue of *Wired*, for example, sketches a new set of mental skill and habits proper to the 21st century, aptitudes deadely literally in character: not “linear, logical, and analytical talents.”

Reading is not timeless universal capability.

This response scored a 1/1/1.

READING — 1

This response demonstrates little comprehension of Gioia’s text. The response is almost entirely composed of ideas and phrases taken directly from the passage.

Although the writer does show that the writer has read the passage by referring to the *Wired* article (for example, the writer conveys that employers are looking for *aptitudes deadely literally in character: not “linear, logical, and analytical talents”*) and by including a notable point in the passage (*Reading is not [a] timeless universal capability*), there is very little evidence that the writer actually understands Gioia’s main argument, and the response is limited to presenting seemingly randomly chosen details from the passage without context or connection to the central idea. Overall, this response demonstrates inadequate reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 1

The writer demonstrates no real understanding of the analytical task and offers no discernible analysis of the source text. The writer does not describe Gioia’s use of evidence, reasoning, or stylistic or persuasive elements, nor does the writer attempt to explain the importance of these elements to Gioia’s argument. The brief response largely consists of ideas and phrases taken directly from the passage. Overall, this response demonstrates inadequate analysis.

WRITING — 1

This response demonstrates little cohesion and insufficient skill in the use and control of language. The writer includes no clear central claim or controlling idea and instead jumps into repeating ideas and phrases from the passage. There is no real organization or progression of ideas, either in paragraphs or in the essay as a whole. Furthermore, there is little to no evidence of the writer’s own writing ability since most of the response is a mash-up of brief snippets of Gioia’s text. Overall, this response demonstrates inadequate control of language and writing skill.

Student Sample 2

Dana Gioia has a very strong belief that the decline of reading in America among teenagers will significantly have a negative affect on society. Ever since economical issues have arose like the attendance for college, incomes and access to information, Gioia states that the interest in young Americans for art and literature has actually diminish.

Gioia builds an arguement by including many studies and their outcomes to persuade his audience that the decline of reading has become an issue within society. For example, Gioia references the 2001 study from the National Association of Manufactures. The study states that the company tested their employees on skill deficiencies and the outcomes were very shocking. Poor reading skills ranked second and 38 percent of employees declared that schools taught reading comprehension inefficiently.

Dana Gioia's arguement clearly states that the decreased interest in reading will have a negative effect because if workers cannot adequately work.

This response scored a 2/1/2.

READING — 2

Only some comprehension of the source text is demonstrated in this response. The writer clearly states Gioia's central argument (*the decline of reading in America among teenagers will significantly have a negative affect on society*) but provides scant details in support of this argument. The sole body paragraph focuses on the National Association of Manufacturers study. Here, the writer states that the *outcomes were very shocking* and *Poor reading skills ranked second and 38 percent of employees declared that schools taught reading comprehension inefficiently*, but provides no further summary or contextualization of this detail. The limited use of details from the passage reflects the writer's partial understanding of the source text.

ANALYSIS — 1

Analysis is inadequate in this response because the writer only identifies an element of persuasion (*Gioia builds an arguement by including many studies and their outcomes*) but does not explain its importance. Instead, the writer summarizes the argument (*to persuade his audience that the decline of reading has become an issue within society*). The writer then provides information from a study (*Poor reading skills ranked second and 38 percent of employees declared*), but again does not explain why it is important to Gioia's argument. The summary in place of analysis shows the writer has little to no understanding of the analytical task. For this reason, the analysis is inadequate.

WRITING — 2

This response demonstrates little cohesion and limited skill in the use and control of language. There is no clear, organizing central claim, as the introduction only focuses on summarizing the argument (for example, *Dana Gioia has a very strong belief that the decline of reading in America*). Word choice is repetitive (*a negative affect on society; an issue within society; a negative effect*), and sentences rely on subject-verb construction (*Dana Gioia has; Gioia builds; For example, Gioia references; Dana Gioia's arguement clearly states*). An overall progression of ideas is not apparent beyond the writer's attempt to bookend the tiny body paragraph with an ineffective introduction and conclusion. The limitations of this response mean it is only partially successful in writing skill.

Student Sample 3

Dana Gioia’s “Why Literature Matters” (2005) argues that arts participation by Americans has declined severely and that it will negatively affect society. His strategies are evidence to support claims and an intellectual diction. His purpose is to get leaders such as politicians to aid in bringing back literature into America.

