

Free Researched Essay Samples as per Rubric

In the order of...

An Essay Rubric

A Sample Essay as per Rubric

A sample Essay Prompt along with its Directions

2 SAT

Essay Rubric:

Two readers evaluate each essay and their scores are added together, creating the final score which is reported as a number between 2–8 for each of the three categories.

Advanced Score:

1. Is cohesive and demonstrates a highly effective command of language.
2. Includes a precise central claim.
3. Includes a skillful introduction and conclusion. The response demonstrates a deliberate and highly effective progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay.
4. 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.
5. Shows a strong command of the conventions of standard written English and is free or virtually free of error.

Proficient Score:

1. Is mostly cohesive and demonstrates effective use and control of language.
2. Includes a central claim or implicit controlling idea.
3. Includes an effective introduction and conclusion. The response demonstrates a clear progression of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay.

4. Has variety in sentence structures. The response demonstrates some precise word choice. The response maintains a formal style and objective tone.
5. Shows a good control of the conventions of standard written English and is free of significant errors that detract from the quality of writing.

Partial:

1. Demonstrates little or no cohesion and limited skill in the use and control of language.
2. May lack a clear central claim or controlling idea or may deviate from the claim or idea over the course of the response.
3. May include an ineffective introduction and/or conclusion. The response may demonstrate some progression of ideas within paragraphs but not throughout the response.
4. 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.
5. 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.

Inadequate:

1. Demonstrates little or no cohesion and inadequate skill in the use and control of language.
2. May lack a clear central claim or controlling idea.

3. Lacks a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The response does not have a discernible progression of ideas.
4. 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.
5. Shows a weak control of the conventions of standard written English and may contain numerous errors that undermine the quality of writing.

SAT Essay sample as per Rubric:

Prompt:

Adapted from Paul Bogard, "Let There Be Dark." ©2012 by Los Angeles Times. Originally published December 21, 2012.

At my family's cabin on a Minnesota lake, I knew the woods so dark that my hands disappeared before my eyes. I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars. But now, when 8 of 10 children born in the United States will never know a sky dark enough for the Milky Way, I worry we are rapidly losing night's natural darkness before realizing its worth. This winter solstice, as we cheer the days' gradual movement back toward light, let us also remember the irreplaceable value of darkness.

All life evolved to the steady rhythm of bright days and dark nights. Today, though, when we feel the closeness of nightfall, we reach quickly for a light switch. And too little darkness, meaning too much artificial light at night, spells trouble for all.

Already the World Health Organization classifies working the night shift as a probable human carcinogen, and the American Medical Association has voiced its unanimous support for "light pollution reduction efforts and glare reduction efforts at both the national and state levels." Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing, and our bodies need darkness for sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression, and recent research suggests one main cause of "short sleep" is "long light." Whether we work at night or simply take our tablets, notebooks and smartphones to bed, there isn't a place for this much artificial light in our lives.

The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish and reptiles. Some examples are well

known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world's flora. Ecological light pollution is like the bulldozer of the night, wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems several billion years in the making. Simply put, without darkness, Earth's ecology would collapse....

In today's crowded, louder, more fast-paced world, night's darkness can provide solitude, quiet and stillness, qualities increasingly in short supply. Every religious tradition has considered darkness invaluable for a soulful life, and the chance to witness the universe has inspired artists, philosophers and everyday stargazers since time began. In a world awash with electric light...how would Van Gogh have given the world his "Starry Night"? Who knows what this vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?

Yet all over the world, our nights are growing brighter. In the United States and Western Europe, the amount of light in the sky increases an average of about 6% every year. Computer images of the United States at night, based on NASA photographs, show that what was a very dark country as recently as the 1950s is now nearly covered with a blanket of light. Much of this light is wasted energy, which means wasted dollars. Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights. Even the northern lake where I was lucky to spend my summers has seen its darkness diminish.

It doesn't have to be this way. Light pollution is readily within our ability to solve, using new lighting technologies and shielding existing lights. Already, many cities and towns across North America and Europe are changing to LED streetlights, which offer dramatic possibilities for controlling wasted light. Other communities are finding success with simply turning off portions of their public lighting after midnight. Even Paris, the famed "city of light," which already turns off its monument lighting after 1 a.m., will this summer start to require its shops, offices and public buildings to turn off lights after 2

a.m. Though primarily designed to save energy, such reductions in light will also go far in addressing light pollution. But we will never truly address the problem of light pollution until we become aware of the irreplaceable value and beauty of the darkness we are losing.

