

**The SAT<sup>®</sup>**



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# Practice Essay #3



**SCORE EXPLANATIONS**



## Student Sample 1

Adam B. Summers wrote an article about why plastic bag should not be banned from the grocery stores. This article proves that Summers built an argument to persuade his audience. Because his article gave out facts and details. Also, that it expanded on the reason why we need them. Finally, that the article explains how it would affect us.

The first reason is that the article explain as to why it would affect us. It could affect the use of carrying items. Plastic bags are useful do to the fact that it carries a lot more items than paper bags. That it can support the weight of the items. Plastic bags are more useful in any kind of way.

**This response scored a 1/1/1.**

### READING — 1

This response demonstrates little comprehension of the source text. Although the writer includes Summers’s central claim that plastic bags *should not be banned from the grocery stores*, there are no other textual ideas provided to demonstrate understanding of the argument. Instead, there are the writer’s own ideas about the merits of plastic bags, that *they are useful do to the fact that it carries a lot more items than paper bags* and that *it can support the weight of the items*. Without having provided any additional textual details beyond the single idea that Summers believes plastic bags should not be banned, the writer has demonstrated inadequate comprehension of the source text.

### ANALYSIS — 1

The response offers little analysis of the source text, demonstrating ineffective understanding of the analytical task. Although the writer identifies that the *article gave out facts and details*, the writer doesn’t include examples of facts or details or explain why any particular facts or details would have been persuasive to readers. Thus, the response provides no discernible analysis beyond the mention of *facts and details* and shows inadequate skill in this dimension.

### WRITING — 1

This response demonstrates little cohesion and inadequate skill in the use of language. The writer’s thesis is borrowed directly from the text of the prompt itself (*Summers built an argument to persuade his audience. Because his article gave out facts and details*), and the ideas that follow do not connect to that thesis, as the second paragraph merely contains the writer’s own thoughts. There is little evidence that ideas connect logically—sentences end abruptly, and ideas are divided between sentence fragments (*This article proves that Summers built an argument to persuade his audience. Because his article gave out facts and details*). Ideas are also expressed vaguely (*The first reason is that the article explain as to why it would affect us*) and problems with subject-verb agreement are prevalent (*why plastic bag should not be banned; Plastic bags are useful do to the fact that it carries*). Because of these issues, the writing is inadequate.

## Student Sample 2

Adams B. Summers argues what the damages of a proposed plastic bag ban would do if the legislation gets passed. Summers presents his argument well, and his use of fact/examples, reasoning to develop ideas, and persuasive word choice build his argument. He uses examples/facts, such as plastic bags only make up 1.6 percent of all solid waste. His excellent word choice that appeals to your mind such as him saying the politician hopes to bring up the bill again to essentially “recycle rather than trash it”. He uses reasoning that makes sense to a reader stating how many jobs may be potentially lost due to the bill and how much waste is really caused by plastic bags v. paper.

**This response scored a 2/1/1.**

### READING — 2

This response demonstrates some comprehension of Summers’s text. The writer indicates an understanding of the main idea of Summers’s argument (*Summers argues what the damages of a proposed plastic bag ban would do if the legislation gets passed*). The writer also selects some important details from the source text (*plastic bags only make up 1.6 percent of all solid waste; many jobs may be potentially lost due to the bill*). However, the writer does not expand on the significance of these details in relation to the main ideas of Summers’s text. The response makes limited and haphazard use of textual evidence with little or no interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates partially successful reading comprehension.

### ANALYSIS — 1

This response demonstrates little understanding of the analytical task. Although the writer identifies some argumentative elements in Summers’s text (*his use of fact/examples, reasoning to develop ideas, and persuasive word choice*), the writer does not explain how these elements build Summers’s argument. Instead, the writer only identifies these aspects of the source text and names an example of each, with no further analysis (*He uses examples/facts, such as plastic bags only make up 1.6 percent of all solid waste*). There are two moments in which the writer ineffectively attempts to analyze Summers’s use of word choice and reasoning (*His excellent word choice that appeals to your mind* and *He uses reasoning that makes sense to a reader*). However, there is not enough textual evidence given to support these claims. For example, the writer does not analyze Summers’s use of specific words and instead falls back into summary of the passage. Overall, this response demonstrates inadequate analysis.