In the second paragraph of Gioia’s essay he includes results of a 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. This is one of his several examples of evidence which support his claim. Gioia states the report concluded that, “The declines have been most severe among young adults (18-24),” which gives him credibility to say that it will affect society negatively because the young and new generation isn’t involved in the arts as much.

Throughout Gioia’s essay he writes with a formal and intellectual diction. This boosts his credibility once again by making him seem very well educated and that may convince the reader that he really knows what he is talking about. Words in his fourth paragraph such as, “longstanding,” “fundamental” , and “contemporary,” are part of his educated word choice.

Gioia’s claim is very well backed by his evidence from several studies and the fact that he seems to be a well educated man. His argument that the decline of reading in America will have a negative affect on society is strongly persuasive.

This response scored a 2/2/2.

READING — 2

Demonstrating limited comprehension of the source text, this response shows an understanding of Gioia’s central idea but not of many of the important supporting details. The first paragraph encapsulates the writer’s understanding of Gioia’s argument: *arts participation by Americans has declined severely and that it will negatively affect society...His purpose is to get leaders such as politicians to aid in bringing back literature into America.* The writer includes a few details that support this argument, but the details are generally presented without context linking them to the overall argument. For instance, in the first body paragraph, the writer presents the quote that *“The declines have been most severe among young adults (18-24),”* but only repeats what it means (*the young and new generation isn’t involved in the arts as much*) and superficially connects it to the argument (*it will affect society negatively*) without fully interpreting and contextualizing. This pattern continues in the next paragraph, which includes only single quotations of word choice without the larger context as to how they are used in claims that support Gioia’s central idea. For this reason, the response is limited in reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 2

Partial analysis is demonstrated in this response as the writer identifies elements of Gioia’s argument but does not fully explain their effect. For instance, in the paragraph about *diction*, the writer notes that the diction is *formal and intellectual*, which *boosts his credibility once again by making him seem very well educated and that may convince the reader that he really knows what he is talking about.* Examples of this formal word choice are provided, but no further explanation about why credibility would convince the reader, or what about these particular words made them so *formal and intellectual*,

is provided. The lack of development in this analysis means it is limited in its success. Overall, the student demonstrates only a partial understanding of the analytical task.

WRITING — 2

With little cohesion and demonstrating limited skill in the use and control of language, this response is an example of a partially successful essay. The writer provides two short body paragraphs that match the central idea's stated topics: *His strategies are evidence to support claims and an intellectual diction*. Ideas connect in simplistic ways (*In the second paragraph of Gioia's essay he includes results...This is one of his several examples*) within paragraphs, but there is a lack of overall progression and idea development in the essay, as the writer moves too quickly from idea to idea. Sentences have limited variety in both structure and word choice, leading to a repetitive and choppy reading experience: *His strategies are evidence to support claims and an intellectual diction. His purpose is to get leaders such as politicians and several mentions of the negative affect on society* are two examples. These weaknesses result in an overall limited response.

Student Sample 4

Literature is one of the most important knowledge that any human can develop and gain. Throughout history, literature has helped many people grow and become strong and bright. Some literature may be inspiring to people, while it might be boring and useless to others. Dana Gioia wrote and published an article “Why Literature Matters” in the New York Times, 2005. In the passage, Dana talks about how literature diminished. Most of the young adult between 18-24 is the source of the decline. Many people do not admire literature anymore, it is considered a troubling trend Dana states. Also book reading is also declining.

During the passage, Dana uses actual surveys to support her opinion on the decline of literature. In the 2002 survey of Public Participation in the Arts, conveys how the arts participation has declined. The most terrifying information is that reading literature is declining mostly by young adults. Some may think that the reason reading by young adults are declining is because of the technology and social media today. The young adults are mostly influence and involved in the internet, telephones, activities and also social interaction to have nay time for reading. The people who do not read are also in danger of suffering the consequences that go beyond literature.

Reading is not only good for you, but it effects the influence that you have in your future job. In the February issue of Wired magazine displays the mental skills and habbits that reading can do to people. Author Daniel Pinks states “the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty, to detect patterns and opportunities, to craft a satisfying narrative.” Basically what he is saying is that reading does not only give you knowledge but it opens up your mind and gives you a greater inspiration and imagination. These talents and skills are great for the buisness and management world. Buisness leaders must have imagination and creativity to be different from the rest and in order to make their way to the top.