Write an essay in which you explain how Paul Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience that natural darkness should be preserved. In your essay, analyze how Bogard uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage. Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Bogard's claims, but rather explain how Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience.

Sample Essay begins here...

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

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

encounter that proves the “irreplaceable value of darkness.” This anecdote provides a baseline of sorts for readers to find credence with the author’s claims.

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

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

guttural power to the idea that the issue of maintaining natural darkness is relevant and multifaceted.

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

Practice prompts for SAT:

"Write an essay in which you explain how Jimmy Carter builds an argument to persuade his audience that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge should not be developed for industry."

Note: *Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Carter's claims, but rather explain how Carter builds an argument to persuade his audience.*

As you read the passage below, consider how Jimmy Carter uses

- *evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.*
- *reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.*
- *stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.*

Adapted from former US President Jimmy Carter, Foreword to Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Seasons of Life and Land, A Photographic Journey by Subhankar Banerjee. ©2003 by Subhankar Banerjee.

1 The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge stands alone as America's last truly great wilderness. This magnificent area is as vast as it is wild, from the windswept coastal plain where polar bears and caribou give birth, to the towering Brooks Range where Dall sheep cling to cliffs and wolves howl in the midnight sun.

2 More than a decade ago, [my wife] Rosalynn and I had the fortunate opportunity to camp and hike in these regions of the Arctic Refuge. During bright July days, we walked along ancient caribou trails and studied the brilliant mosaic of wildflowers, mosses, and

lichens that hugged the tundra. There was a timeless quality about this great land. As the never-setting sun circled above the horizon, we watched muskox, those shaggy survivors of the Ice Age, lumber along braided rivers that meander toward the Beaufort Sea.

3 One of the most unforgettable and humbling experiences of our lives occurred on the coastal plain. We had hoped to see caribou during our trip, but to our amazement, we witnessed the migration of tens of thousands of caribou with their newborn calves. In a matter of a few minutes, the sweep of tundra before us became flooded with life, with the sounds of grunting animals and clicking hooves filling the air. The dramatic procession of the Porcupine caribou herd was a once-in-a-lifetime wildlife spectacle. We understand firsthand why some have described this special birthplace as “America’s Serengeti.”

4 Standing on the coastal plain, I was saddened to think of the tragedy that might occur if this great wilderness was consumed by a web of roads and pipelines, drilling rigs and industrial facilities. Such proposed developments would forever destroy the wilderness character of America’s only Arctic Refuge and disturb countless numbers of animals that depend on this northernmost terrestrial ecosystem.

5 The extraordinary wilderness and wildlife values of the Arctic Refuge have long been recognized by both Republican and Democratic presidents. In 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established the original 8.9 million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Range to preserve its unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values. Twenty years later, I signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, monumental legislation that safeguarded more than 100 million acres of national parks, refuges, and forests in Alaska. This law specifically created the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, doubled the size of the former range, and restricted development in areas that are clearly incompatible with oil exploration.

6 Since I left office, there have been repeated proposals to open the Arctic Refuge coastal plain to oil drilling. Those attempts have failed because of tremendous opposition by the American people, including the Gwich’in Athabascan Indians of

Alaska and Canada, indigenous people whose culture has depended on the Porcupine caribou herd for thousands of years. Having visited many aboriginal peoples around the world, I can empathize with the Gwich'ins' struggle to safeguard one of their precious human rights.

7 We must look beyond the alleged benefits of a short-term economic gain and focus on what is really at stake. At best, the Arctic Refuge might provide 1 to 2 percent of the oil our country consumes each day. We can easily conserve more than that amount by driving more fuel-efficient vehicles. Instead of tearing open the heart of our greatest refuge, we should use our resources more wisely.

8 There are few places on earth as wild and free as the Arctic Refuge. It is a symbol of our national heritage, a remnant of frontier America that our first settlers once called wilderness. Little of that precious wilderness remains.

9 It will be a grand triumph for America if we can preserve the Arctic Refuge in its pure, untrammelled state. To leave this extraordinary land alone would be the greatest gift we could pass on to future generations.