### WRITING — 1

This response demonstrates little cohesion and limited skill in the use of language. The response is only one brief paragraph and lacks a recognizable introduction and conclusion. Although there is a central claim, taken directly from the prompt (*Summers presents his argument well, and his use of fact/examples, reasoning to develop ideas, and persuasive word choice build his argument*), there is no discernible progression of ideas in the response. Sentences tend to run on and demonstrate grammar errors (*His excellent word choice that appeals to your mind such as him saying the politician hopes to bring up the bill again to essentially “recycle rather than trash it.”*) Furthermore, sentence structures are repetitive. Because of the brief nature of the response, there is not enough evidence of writing ability to merit a score higher than 1. Overall, this response demonstrates inadequate writing.

## Student Sample 3

Adam B. Summers builds an argument to persuade his audience that plastic shopping bags should not be banned by finding good evidence, getting his audience attention, and by being confident about what he going against. Why else would someone else get audience?

Adam B. Summers did a good job of finding good evidence to support what he didn't want to see happen. In the article every paragraph had some type of evidence whether he agreed with it or disagreed with it. He also brought up good points like the fact that tax payers would have to pay money to actually get new bags to be put in every store. Bringing this up will get tax payers on his side. I don't think the tax payers would like that because seeing that they have to pay for new bags in stores when stores already have bags, they rather pay for something they that will actually invest like for their kids school instead of something thats going to be wasted anyway. Summers also made another point about 2,000 of people would lose their jobs if they take away took away plastic bags. Why would people risk their jobs and then pay taxes for what made them lose their job in the first place? Plastic bags are also easier to recycle, everybody recycle their plastic bags. Using paper bags

**This response scored a 2/2/2.**

### READING — 2

This response demonstrates partial understanding of the source text by recognizing Summers's main argument *that plastic shopping bags should not be banned* and then by including a few additional details from the source text. The writer cites *the fact that tax payers would have to pay money to actually get new bags to be put in every store* and that *about 2,000 of people would lose their jobs if they take away took away plastic bags*. The writer has thus demonstrated understanding of a couple of the points Summers made, but without more textual details or the writer's own summary of the passage, the response is limited in its demonstration of reading comprehension.

### ANALYSIS — 2

The response provides a little analysis, demonstrating partial understanding of the analytical task. The writer identifies Summers's use of *evidence, getting his audience attention, and by being confident about what he going against*, but the writer only addresses *finding good evidence* in the remaining text. In this discussion, the writer first makes vague claims about the use of evidence in the source text (*Summers did a good job of finding good evidence to support what he didn't want to see happen. In the article every paragraph had some type of evidence whether he agreed with it or disagreed with it.*) The writer then goes on to identify that Summers *brought up good points like the fact that tax payers would have to pay money to...get new bags...in every store* and then asserts that *Bringing this up will get tax payers on his side. I don't think the tax payers would like that because seeing that they have to pay for new bags in stores when stores already have bags, they rather pay for something [else]*. Here, the writer has gone beyond merely identifying the presence of analytical features to making a claim about the effect this will have on the audience, creating partial analysis. Without having expanded on this or other ideas about the use of persuasive features, however, analysis remains limited.

## WRITING — 2

The response demonstrates limited cohesion and little skill in the use and control of language. Although the writer provides a brief introduction that cites Summers's main argument and includes the writer's thesis, the response does not live up to the promise of the thesis. The writer has one additional paragraph after the introduction, which covers *good evidence* and demonstrates that the writer can connect and sequence some sentences, but without more text, the writer isn't able to demonstrate cohesion across multiple paragraphs or to address additional elements raised in the thesis.

The response also shows weak control of the conventions of standard written English (*getting his audience attention; by being confident about what he going against. Why else would someone else get audience?*) and loses control in the one attempt at long sentence structure: *I don't think the tax payers would like that because seeing that they have to pay for new bags in stores when stores already have bags, they rather pay for something they that will actually invest like for their kids school instead of something thats going to be wasted anyway.* Overall, the response demonstrates partially successful writing.

## Student Sample 4

Adam B. Summers brings up several good points as to why plastic shopping bags should not be banned. He explains how the EPA says all plastic bags only make up 1.6 percent of all waste, and plastic shopping bags only contribute 0.3 percent to all the waste. The bags hardly make up any waste and require less energy to make compared to paper or cotton bags. Plastic bags produce fewer greenhouse gasses, 80 percent less waste and less water to make them over paper or cotton reusable bags. Reusable bags also have a higher risk of giving a consumer food poisoning because of bacteria left in them and then the bags are used again.