A 2003 study of 15-16 year olds concluded that “Young people do not understand the ideals of citizenship, and their appreciation and support of American democracy is limited.” Without reading, people will not know historical and political information that readers know. “Reading A Risk” the issue from Arts Endowment conveys that people who read are more civically engaged then non readers. Readers scored two to four times more likely to perform charity work, visit a museum or attend a sporting event. Literary reading can provide the historical and civic knowledge that people need. The decline of literary reading may have a long term social and economic problem. This is because they do not have the knowledge to pursue the job they want and may not have the social mobility to converse with the people they need to.

Reading does not require much skill, you have to be inspired to do it. As Dana states, “Advanced literacy is a specific intellectual skill and social habbit that depends on a great many educational, cultural, and economic factors.” In the future, the more declines we have in reading may effect the knowledge of the people which can cause our nation to be less informed, active and independent minded.

This response scored a 3/1/3.

READING — 3

Effective comprehension of the source text is demonstrated in this response. The introduction begins to cement the writer's understanding of the central idea with statements like *Dana talks about how literature diminished* and *Many people do not admire literature anymore, it is considered a troubling trend*, and the writer's understanding is sharpened later in the response when noting that *The decline of literary reading may have a long term social and economic problem* and *In the future, the more declines we have in reading may effect the knowledge of the people which can cause our nation to be less informed, active and independent minded*. The essay contains contextualization of many of the supporting details that Gioia employs in his argument, including summaries of the 2002 survey of *Public Participation in the Arts* and Daniel Pink's article in the February issue of *Wired magazine*. Details are paraphrased without substantive errors and with enough interpretation to show the writer's comprehension, like *The decline of literary reading may have a long term social and economic problem*. *This is because they do not have the knowledge to pursue the job they want and may not have the social mobility to converse with the people they need to*. The understanding illustrated through these details demonstrates effective comprehension of the source text.

ANALYSIS — 1

The writer demonstrates little to no understanding of the analytical task by providing only a few identifications of elements of the argument and not explaining their importance. Much of the response is focused on summarizing the source passage, but there are statements like *Dana uses actual surveys to support her opinion on the decline of literature* and *The most terrifying information is* in which the writer identifies an argumentative element (*surveys; terrifying information*) but does nothing to explain why or how it helps Gioia's persuasiveness and instead links them to summary of the argument (like *The most terrifying information is that reading literature is declining mostly by young adults*). Because of the focus on summary and not analysis, analysis in this response is inadequate.

WRITING — 3

This response demonstrates the writer's ability to compose a mostly effective essay. While the introduction establishes the general topic of *how literature diminished*, it is lacking a clear central idea that orders the remainder of the response. Body paragraphs are focused on different examples of evidence from the source text, and the writer establishes a progression of ideas by linking ideas in simple but clear ways (*Author Daniel Pinks states...Basically what he is saying is; The decline of literary reading...This is because they do not have*). There is some precise word choice (*admire; terrifying; suffering*), and sentences have enough variety to avoid repetition. Although some syntax is awkward (*Literature is one of the most important knowledge; The young adults are mostly influence and involved in the internet*), these mistakes are typical in first-draft, timed writing and do not interfere with the writer's ability to impart meaning. On balance, this response is proficient in writing.

Student Sample 5

In the article “Why literature matters” (2005) Dana Gioia expresses that American arts have changed and that many people are beginning to no longer read. He argues that intellectual abilities are decreasing. Gioia expresses reasoning, includes evidence, and establishes a word choice. His purpose is to encourage more people to begin reading again in order to maintain a higher intellectual level. He targets everyone essentially as his audience.

Gioia expresses reasoning in paragraph five to state that the decline in reading will lead to consequences and people will have a lower set of mental skills. He specifically states “the ability to create artistic and emotional ability...to craft a satisfying narrative,” will disappear if people no longer read. This causes the audience to think on a broader level and want to be able to express their talents.

Gioia also includes facts and statistics in paragraph six in order to capture the audience so they realize that intellectual state of peoples minds are actually dropping. He inserts, “poor reading skills ranked second, 38 percent of employers complained that local schools inadequately taught reading comprehension.” Gioia inserts this to grab people’s attention, people who teach, such as schools to be sure that children have good reading comprehension at an early age.

Finally Gioia displays proper word choice throughout the text to express the fact that having a good reading comprehension will broaden your vocabulary. He expresses the word intellectual multiple times for effect. Gioia expects that people will notice that they do need to read on past events as well as other counts to be able to relate to society.

Gioia’s goal is to reach out to his audience and to encourage them to read, and apply their intellectual abilities to their everyday life. He has a sense of hope that people express their abilities to grow and be fruitful with their social encounters.

