

10 SAT ESSAY PROMPTS

Prompt 1

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Millions of men have lived to fight, build palaces and boundaries, shape destinies and societies, but the compelling force of all times has been the force of originality and creation profoundly affecting the roots of the human spirit.

Adapted from Ansel Adams

Assignment: Are originality and creativity necessary for success? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 2

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Education is the process by which the individual relates himself to the universe, gives himself citizenship in the changing world, shares the race's mind and enfranchises his own soul.

Adapted from Dr. John H. Finley

Assignment: Should the primary purpose of education be to help students understand contemporary social issues? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 3

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

The current state of the news media is partially to blame for the public's general lack of information vital for responsible citizenship in a democracy. The news media has become an aspect of show business, offering merely infotainment. It has evolved into an entity that tends to function as a public relations agency for the wealthy and powerful.

Adapted from Teresa Stover

Assignment: Do the news media shape our society by influencing how people feel and act? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 4

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.

Adapted from Albert Einstein

Assignment: Can the drive towards technological progress have a negative influence on societal values? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 5

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Often the difference between a successful person and a failure is not one has better abilities or ideas, but the courage that one has to bet on one's ideas, to take a calculated risk - and to act.

Adapted from Andre Malraux

Assignment: Is it necessary to take risks in order to achieve success? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 6

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Opposition is a natural part of life. Just as we develop our physical muscles through overcoming opposition—such as lifting weights—we develop our character muscles by overcoming challenges and adversity.

Adapted from Stephen R. Covey

Assignment: Do we grow as individuals only by overcoming adversity? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 6

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Rules are not necessarily sacred; principles are.

Adapted from Franklin D. Roosevelt

Assignment: Are there situations where it is more ethical not to follow established rules? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 7

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

People throw away what they could have by insisting on perfection, which they cannot have, and looking for it where they will never find it.

Adapted from Edith Schaeffer

Assignment: Can the desire for perfection be disastrous? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 8

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

As human beings, we are endowed with freedom of choice, and we cannot shuffle off our responsibility upon the shoulders of God or nature. We must shoulder it ourselves. It is our responsibility.

Adapted from Arnold Toynbee

Assignment: Are people's lives shaped by the choices they make, rather than by external factors and events? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 9

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Competition has been shown to be useful up to a certain point and no further, but cooperation, which is the thing we must strive for today, begins where competition leaves off.

Adapted from Franklin D. Roosevelt

Assignment: Is cooperation ultimately more successful than competition? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Prompt 10

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

I owe my success to having listened respectfully to the very best advice, and then going away and doing the exact opposite.

Adapted from G.K. Chesterton

Assignment: Do people achieve success more frequently when they take the advice of others, or when they follow their own instincts? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.