

## LE2 or 3 - Anatomy of a Test (Unit Two or Three assignment)

Instructor name

Section number

Writing strategies we're working on here

**Rhetorical analysis:** analyzing genres (ie, those of school and tests), making explicit choices about form and content of writing, using genres that achieve writing purposes and reach identified audience. **Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing:** critically analyzing choices regarding language and form, using writing to support interpretation of text, considering relationships between your ideas and others'. **Processes:** using texts to develop ideas for writing, revising to develop ideas, collaborating with others, critiquing others' writing. **Knowledge of conventions:** analyzing and using genre conventions and reflecting on their value, practicing with MLA citations, identifying and editing divergent mechanical and/or syntactical patterns. **Use of technology:** Work through drafting with computers, use computers to facilitate inquiry.

Possible readings for this assignment:

Gary Orfield and Joanna Wald, "Testing, Testing"

Mike Rose, "The Working Life of a Waitress"

Ron Suskind, "Fierce Intimacies"

Darcy Frey, "The Last Shot"

Sample SAT writing exam question

As resources for education become more scarce, schools (both K-12 and college/universities) face pressures to become "more accountable." The definition of "accountability," however, changes depending on who is doing the defining.

In this assignment, you'll analyze one genre of writing associated with the idea of "accountability" and then use readings for this assignment to respond to the question: what are the conventions of this genre? Where, when, and how are these conventions used (or not used) in your everyday experience either in *or* out of school?

To begin thinking about this assignment, you first need to produce a text to analyze. For this, you'll spend 25 minutes writing (by hand, with a #2 pencil or black pen) a sample essay of the kind currently included in the SAT. This will be your primary text for analysis.

Next, you'll use the SAT scoring guide (MAKE A LINK TO THIS, OR INCLUDE THE URL, ON YOUR ASSIGNMENT SHEET) to score the essays of one of your classmates. After you receive your score, you can use the explanation on the scoring sheet as an 'explanation' of your mark. Then, the analysis begins. Given the score that you received on this essay (and the process that you used to write it), what do you think is valued by this kind test? What kinds of writing (and/or reading) strategies do you think are most beneficial for this kind of writing, and what kinds of writing (and/or reading) strategies do you think this kind of writing will help students develop?

After you've completed this portion of the assignment, you'll put it in conversation with your analysis of one of the readings. For this, you'll need to take a close look at the kinds of writing and reading that one person from these readings does inside or outside of school. What strategies are involved there? Would the strategies that you think are valued in "SAT writing" be useful and/or valuable in this context? How/how not?

Short essay A:

To write this SE, you'll need to have "taken" and scored your sample SAT essay. In this SE, write about what kind of writing you think is valued there, and what (in the essay and/or in your process of writing the essay) makes you say that this is valued.

Short essay B:

Here, you'll want to extend beyond SE A and begin your dialogue with your analysis of the practices of one character from the readings. What are that character's genre practices? How would the SAT strategies be useful (or not) for the practices of that character?

**Activities for this assignment:**

Scoring the SAT

Rewrite SAT essay in a different genre – how would this be perceived?

Flip of that – write SAT essay for different audiences – how would it look different?