This response scored a 3/2/3.

READING — 3

This response demonstrates effective comprehension of Gioia’s text. The writer provides appropriate textual evidence (paraphrases and quotations) to capture both the main ideas of the passage (*American arts have changed and that many people are beginning to no longer read and intellectual abilities are decreasing*) and some important supporting details (*He specifically states “the ability to create artistic and emotional ability...to craft a satisfying narrative,” will disappear if people no longer read*). There are no substantive errors of fact or interpretation in this essay. On the whole, the writer demonstrates a complete understanding of Gioia’s argument, especially the relationship between declining literary reading and social awareness (or *social encounters*). Overall, this response demonstrates proficient reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 2

The writer demonstrates a limited understanding of the analytical task and offers only a partial analysis of how Gioia builds his argument. The writer identifies some analytical elements of Gioia’s text (such as reasoning, facts, and word choice) and attempts to describe how these elements function in the passage. However, throughout the response, the writer provides only single assertions about elements of argumentation

in Gioia's text, like *This causes the audience to think on a broader level and want to be able to express their talents* and *Gioia inserts this to grab people's attention, people who teach, such as schools*. These instances of analysis, here most commonly found at the end of paragraphs, illustrate some understanding on the writer's part of how Gioia builds his argument; however, the writer does not provide an effective discussion or evaluation of how evidence, reasoning, or stylistic and persuasive elements are used to build the argument. Overall, this response demonstrates only partially successful analysis.

WRITING — 3

This response is mostly cohesive and demonstrates broadly effective use and control of language. Starting with an effective introductory paragraph that includes a clear central claim (*Gioia expresses reasoning, includes evidence, and establishes a word choice. His purpose is to encourage more people to begin reading again in order to maintain a higher intellectual level*), the writer structures the essay clearly, if formulaically, around the three points of reasoning, evidence, and word choice. Each paragraph remains on topic, and there is a clear progression of ideas within paragraphs and across the essay as a whole. The response maintains a formal style and objective tone while demonstrating a variety of sentence structures. Although sentence structures are occasionally awkward (*Gioia expects that people will notice that they do need to read on past events as well as other counts to be able to relate to society*), language errors do not detract significantly from the quality of writing. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient writing.

Student Sample 6

Dana Gioia claims that the decline of reading will have a negative impact on society. He uses persuasive techniques and provides the reader with credible facts backing up his claim.

Gioia states that during the past quarter century, American interest in literature has decreased. In 2002, a study showed that reading literature has declined, especially in young adults. A decline in reading has effected the business world tremendously. “In 2001, the National Association of Manufacturers polled its members on skill deficiencies. Poor reading skills ranked second, and 38 percent of employers complained that local schools inadequately taught reader comprehension” (Gioia 3). When you look at the decline of reading in the civic sphere, it has also had its consequences. “...literary readers are markedly more civically engaged than nonreaders, scoring two to four times more likely to perform charity work, visit a museum, or attend a sporting event” (Gioia 3). Gioia uses many factual examples of the negative consequences due to the decrease in literary skills. Providing the reader with many examples creates ethos. The author is a credible source of information which makes the passage believable and effective. Gioia also uses quotations from different sources such as Wired Magazine, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Association of Manufacturers, “Reading at Risk”, and National Endowment for the Arts. All of these sources give a variety of facts and information, but all agree on the same thing: that there has been a decline in literature. This is a good use of literary techniques because it backs up what Gioia is trying to prove to the audience.

Gioia uses various stylistic elements to add power to the ideas expressed. His word choice greatly impacts his essay by better explaining his topic in a more detailed and interesting way. In the first paragraph, Gioia describes how income, college attendance, and access to information all increased by using words such as ballooned, enormously, and unforeseen. When he describes literature, he simply says it diminished. His word choice shows a great spectrum of where literature lies compared to the other three. In paragraph three, Gioia states, “That individuals at a time of crucial intellectual and emotional development bypass the joys and challenges of literature is a troubling trend” (Gioia 2). By using the words crucial, emotional, and joys, Gioia convinces the reader that it is important to have literary skills and those who don't are missing out. Using particular words allows Gioia to more easily persuade the audience to agree with his point of view. Gioia builds an argument based on facts and a variety of sources that agree with his stance on literature. His word choice and knowledge of the subject both play a huge role when defending his claim. The audience is more likely to take his side if they feel he is passionate and well informed on the subject, which he proves to be.

This response scored a 3/3/3.

