

SAT ACT Word Pairs & Other Slick Rules

Word Pairs

A. Either...or...

Either Cardi B **or** Jennifer Lopez will sing really well.

B. Neither...nor...

Neither Cardi B **nor** Jennifer Lopez will sing really well.

C. Not only...but also...

Not only are your feet ugly, **but** they **also** smells bad too.

D. Both...and...

Both your mama **and** your daddy have giant thumbs.

E. As...as...

I am just **as** good a test-taker **as** any Harvard Student.

F. Between...and...

Between you **and** me, your breath is stinky.

G. So/such...that...

Your hair is **so** fugly **that** birds won't nest in it.

Your hair had **such** a big knot in it **that** it broke my comb.

H. More/less...than...

Although Justin's lyrics are **more** likeable **than** those of Selener's, Justin can be weak.

I. Just as...so...

Just as Robert is known for his beats, **so** is Nikki known for her rhymes.

J. From...to...

From the early days of kindergarten **to** the final day's of high school, we had fun.

K. At once...and... (slick!)

Kanye is **at once** popular because of his music **and** controversial because of his tantrums.

L. No sooner...than... (slick!)

No sooner had my grandma made me eat tuna salad **than** my grandpa made me eat cod fish.

M. Not so much...as... (slick!)

Although he has many fans, Lebron is known **not so much** for switching teams **as** he is for winning championships.

N. So far as...

Kiki went **so far as** to eat 5 scoops of ice cream just to make Julio smile.

So far as I know, I have to be home by 11.

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Which vs. That

which = comma that = NO comma

The movie was sad, **which** made us cry like babies. notice the the main sentence comes first
The movie **that** made us cry like babies was sad.

Who vs. Whom

who and whom deal with people not things
who = subject (S) whom = direct object (DO)

Michael (S) danced with Marcie (DO).

Who danced with Marcie? Michael (S).

With **whom** did Michael dance? With Marcie (DO).

prepositions = whom

prepositions NO GO with who

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| with whom YES! | for whom YES! | by whom YES! | above whom YES! | between whom YES |
| with who NO! | for who NO! | by who NO! | above who NO! | between who NO! |

prepositions = which

when matched with a preposition, do not use a comma

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| with which YES! | for which YES! | by which YES! | above which YES! | between which YES |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|

Who vs. Which

who and whom deal with people not things
which deals with things not people

Einstein was a scientist which ruled the world of physics. NOPE!

Einstein was a scientist **who** ruled the world of physics. FO SHO!

notice: Who ruled the world of physics? Einstein (S).

Where vs. Were vs. We're

where = place also where = in which

Home is **where** I live. Home is the place **in which** I live. FO SHO!

were = plural verb We were playing.

We **were** only playing with you.

we're = a contraction for "we are"

We're going home.

There vs. Their vs. They're

there = place

Who goes **there**?

their = plural pronoun

Their shoes are funky.

they're = contraction for "they are"

Who knows where **they're** going?

Idioms

Unfortunately, preposition/idiom questions are among the most difficult to study for because there are thousands of possible errors and no real pattern to the prepositions tested. It is therefore not terribly constructive to spend your time memorizing long lists of phrases. In general, though, if a given preposition sounds somewhat odd, it's probably wrong. This is one case that requires you to trust your ear. That said, I am including a list of common idioms, including a number that have appeared on previous tests.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (Pre)occupation with | In the hope(s) of |
| Consistent/inconsistent with | Characteristic/typical of |
| Sympathize with | Convinced of |
| Correlate with | Consist of |
| Identify with | Composed/comprised of |
| Familiar/unfamiliar with | In recognition of |
| In contrast to (BUT: contrast with) | Capable/incapable of |
| Be native to (BUT: be a native of) | A mastery of |
| Have a tendency toward | Have an appreciation of/for |
| Biased toward | Criticize for |
| Recommend to | Necessary for |
| Listen to | Prized for |
| Try to (NOT: try and) | Endure/last for |
| Prefer x to y | Wait for |
| Devoted to | Watch/look (out) for |
| A threat to/threaten to | Responsible for |
| Central to | Compensate for |
| Unique to | Strive for |
| Similar to | Have a tolerance for |
| Parallel to | Famous/Celebrated for |
| An alternative to | Recognized/known for |
| Enter into | Named for/after |
| Have insight into | Worry about |
| Interested in | Complain about |
| Succeed in/at | Wonder about |
| Adept in/at | Curious about |
| Have confidence in | Think about |
| Engage in/with | Bring about |
| Take pride in | Be particular about |
| Insist on | Protect from/against |
| Focus on | Defend from/against |
| Rely on | Apparent from |
| Reflect on | Predate by |
| Dwell on | Followed by |
| Draw (up)on | Confused/puzzled/perplexed by |
| Based on | Accompanied by |
| Suspicious of | Encouraged by |
| Devoid of | Outraged by |
| A proponent of | Surprised/stunned/shocked by |
| A command of | Amazed/awed by |
| A source of | Impressed by |
| An offer of | Known as/to be |
| An understanding/knowledge of | Far from |
| Approve/disapprove of | Differ(ent) from |
| Take advantage of | Refrain from |
| In awe of | Have power/control over |
| A variety/plethora of | Mull over |

Diction

Diction errors (also known as usage or “wrong word” errors) generally appear at most once per test, and often they do not appear at all. They are created by switching two similar or identical-sounding but differently spelled words.

Incorrect: The work of Portuguese Renaissance painter Gregorio Lopes **insists** mostly of frescoes for monasteries across the Iberian Peninsula.

Correct: The work of Portuguese Renaissance painter Gregorio Lopes **consists** mostly of frescoes for monasteries across the Iberian Peninsula.

Below is a list of word pairs of the sort that may appear on the SAT. Please be aware, however, that like preposition errors, diction errors are often extremely random and cannot be predicted with any degree of confidence.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Accept vs. Except | Comprehensive vs. Comprehensible | Incur vs. Occur |
| Access vs. Excess | Conscious vs. Conscience | Indeterminate vs. Interminable |
| Addition vs. Edition | Contribute vs. Attribute | Influence vs. Affluence |
| Adopt vs. Adapt | Counsel vs. Council | Ingenious vs. Ingenuous |
| Advice vs. Advise | Contemptuous vs. Contemptible | Laid vs. Lain |
| Affect vs. Effect | (In)credible vs. (In)credulous | Lead vs. Led |
| Afflict vs. Inflict | Desirous vs. Desirable | Lie vs. Lay |
| Allusion vs. Illusion | Devise vs. Device | Lose vs. Loose |
| Ambivalent vs. Ambiguous | Elicit vs. Illicit | Manner vs. Manor |
| Anecdote vs. Antidote | Elude vs. Allude | Pair, Peer, Pier |
| Appraise vs. Apprise | Emit vs. Omit | Precede vs. Proceed |
| Assent vs. Ascent | Ensure vs. Assure | Precedent vs. President |
| Auditory vs. Audible | Exhaustive vs. Exhausting | Perpetrate vs. Perpetuate |
| Averse vs. Adverse | Expandable vs. Expendable | Persecute vs. Prosecute |
| Capital vs. Capitol | Explicit vs. Implicit | Principal vs. Principle |
| Censor vs. Censure | Flaunt vs. Flout | Supposed to, NOT suppose to |
| Cite vs. Site vs. Sight | Foreboding vs. Forbidding | Than vs. Then |
| Collaborate vs. Corroborate | Imminent vs. Eminent | Visual vs. Visible |
| Command vs. Commend | Imply vs. Infer | Would/Could/Should have, NOT of |