Plastic bags are also called “single use” bags, but that is not true because people re-use them for garbage bags. By cutting of plastic shopping bags people would by more garbage bags wich are plastic so it would defeat the purpose. eliminating plastic bags would also cause the people who make them and dispose them lose their jobs too. Enviornmentalists can try to convince people paper is better than plastic but people should also look at it from the other perspective, and choose, “Paper or Plastic?”.

**This response scored a 3/1/2.**

### READING — 3

This response demonstrates effective comprehension of Summers’s text. The writer provides appropriate textual evidence (in this case, paraphrases) to articulate both the central idea (*plastic shopping bags should not be banned*) and important details from the passage (*all plastic bags only make up 1.6 percent of all waste, and plastic shopping bags only contribute 0.3 percent to all the waste; Plastic bags produce fewer greenhouse gasses, 80 percent less waste and less water to make them over paper or cotton reusable bags*). The writer also demonstrates a proficient understanding of the entirety of Summers’s text by incorporating details from various points throughout Summers’s argument (*Plastic bags are also called “single use” bags, but that is not true because people re-use them for garbage bags; eliminating plastic bags would also cause the people who make them and dispose them lose their jobs too*). The response, which is essentially summary, is free of substantive errors of fact and interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient reading comprehension.

### ANALYSIS — 1

This response demonstrates no understanding of the analytical task, as it is exclusively summary and offers no discernable analysis of Summers’s text. The writer fails to identify aspects of evidence, reasoning, or stylistic and persuasive elements that Summers uses to build his argument and instead only provides a general statement on the quality of the passage (*Adam B. Summers brings up several good points as to why plastic shopping bags should not be banned*). Overall, this response demonstrates inadequate analysis.

### WRITING — 2

This response demonstrates limited cohesion and writing skill. The response includes an ineffective introduction and conclusion based on the brief, general central claim that opens the response (*Adam B. Summers brings up several good points as to why plastic shopping bags should not be banned*) and the concluding sentence of the response (*Enviornmentalists can try to convince people paper is better than plastic but people*

*should also look at it from the other perspective, and choose, "Paper or Plastic?").* There is no real organization of ideas within paragraphs, and there are no transitions between the two paragraphs that indicate how the ideas in one relate to the other. Although there is some limited progression of ideas over the course of the response, there is little progression of ideas within paragraphs. There are numerous errors that detract from the quality of writing, and the response at times exhibits limited control of language and vague word choice (*By cutting of plastic shoping bags people would by more garabge bags wich are plastic so it would defeat the purpose*). Overall, this response demonstrates partially successful writing.

## Student Sample 5

In Adam B Summers' essay he gives valid reasons why plastic bags should not be banned. His essay is persuasive in many ways such as focusing on the effect on the earth and also job cutting. He also gives alternative ways to use a plastic bag. Summers gives examples on how banning plastic bags can lead to worse human damage.

Summers states that a plastic bag is easy to make without using much of anything. Knowing that making a plastic bag takes up to 70% less energy and can also help our earth because it doesn't produce green house gases. Saying this part persuades the earth lovers and it persuades them to side with the no bag ban because it's not as harmful as the reusable bags.

Reusable bags are more harmful than anyone could think and when Summers put in the facts that people die from food born illnesses it catches the doctors and people who care about the well being of others his essay persuades them to not only use the plastic bags but to use caution when using reusable bags because of the illnesses and deaths.

There are many ways to use a plastic bag not just for groceries and when Adam Summers states this it focuses on the renew and reusers where can use plastic bags in the home and daily life. Also being a cheaper alternative. Summers states that the banning of plastic bags will cost the jobs of 2000 people which to the companies and workers this is a valid argument if they want to keep their jobs.

Summers provides multiple ways to persuade some one and any one with different beliefs. This build many persusive arguments and cause and effects fact based conclusions.

**This response scored a 3/2/2.**

### READING — 3

This response demonstrates effective comprehension of Summers's text. The writer accurately paraphrases the central idea (*plastic bags should not be banned*) and important details from the passage—for instance, the environmental impacts of plastic vs. reusable bags (*Knowing that making a plastic bag takes up to 70% less energy and can also help our earth because it doesn't produce green house gases*) and the impact of the bag ban on jobs (*Summers states that the banning of plastic bags will cost the jobs of 2000 people*). The writer summarizes all the major points in Summers's argument with no substantive errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient reading comprehension.