READING — 3

This response demonstrates effective comprehension of the source text. The writer accurately captures the central idea of Gioia's passage (*the decline of reading will have a negative impact on society*). The writer also accurately paraphrases (*In 2002, a study showed that reading literature has declined, especially in young adults*) and directly quotes important details from the source text, demonstrating effective comprehension. In the first body paragraph, for example, the writer demonstrates an understanding of Gioia's point that *the negative consequences due to the decrease in literary skills* affects both *the business world* and *the civic sphere* by providing direct quotations from the source text. The inclusion of relevant details and the appropriate use of textual evidence demonstrate a proficient understanding of Gioia's text.

ANALYSIS — 3

This response offers an effective analysis of the source text and demonstrates a sufficient understanding of the analytical task. In the first body paragraph, the writer analyzes how Gioia uses facts to establish *ethos* in the passage (*Gioia uses many factual examples of the negative consequences due to the decrease in literary skills. Providing the reader with many examples creates ethos*). The writer then goes on to explain the importance of creating *ethos*: *The author is a credible source of information which makes the passage believable and effective*. In this extension of the idea, the writer conveys the effect on the audience of Gioia's factual examples and use of sources. Although the writer later provides an unexplained assertion at the end of the paragraph (*This is a good use of literary techniques because it backs up what Gioia is trying to prove to the audience*), the response provides more effective analysis again in the next paragraph when the writer discusses the effects of Gioia's word choice on his audience (*By using the words crucial, emotional, and joys, Gioia convinces the reader that it is important to have literary skills and those who don't are missing out. Using particular words allows Gioia to more easily persuade the audience to agree with his point of view*). Although each of those sentences by itself is an assertion, taken together they extend into effective analysis. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient analysis.

WRITING — 3

This response is mostly cohesive and demonstrates effective use of language. The writer provides a brief but generally effective introduction that lays out a central claim (*He uses persuasive techniques and provides the reader with credible facts backing up his claim*). The two body paragraphs are loosely structured around Gioia's word choice and knowledge of the subject (*factual examples* and *different sources*). Although the writer takes some time to clarify the controlling idea of the first body paragraph, the details and ideas in that paragraph all work toward supporting the claim that Gioia's factual examples and sources *all agree on the same thing: that there has been a decline in literature*. The second body paragraph is more clearly focused and demonstrates a clear progression of ideas. The response also includes an effective conclusion that is evident despite not being separated from the body of the essay by a paragraph break (*Gioia builds an argument based on facts and a variety of sources that agree with his stance on literature. His word choice and knowledge of the subject both play a huge role when defending his claim*). The response is free from significant errors that detract from the quality of writing. The minor problems in focus and structure early in the response are typical of even proficient first-draft writing and decrease as the writer progresses through the analysis of Gioia's argument. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient writing.

Student Sample 7

Stepping outside, a person in the United States can instantly see how prevalent a role technology has in our lives. From the smart phones that connect people globally through a few touches on the screen, to the airplanes roaring across the sky, the astounding capabilities and convenience that technology offers is unmatched. In “Why literature matters”, an article from the New York Times Corporation by Dana Gioia, Gioia explores how living in the high-tech 21st century has unfortunately deteriorated the percentage of Americans who read literature. Gioia is able to sway his audience to devote more time to the simple task of reading works of intellectual value through fearful diction and compelling consequences associated with being illiterate.

Through his article, Gioia implements fearful diction to express his concern that America’s future is in the hands of those who are less informed and comprehending of situations; economic and social. By labeling the diminished percentage of those who read as “worrisome” and “troubling” Gioia is able to convey the negativity of the lack of literacy. Upon reading the article, and mulling over how Gioia feels about America’s current reading levels, a reader is inclined to acknowledge that illiteracy is detrimental to American society and something that needs to be repaired; the point Gioia was trying to impose.

Also in the article, Gioia reveals to the audience the consequences of this trend. By exposing the domino effect of illiteracy into other large aspects of American society such as electing leaders, and the business world, Gioia succeeds in alarming the audience to the seriousness of the issue and instilling a sense of urgency to mend the problem. Although the facts alone are eye-opening to any reader, by backing the facts up with big name organizations like “The National Association of Manufacturers” and the “National Conference of State Legislatures”, Gioia is able to cement his argument and therefore be more empowered in persuading his audience on the importance of reading.