### ANALYSIS — 2

This response offers a limited analysis of Summers's text, indicating only partial understanding of the analytical task. Although the writer attempts to explain how Summers's use of evidence builds his argument, the writer only asserts the importance of this evidence and its effect on the audience. For example, the fact that plastic bags take 70 percent less energy to make *persuades the earth lovers...to side with the no bag ban because it's not as harmful as the reusable bags*. The writer then asserts that this evidence helps build Summers's argument but does not explain how or why. This pattern of assertion without a follow-up discussion or explanation continues in the subsequent paragraph about the health consequences of reusable bags (*when Summers put in the*



*facts that people die from food born illnesses it catches the doctors and people who care about the well being of others...[and] persuades them to not only use the plastic bags but to use caution when using reusable bags).* This happens again in the paragraph about job cuts (*to the companies and workers this is a valid argument if they want to keep their jobs*). Overall, the response demonstrates partially successful analysis.

## **WRITING — 2**

This response demonstrates limited cohesion and writing skill. The response does contain a central claim (*Summers gives valid reasons why plastic bags should not be banned*). It also contains an introduction and conclusion; however, they are mostly ineffective due to imprecise word choice (*Summers provides multiple ways to persuade some one and any one with different beliefs. This build many persuasive arguments and cause and effects fact based conclusions*). Although each body paragraph is loosely centered on one of three aspects of Summers's argument (ecological, health, and unemployment consequences of the plastic bag ban), there is limited variety in sentence structures and vague word choice throughout the response (*Summers gives examples on how banning plastic bags can lead to worse human damage; when Adam Summers states this it focuses on the renew and reusers where can use plastic bags in the home and daily life. Also being a cheaper alternative*). Language and writing errors, such as syntactically awkward sentences, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments, detract from the quality of writing and impede understanding. Overall, this response demonstrates partially successful writing.

## Student Sample 6

The style and features an author use can help persuade the audience if clearly used. Adam B. Summers in the essay “Bag ban bad for freedom and environment” uses factual evidence, word choice, and emotion to build his argument. In doing this, Summers successfully persuades his audience into believing “Paper or Plastic” is a personal right.

When using factual evidence, Summers further persuades his reader. Readers are often attracted to facts because they are hard evidence to proving a point. Summers touches upon how plastic bag waste makes up only 0.3 percent out of the 1.6 percent of all municipal solid waste products. By providing this fact Summers shows the low numbered statistics which persuade the reader. The reader sees the small numbers and is immediately taking the author's side. Another use of factual evidence is when Summers discusses Ireland's problem since they've banned the use of plastic bags. By adding in the effects this had on another country, the audience realizes the same situation could happen in California, causing the reader to further his mind to Summer's ideas.

The word choice Summers uses helps lure his readers into his argument. In the first paragraph, Summers uses words such as “dodged”, “narrowly”, and “down”. The usage of words makes the reader feel as if he is in the actual voting process of the bill, taking the rocky road in state government only to get voted down. From the start, Summers makes the audience feel involved which intrigues the reader further. In the second to last paragraph, Summers plays with the phrases “weather the storm” and “pony up” to represent the possibilities to come if a bill banning plastic bags is passed. By telling the reader to “get ready”, he puts a negative feeling to the future of the bill and persuades the reader into thinking that the future may not be something they like.

Summers also adds in personal emotion to make the reader feel connected to the author. He writes “I love sea turtles as much as the next guy” to show that he is human too and cares about nature. The claim would touch many readers who are in the same position as Summers; they love nature but think the banning of plastic bags is unreasonable. Summers connects to all readers in his audience when he further helps

**This response scored a 3/3/3.**

### READING — 3

This response demonstrates effective comprehension of the source text by exhibiting proficient understanding of both the central idea and important details in Summers's text. The writer accurately paraphrases the central idea of the passage (*Summers successfully persuades his audience into believing “Paper or Plastic” is a personal right*). The writer also both paraphrases and directly quotes important details from the source text (*Summers plays with the phrases “weather the storm” and “pony up” to represent the possibilities to come if a bill banning plastic bags is passed; Summers touches upon how plastic bag waste makes up only 0.3 percent out of the 1.6 percent of all municipal solid waste products*). Although the response is incomplete, as it ends midsentence, there are enough details provided from the source text to indicate that the writer adequately understands the entirety of Summers's argument. The response is also free of substantive errors of fact and interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient reading comprehension.

### ANALYSIS — 3

This response offers an effective analysis of Summers’s argument and demonstrates proficient understanding of the analytical task. The writer identifies three persuasive elements—*factual evidence, word choice, and emotion*—and competently evaluates how these aspects of Summers’s text contribute to building his argument. Moreover, the writer explains, with sufficient support, what effects these persuasive elements have on Summers’s audience. One example of this type of analysis occurs at the beginning of the paragraph analyzing Summers’s use of word choice. The writer first claims that *The word choice Summers uses helps lure his readers into his argument*. Then, after providing examples of this luring word choice, the writer argues that *The usage of words makes the reader feel as if he is in the actual voting process of the bill, taking the rocky road in state government only to get voted down*. The writer then continues this analysis by saying that *Summers makes the audience feel involved which intrigues the reader further*. All of these work to explain the effects of how luring the audience with particular word choice functions in the response. Although this analysis is effective, the response lacks the thoroughness and insight seen in responses scoring higher in this dimension. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient analysis.

### WRITING — 3

The response is mostly cohesive and demonstrates effective use and control of language. The introduction is brief but effectively provides a clear central claim (*Adam B. Summers in the essay “Bag ban bad for freedom and environment” uses factual evidence, word choice, and emotion to build his argument*). The rest of the response is organized according to this three-pronged structure, with each body paragraph remaining on topic. A clear progression of ideas is demonstrated both within paragraphs and throughout the response. The writer integrates quotations and examples from the source text to connect ideas and paragraphs logically. There is a variety of sentence structures (*He writes “I love sea turtles as much as the next guy” to show that he is human too and cares about nature. The claim would touch many readers who are in the same position as Summers; they love nature but think the banning of plastic bags is unreasonable*). There are also some examples of precise word choice (*helps lure his readers into his argument; taking the rocky road in state government only to get voted down; makes the audience feel involved which intrigues the reader further*). Although the response has no conclusion, this does not preclude the response from demonstrating proficient writing overall.

## Student Sample 7

In the wake of environmental concerns in the United States, a bill in California which would ban plastic bags for groceries failed to make it through the state Senate by a small margin. In his article “Bag ban bad for freedom and environment” (2013), Adam Summers asserts that the plastic bag ban would be harmful for consumers and the environment. He conveys this through citing statistics, appealing to the audience’s emotions and sense of self-interests, and utilizing sarcastic diction. The intended audience for this article is primarily readers who support the proposed bag ban and intend to help it pass.

The author’s statistics cited throughout the article reinforce his argument and provide a solid base. In the fourth paragraph he mentions the most common plastic grocery bags, which “make up just 0.3 percent of solid municipal waste materials. The author also cites the “77 percent increase in the sale of plastic trash can liner bags” as a result of a similar ban in Ireland. These statistics appeal to the reader’s logic and ensure that they can follow a logical path to support the author and oppose the ban. The statistics provide solid evidence that are enhanced by the numbers and cannot be easily argued against.

The author’s patriotic asides in the first and final paragraphs appeal to the audience’s emotions and self-interests. In the first paragraph, the author talks of the rights the government has impeded and talks of a regulation of “what kind of container we can use to carry our groceries.” In the final paragraph, the author talks of the fundamental rights to decide “paper or plastic.” This causes the readers to feel violated by the government and want to look out for his rights. When the regulations start to harm the individuals themselves, then they are more likely to take measures to oppose the bill.

The author’s sarcastic tone throughout the article conveys the conception that those people supporting this bill are misinformed and incorrect. In the sixth paragraph, the author says “The claims that plastic bags are worse for the environment than paper bags or cotton reusable bags are dubious at best.” He also leads the reader to infer that supporters of the bill believe plastic bags are “evil incarnate” and “use government force to compel people to live the way they think best.” In the first paragraph, the author talks of how “Californians dodged yet another nanny-state regulation.” This sarcastic tone causes the audience to lose faith in these Environmentalists. It also causes the reader to question the motives of the bill and its supporters.

Through citing statistics, appealing to self-interest and emotions, and utilizing sarcastic diction, Adam Summers conveys his beliefs that California should not pass a law banning plastic grocery bags.

**This paper scored a 3/3/4.**

### READING — 3

This response demonstrates effective comprehension of the source text, with the writer showing an understanding of both the central idea (*the plastic bag ban would be harmful for consumers and the environment*) and important details of the passage (*the most common plastic grocery bags, which “make up just 0.3 percent” of solid municipal waste; government regulation of “what kind of container we can use to carry our groceries”*). Throughout the response, the writer conveys an understanding of the source text with appropriate use of both quotations and paraphrases. There are also no errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient reading comprehension.