Lastly, Gioia’s target audience plays a major role in achieving the goal to propel his argument into a plan of action. Writing for the New York Times, Gioia can likely expect his audience to be educated and even have some influence in American society. By appealing his argument to people who are in control of others who are a part of the illiterate population, Gioia can put faith into the hope that his audience will make the problem he presented a solution. An example of this would be if a school board official were to read his article, and then decided the matter to be so pressing that he/she took the necessary actions to propose rules for his/her respective school district. Due to the profound impact Gioia’s article can have on a large quality of Americans, his argument is strengthened exponentially.

Ultimately, Gioia is able to relay a strong and persuasive argument regarding the decline of Americans reading and why it needs to be fixed through concerned word choice, compelling consequences, and masterfully writing to inspire a specific audience.

This response scored a 3/3/4.

READING — 3

This response demonstrates effective comprehension of the source text in terms of both the central ideas and important details in Gioia's piece. The writer accurately paraphrases the main idea of Gioia's text (*living in the high-tech 21st century has unfortunately deteriorated the percentage of Americans who read literature*). The writer also includes important details from the text that illustrate an effective comprehension of the passage, such as when the writer summarizes the consequences of the decrease in reading on American society (*the domino effect of illiteracy into other large aspects of American society such as electing leaders, and the business world*). The response is free from errors of fact and interpretation, and the writer's ability to paraphrase accurately the main ideas and supporting details of Gioia's piece indicates proficient reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 3

The response offers an effective analysis of the source text, demonstrating a proficient understanding of the analytical task. In the second body paragraph, for example, the writer effectively analyzes Gioia's use of what the writer calls *fearful diction*, coming to the conclusion that *Upon reading the article, and mulling over how Gioia feels about America's current reading levels, a reader is inclined to acknowledge that illiteracy is detrimental to American society and something that needs to be repaired*. The writer is thus able to articulate the effect of Gioia's diction on his audience, signaling an understanding of the analytical task. This effective analysis continues when the writer discusses Gioia's use of *eye-opening* facts about the consequences of the decline in reading and when the writer suggests the potential effect of Gioia's argument on his *target audience* via a hypothetical scenario (*By appealing his argument to people who are in control of others...Gioia can put faith into the hope that his audience will make the problem he presented a solution. An example of this would be if a school board official were to read his article, and then...took the necessary actions*). Although providing this scenario indicates strong analytical skill on the part of the writer, the discussion is elaborated only enough to demonstrate proficiency and does not demonstrate the thoroughness and insightfulness expected at the advanced level.

WRITING — 4

This response is cohesive and demonstrates highly effective use and command of language. The writer presents a generally skillful introduction, opening with a brief narrative about the pervasiveness of technology in twenty-first-century life before summarizing the passage and providing a thoughtful central claim: *Gioia is able to sway his audience to devote more time to the simple task of reading works of intellectual value through fearful diction and compelling consequences associated with being illiterate*. The writer uses precise, original word choice and phrases throughout the response (*astounding capabilities; the domino effect; mulling over; instilling a sense of urgency; strengthened exponentially*). The body paragraphs are each tightly focused and are deliberately structured to advance the writer's analysis of Gioia's use of *diction*, *consequences*, and *audience*. The response maintains a formal style and objective tone, contains clear transitions (*also; lastly; ultimately*) to guide the reader, and ends with a concise and precise summary conclusion (*Ultimately, Gioia is able to relay a strong and persuasive argument regarding the decline of Americans reading and why it needs to be fixed through concerned word choice, compelling consequences, and masterfully writing to inspire a specific audience*). Overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing.

Student Sample 8

From the very beginning of this passage, we can see that author, Dana Gioia, has a concern with literary knowledge declining; even the title shows his concern. Gioia uses evidence, reasoning, and diction to persuade us to agree with him on three points, that literary knowledge is declining, that literary knowledge is very important, and that consequences shall ensue if nothing is done about our apathy towards literature.

Gioia cites the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts on the fact that “arts participation by Americans has declined for eight of the nine major forms that are measured.” One percentage Gioia noted as particularly staggering was the decline in reading literature. Not only that, but Gioia also brings up that the Arts Endowment issued the reading portion of the survey as a separate report. Since Gioia is mainly using facts in this key point, and not opinions, evidence is used instead of reasoning, however, he did use distinct diction. Stating that he findings in the study are not only ‘severe’, but also ‘worrisome’. Adjectives like this add more weight to his words.