### ANALYSIS — 3

This response demonstrates an understanding of the analytical task by offering an effective analysis of the source text. The writer centers the analysis on how Summers conveys his argument *through citing statistics, appealing to the audience’s emotions and sense of self-interests, and utilizing sarcastic diction*. In each of these areas, the writer competently discusses the effect of Summers’s argumentative strategies. For example, in the first body paragraph, the writer cites some of the statistical evidence in the source text and points out that *These statistics appeal to the reader’s logic and ensure that they can follow a logical path to support the author and oppose the ban*. Further, the writer states that the statistics *cannot be easily argued against*. Effective analysis continues in the second body paragraph, in which the writer evaluates Summers’s *patriotic asides* and the fact that they cause the reader *to feel violated by the government and want to look out for his rights*. These examples illustrate the writer’s consistent focus on analyzing the effect of various argumentative strategies on the audience, and the writer chooses relevant support for the analysis. Overall, this response demonstrates proficient analysis.

### WRITING — 4

This response demonstrates a highly effective use of language in this cohesive essay. The body paragraphs closely follow the central claim (*Adam Summers asserts that the plastic bag ban would be harmful...through citing statistics, appealing to the audience’s emotions and sense of self-interests, and utilizing sarcastic diction*) presented in the introduction. There are some slight organizational missteps that lead to a somewhat clumsy progression of ideas. For example, the last sentence of the introductory paragraph, although informative, does not enhance the introduction in any way or provide a smooth segue into the following paragraphs. However, these slight organizational issues are counteracted by a consistent variety of sentence structures and precise word choice (*wake of environmental concerns; enhanced by the numbers; patriotic asides; rights the government has impeded; take measures to oppose the bill*). Overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing.

## Student Sample 8

In Adam B. Summers' "Bag ban bad for freedom and environment" editorial for the San Diego Union-Tribune, he argues against the possible laws hindering Californians from using plastic bags at grocery stores. He believes they would do more harm than good, and that "a little reason and perspective is in order." By the end of this piece the reader will likely find themselves nodding in agreement with what Summers has to say, and this isn't just because he's right. Summers, like any good writer, employs tactical reasoning and persuasive devices to plead with the audience to take his side. In this article, he demonstrates many such devices.

"Plastic bags ... make up only about 1.6 percent of all municipal solid waste materials," Summers ventures, his first utilization of a cold, hard fact. The truth in the numbers is undeniable, and he cites his sources promptly, making the statement that much more authentic. Knowledge is often viewed as power, and with information as direct as a statistic, Summers is handing that power to the reader – the power to agree with him. Not only does Summers spread the facts with numbers, he also does so with trends. He talks about the price increase in Ireland, and the documented health hazards of reusable bags. He uses the truth, backed by reliable sources, to infiltrate the readers' independent mind. His thoroughness in this regard carefully builds his argument against this piece of legislation, and this is just one of the many ways he spreads his opposition.

Additionally, Summers appeals to the ethical and emotional side of individuals. With key phrases like "taxpayers will have to pony up" and "borne by consumers," Summers activates the nature of a human to act in their own self-interest. While one might view this as selfish, Summers reassures the reader that they are not alone in feeling this way, further contributing to his argument. With his statement that he "love[s] sea turtles as much as the next guy," Summers adds acceptance to those who don't care to act with regard for the environment. By putting himself beside the reader as a typical consumer, he equals them, and makes himself more likeable in the process. Appealing to environmentalists, too, Summers qualifies that they "have every right to try to convince people to adopt certain beliefs or lifestyles, but they do not have the right to use government force..." A statement such as this is an attempt to get readers of either persuasion on his side, and his ingenious qualification only adds to the strength of his argument.

An article focusing on the choice between "paper or plastic," and how that choice might be taken away certainly seems fairly standard, but by adjusting his diction (i.e. using well known phrases, selecting words with strong connotations), Summers creates something out of the ordinary. It is with word choice such as "recycled rather than trashed" that the author reveals the legislations intent to stir up a repeat bill. Because the issue at hand is one of waste and environmental protection, his humorous diction provides a link between he and the audience, revealing not only an opportunity to laugh, but also reinforcement of the concept that Summers is trustworthy and just like everyone else. Negative words with specifically poor connotations also aid Summers in his persuasive struggle. "Reprieve," "dubious," "bureaucracy," and "evil incarnate" all depict a disparaging tone of annoyance and anger, surely helping Summers to spread his message.

It is through many rhetorical devices that Summers sells his argument. Powerful diction, qualification, ethos, pathos, logos, and informative facts all contribute to an exceptionally well-written argument. It is his utilization of these practices and more that make this article worthy of recognition. Once one reads the piece, they'll be nodding along in accordance with Summers, and it isn't for no reason.

**This paper scored a 4/4/4.**

#### READING — 4

This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text. The writer provides a brief summary of Summers's main point in the introductory paragraph (*he argues against the possible laws hindering Californians from using plastic bags at grocery stores*) and throughout the response uses a mixture of direct quotations and paraphrases to show an understanding of how the central idea and important details from the source text interrelate (*He talks about the price increase in Ireland, and the documented health hazards of reusable bags; the existence of legislations [with] intent to stir up a repeat bill*). Further, the writer demonstrates an understanding of how the central idea and key details interrelate by consistently relating details to the main argument of the source text. The response is also free from errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

#### ANALYSIS — 4

This response demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the analytical task by offering an insightful analysis of Summers's employment of *tactical reasoning and persuasive devices to plead with the audience to take his side*. The writer puts forth a thorough evaluation of Summers's use of evidence, reasoning, and stylistic and persuasive elements by continually analyzing even the smallest features of Summers's piece. For example, when citing a fact that Summers provides the information that *"Plastic bags...make up only about 1.6 percent of all municipal solid waste materials,"* the writer focuses on *The truth in the numbers* as well as Summers's deliberate choice to share the fact's source and the effect doing so has on Summers's argument. The writer continues the analysis by broadening the focus to a brief but sophisticated discussion of knowledge as power and the persuasive approach of *handing that power to the reader*. This type of well-considered evaluation continues throughout the response, during which the writer touches on Summers's appeals to *the ethical and emotional side of individuals* and Summers's use of diction to create *something out of the ordinary*. The response is focused on relevant and strategically chosen features of the source text in support of the writer's analysis. Overall, this essay demonstrates advanced analysis.

#### WRITING — 4

This response demonstrates highly effective command of language and cohesion. The response is organized around the writer's claim that readers *will likely find themselves nodding in agreement with what Summers has to say, and this isn't just because he's right* but also because of his use of *tactical reasoning and persuasive devices*. The response is tightly organized and demonstrates a deliberate progression of ideas, with the writer seamlessly transitioning from point to point. Sentence structures are varied and often sophisticated (*While one might view this as selfish, Summers reassures the reader that they are not alone in feeling this way, further contributing to his argument*). Word choice is precise without tonal missteps (*tactical reasoning; his ingenious qualification only adds to the strength of his argument; disparaging tone of annoyance and anger*). The response also shows a strong command of the conventions of standard written English and is virtually free of errors. Minor syntax errors (*Summers adds acceptance to those who don't care to act; and it isn't for no reason*) do not detract from the quality of the writing. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing skill.

## Student Sample 9

“Paper or plastic?” This is often a question we are asked at our weekly and/or bi-weekly trip to the supermarket to purchase groceries to keep our family fed. Adam B. Summers has created a highly plausible argument that may change your answer next time you go grocery shopping. He has developed valid claims that are backed up with crucial evidence and has been able to properly persuade the reader by appealing to logos and other rhetorical strategies.

Summers uses his words and research to reason with the reader and explain to them why plastic bags really are the correct choice. A vast majority of people are misled about all of the waste that plastic bags cause when Summers writes, “...plastic bags, sacks, and wraps of all kinds (not just grocery bags) make up only about 1.6 percent of all municipal solid waste materials.” This number is definitely lower than we all assume, going into this passage, and we are left surprised. Using reusable bags is a solution that others have come up with to attempt to create less waste, however Summers delivers an appealing argument. “...plastic bag bans lead to increased health problems due to food contamination from bacteria that remain in the reusable bags.” This excerpt creates another claim that leaves the reader wondering if reusable bags are really worth it. These past two claims are connected well because they both draw the reader back to the idea of using plastic bags. Another claim by Summers, “...one unintended consequence of the plastic bag would likely be an increase in plastic bag purchases for these other purposes.” These “other purposes” can be for lining trash bins, picking up after your dog on a walk, collecting kitty litter, and many more things we use plastic bags for. When the author brings in all of these additional uses of the plastic bag, we see the significance of the plastic bag and how much money we save by reusing them. A final claim by Summers, “The plastic bag ban would threaten the roughly 2,000 California jobs in the plastic bag manufacturing and recycling industry...” Now the reader almost feels guilty because they do not want to take away jobs of others and the fact that some people even depend on shoppers using plastic bags. These two final claims are well connected because the author stressed the economic benefits of using plastic bags. Not only are these bags saving you money, but they also are keeping some people in work. These four ideas are successfully connected and convince the reader to use plastic bags over paper bags and other types of reusable bags.