Gioia’s next key point is just how important literature is. Gioia states that “the significance of reading has become a persistent theme in the new business world,” and also cites multiple quotes by Wired Magazine explaining how people with literary knowledge are better suited for the business world. That leaders seek “the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty” is more important than “linear, logical, and analytic talents”. Gioia even puts in a worker’s perspective from the 2001 National Association of Manufacturers poll. Evidence showed reading was the 2nd highest deficiency amongst workers, and that “38 percent of employers complained that local schools inadequately taught reading comprehension”. For reasoning, Gioia purposely used evidence that is very relative to the common man or woman, especially relative to younger Americans by saying “That individuals at a time of crucial intellectual and emotional development bypass the joys and challenges.” (notice how joys and challenges is said to further praise literature, and persuade the reader)... “of literature is a troubling trend,” again using diction to further persuade readers.

As a closing point, Gioia touches on the consequences of illiteracy. “The decline of literary reading foreshadows serious long term social and economic problems” That is Gioia’s main point on these consequences, and uses evidence in the previous paragraph to support it. Gioia mentions the surprising finding in “Reading at Risk” that literary readers are markedly more civically engaged than nonreaders. In his final paragraph, Gioia states that as we lose our literary intelligence “our nation becomes less informed, active, and independent minded”, and that these qualities we as a nation “cannot afford to lose.” These bold statements hammer in to the reader just how significant literature really is, in many different aspects of our life.

This persuasive passage used enough evidence, reasoning, and careful diction to not only make readers take a stance on literacy, but also provoke readers to take action on what he seemingly considers an epidemic that is truly detrimental to the nation.

This response scored a 4/2/4.

READING — 4

This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text. The writer briefly summarizes the main idea of Gioia's passage (the author's *concern with literary knowledge declining*) and includes an abundance of important details from the text through a mixture of appropriate quotations and paraphrases. Moreover, the writer exhibits an understanding of how details relate to Gioia's main idea and how this interrelation creates meaning for the reader. For example, the writer points out how Gioia establishes that *"the significance of reading has become a persistent them[e] in the new business world"* by the author's use of *multiple quotes* *buy Wired Magazine*. The writer then connects that information to a 2001 poll cited in the next paragraph of Gioia's text (*Gioia even puts in a worker's perspective from the 2001 National Association of Manufacturers poll*). The writer, then, shows understanding of how different details in Gioia's text contribute to an understanding of the whole. The response is also free of errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 2

The writer demonstrates a limited understanding of the analytical task and offers only a partial analysis of how Gioia builds his argument. The writer does identify some important rhetorical elements of Gioia's text (*evidence, reasoning, and diction*) and attempts to describe how these elements function in the source text. However, these moments of analysis, all of which focus on Gioia's use of diction, never move past assertions. For example, in the first body paragraph, the writer identifies Gioia's use of *distinct diction* (*Stating that [t]he findings in the study are not only "severe", but also "worrisome"*) and then asserts that *Adjectives like this add more weight to his words*. A pattern of assertion-based analysis continues throughout the response (*These bold statements hammer in to the reader just how significant literature really is, in many different aspects of our life*). Both of these examples illustrate some limited understanding of the analytical task. However, the writer never attempts to explain, for example, how or why these adjectives or statements persuade the reader or what effect Gioia's diction has on his audience. For this reason, this response demonstrates only partially successful analysis.

WRITING — 4

The writer demonstrates highly effective use and command of language in this cohesive essay. The introductory paragraph includes a precise central claim that lays out the rather complex structure of the response (*Gioia uses evidence, reasoning, and diction to persuade us to agree with him on three points, that literary knowledge is declining, that literary knowledge is very important, and that consequences shall ensue if nothing is done about our apathy towards literature*). The writer then constructs a tightly controlled response that demonstrates a deliberate and highly effective progression of ideas, both within paragraphs and throughout the response. For example, the second body paragraph (focused on Gioia's claim that literary knowledge is declining) follows the three-pronged approach, set forth in the opening paragraph, of examining Gioia's use of evidence, reasoning, and diction. Each paragraph stays on topic while covering each of the three rhetorical elements of Gioia's argument. The writer uses precise word choice (*particularly staggering; consequences shall ensue; an epidemic that is truly detrimental to the nation*) and a wide variety of sophisticated sentence structures. This response demonstrates a strong command of standard written English and is virtually free of errors. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing.

Student Sample 9

In the article, “Why Literature Matters” by Dana Gioia, Gioia makes an argument claiming that the levels of interest young Americans have shown in art in recent years have declined and that this trend is a severe problem with broad consequences. Strategies Gioia employs to support his argument include citation of compelling polls, reports made by prominent organizations that have issued studies, and a quotation from a prominent author. Gioia’s overall purpose in writing this article appears to be to draw attention towards shortcomings in American participation in the arts. His primary audience would be the American public in general with a significant focus on millennials.

In his introduction paragraph, Gioia employs a distinct contrast with several listed positive changes in American life such as increased college attendance and increases in income, with the focus of his article: the fact that the interest young Americans show in art has declined. This tool is utilized to establish an emphasis on his primary point by highlighting it as a negative development relative to other changes in American life. This literary tool serves a strong purpose by acting as a vehicle to draw the audience into the principle issue addressed by the writing.

In paragraph 5, Gioia utilizes a synergistic reference to two separate sources of information that serves to provide a stronger compilation of support for his main topic. By citing a quotation from author Daniel Pink who states, that the talents individuals require for success in the 21st Century are not, “linear, logical, analytic talents,” but ones that provide, “the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty, to detect patterns and opportunities,” and “to craft a satisfying narrative,” Gioia is able to build his point with the agreement of a respected individual. He then immediately follows with a statement that business leaders like to see, “imagination, creativity, and higher order thinking” as qualities for individuals in management positions. This dual utilization of claims from two separate sources conveys to Gioia’s audience the sense that the skills built through immersion in the arts are vital to succeeding in the modern workplace which aids in logically leading his audience to the conclusion that a loss of experience with the arts may foreshadow troubling results.

In paragraph 6, Gioia follows up on the point established in paragraph 5 by introducing a negative example of the consequences of loss of the arts with a focus on literacy. Gioia cites a 2001 poll on the National Association of American Manufacturers stating that poor reading skills ranked second among its employees surveyed for skill deficiencies while 38% of employees believed local schools inadequately taught reading comprehension. Gioia’s presentation of a numerical statistic based on a major employer adds significant logical weight to his argument by providing an example of the effects of a deficit in experience with art and literature. This may effect his audience by providing a more accurate depiction of the true problems caused by disconnection with arts while possibly choosing an example they could personally relate to.

Overall, Gioia provides an strong logical argument that disconnection with the arts is troubling for America. He employs strong logical connections and establishes real-world foundations for his point.

This response scored a 4/3/4.

READING — 4

This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text and illustrates an understanding of the interrelation between the central idea and important details in Gioia's piece. The writer accurately paraphrases the central idea of Gioia's text (*the levels of interest young Americans have shown in art in recent years have declined and that this trend is a severe problem with broad consequences*). The writer then exhibits an understanding of the details in Gioia's text and how they work together to convey the main point (*Gioia is able to build his point; He then immediately follows with; In paragraph 6, Gioia follows up on the point established in paragraph 5*). The response is also free of errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

ANALYSIS — 3

The response demonstrates good understanding of the analytical task by offering an effective analysis of the source text. The writer is able to move past simple identification of and assertions about the analytical elements in Gioia's text to discuss how these elements contribute to Gioia's argument. For example, the writer identifies the *distinct contrast* that Gioia establishes early in the passage between *positive changes in American life* and *the fact that the interest young Americans show in art has declined*. The writer then explains that Gioia uses this contrast to *establish an emphasis on his primary point by highlighting it as a negative development*. The writer then competently evaluates the effect of this element of Gioia's text by explaining that *This literary tool serves a strong purpose by acting as a vehicle to draw the audience into the principle issue addressed by the writing*. This pattern of effective analysis continues throughout the remainder of the response and indicates proficient analytical skill. The writer clearly can delineate and evaluate the impact of Gioia's argumentative moves, but this analysis lacks the thoroughness and completeness needed to receive a higher score. For example, there is no indication of how or why these moves are effective.

WRITING — 4

The writer demonstrates highly effective use and command of language in this cohesive response. The response includes a precise central claim (*Strategies Gioia employs to support his argument include citation of compelling polls, reports made by prominent organizations that have issued studies, and a quotation from a prominent author*). The skillful introduction establishes the framework for the writer's organizational structure, which is followed throughout the response. Although the subsequent discussion is not laid out as explicitly as the simple three-pronged thesis suggests, each body paragraph remains on topic and demonstrates a deliberate progression of ideas, and the response as a whole remains focused and cohesive. The response contains many examples of sophisticated sentence structure, notable vocabulary, and precise word choice (*This dual utilization of claims from two separate sources conveys to Gioia's audience the sense that the skills built through immersion in the arts are vital to succeeding in the modern workplace which aids in logically leading his audience to the conclusion that a loss of experience with the arts may foreshadow troubling results*). Overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing ability.

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>