Evidence is a key component of this passage and Summers is sure to include this when presenting us with key facts. He references important agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and includes a professor from the University of Pennsylvania, Jonathan Klick and a professor from George Mason University, Joshua D. Wright. The inclusion of this agency and these professors make the work of Summers credible and believable because as readers are confident of what we are being told is correct and true. Evidence he also uses are facts such as, “...plastic grocery bags produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions, require 70 percent less energy to make, generate 80 percent less waste.” These facts back up Summers’ claims that plastic bags are the better choice. Without evidence, his passage would not mean a thing to us readers and we would never be able to believe what he has said.

Persuasive elements are what make this passage successful. Summers has excellent ideas and credible evidence, but his use of persuasion are what capture the reader. He appeals to logos when stating all of his claims about how using plastic bags can save you money and keep you from getting sick, but he also appeals to pathos because this passage described how plastic bags amount to less waste than most of us think and he wants to help us make the Earth a better place to live. Throwing examples at us, “... San Francisco’s plastic bag ban in 2007 resulted in a subsequent spike in hospital emergency room visits due to E. Coli, salmonella, ...” persuade the reader as well. With rhetorical strategies and direct examples, Summers is clearly able to persuade the reader to choose plastic next time.

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So what will you choose next time you're shopping for groceries with your family? Summers has made the choice obvious with his persuasive and effective passage. He has been able to develop several ideas and backed them up with evidence that us readers can trust. After reading this passage, there seems to be no other choice than plastic.

**This paper scored a 4/4/4.**

#### **READING — 4**

This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text. The writer shows an understanding of Summers's *highly plausible argument* and the important specifics that add detail to one of Summers's central claims: that *plastic bags really are the correct choice*. The writer accurately paraphrases ideas from Summers's text throughout the essay (*These "other purposes" can be for lining trash bins, picking up after your dog on a walk, collecting kitty litter, and many more things we use plastic bags for*), and the writer skillfully incorporates direct quotations within the response (*people are misled about all of the waste that plastic bags cause when Summers writes, "...plastic bags, sacks, and wraps of all kinds"*). The writer also understands how the details in Summers's text interrelate to convey the main point of the piece (*valid claims that are backed up with crucial evidence; Summers uses his words and research to reason with the reader; These past two claims are connected well because they both draw the reader back to the idea; Summers has...credible evince, but his use of persuasion [is] what capture[s] the reader*). The response is free from errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

#### **ANALYSIS — 4**

This response demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the analytical task by offering an insightful analysis of the source text. Rather than relying on assertions as analysis, the writer thoroughly evaluates how Summers uses *words and research to reason with the reader*, how *Evidence is a key component*, and how *Persuasive elements...make this passage successful*. The writer is able to fully discuss each of these aspects of Summers's piece, using relevant examples from the source text as support for the writer's analysis. For example, the writer uses Summers's claim that *"The plastic bag ban would threaten the roughly 2,000 California jobs in the plastic bag manufacturing and recycling industry"* to discuss the guilt the writer perceives the reader feels in reaction to this claim. The writer also explains how Summers uses this claim in conjunction with discussion of alternate uses for plastic bags to stress *the economic benefits of using plastic bags*. The writer consistently focuses on the features of Summers's text that are most relevant and offers well-considered evaluations throughout the response. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced analysis.

#### **WRITING — 4**

This response demonstrates highly effective command of language and cohesion. Beginning with the skillful introduction, the writer constructs a response that demonstrates a deliberate and highly effective progression of ideas, starting with an examination of Summers's claims and evidence and ending with emphasis on the use of persuasive elements. This skillful control over organization occurs at the body paragraph level as well, as the writer connects pieces of evidence from different parts of the source text within each paragraph. The writer's word choice is precise (*a highly plausible argument, a key component, The inclusion of this agency*), and sentence structures are varied and sophisticated. This response demonstrates a strong command of written English and is virtually free of errors. Overall, this response demonstrates advanced writing.

## SAT Essay Scoring Rubric

Score	Reading	Analysis	Writing
<b>4</b> <b>Advanced</b>	<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>
<b>3</b> <b>Proficient</b>	<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>

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Score	Reading	Analysis	Writing
<b>2 Partial</b>	<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>
<b>1 Inadequate</b>	<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>