

## SAT essay prompts

### **Excerpt:**

1. *Honesty is an important value in every relationship. Whether interacting with a friend, a roommate, a spouse, a parent, or another loved one, individuals expect others to be honest and feel betrayed when they are deceived.*

—Jennifer Gescheidler

2. *Deception can actually make it easier for people to get along. In a recent study, for example, one out of every four of the lies told by participants was told solely for the benefit of another person. In fact, most lies are harmless social untruths in which people pretend to like someone or something more than they actually do (“Your muffins are the best!”)*

—Allison Kornet

**Assignment:** Is deception ever justified? 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.

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**Excerpt:** *Technology promises to make our lives easier, freeing up time for leisure pursuits. But the rapid pace of technological innovation and the split second processing capabilities of computers that can work virtually nonstop have made all of us feel rushed. We have adopted the relentless pace of the very machines that were supposed to simplify our lives, with the result that, whether at work or play, people do not feel like their lives have changed for the better.*

—Karen Finucan

**Assignment:** Do changes that make our lives easier not necessarily make them better? 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.

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**Excerpt:** *The media not only transmit information and culture, they also decide what information is important. In that way, they help to shape culture and values.*

—adapted from Alison Bernstein, "Artists Thrive on Freedom and Freedom Thrives on the Arts"

**Assignment:** Do newspapers, magazines, television, radio, movies, the Internet, and other media determine what is important to most people? 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.

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**Excerpt:** *A better understanding of other people contributes to the development of moral virtues. We shall be both kinder and fairer in our treatment of others if we understand them better. Understanding ourselves and understanding others are connected, since as human beings we all have things in common.*

—Anne Sheppard

**Assignment:** Do we need other people in order to understand ourselves? 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.

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**Excerpt:** *A mistakenly cynical view of human behavior holds that people are primarily driven by selfish motives: the desire for wealth, for power, or for fame. Yet, history gives us many examples of individuals who have sacrificed their own welfare for a cause or a principle that they regarded as more important than their own lives. Conscience—that powerful inner voice that tells us what is right and what is wrong—can be a more compelling force than money, power, or fame.*

**Assignment:** Is conscience a more powerful motivator than money, fame, or power? 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.

## **GHSJWT prompts**

### **Writing Situation**

Because of dwindling economic resources and decreasing student scores on standardized tests, the Georgia Department of Education is considering eliminating sports programs in middle and high schools. The members of the state board of education are calling for Georgia citizens to share their positions about this issue before they make a decision. Reflect on the matter of whether sports programs should or should not be removed from public schools.

### **Directions for Writing**

Write a letter to the Georgia Board of Education. Clearly express your position and include supporting evidence to convince board members to agree with your viewpoint.

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### **Writing Situation**

At the present time, young Americans volunteer to enlist for military service. However, other countries already require that their citizens serve for a specific length of time (such as Israel, where men serve three years, women two). If the United States of America is to maintain its present military operations, some argue that more members of the armed forces may be necessary. Do you agree or disagree with the idea that all Americans, both men and women, should be required to serve in the military for two years?

### **Directions for Writing**

Write a letter to an elected official or to your fellow Americans (addressing them through a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* or the *Rockdale Citizen*) in which you persuade the reader to support your point of view. Support your position with specific reasons and examples.

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### **Writing Situation**

Historically, Americans have shown how much they value education by providing free education for all students from kindergarten through high school. Many Americans now believe that education should be extended to include free or low cost college or vocational training after high school. Do you believe that some form of education should be provided to high school graduates at no cost or at a low cost?

### **Directions for Writing**

Write a letter to your legislator clearly expressing your position on the issue of free or low cost education or training for high school graduates. Convince the legislator to support or oppose free or low cost education.

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### **Writing Situation**

With the development of space travel, living beyond the planet Earth has become a possibility. You are one of the people who have been chosen to colonize another planet. The planet is already supplied with the basics of food, clothing, and shelter. Each colonist can take one additional item, but all must agree on the items that each colonist brings. Decide what one item you want to take with you.

### **Directions for Writing**

Write a speech to your fellow colonists that justifies your choice. By presenting a well-developed argument, convince them that your item should be taken to the new planet.

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### **Writing Situation**

Your grades have dropped, and your parents insist that you must quit your part-time job. Because you must make your own car payments, this decision means that you will not be able to keep your car. You are concerned that you will get upset if you try to talk to your parents. Instead, you decide to write them about the situation.

### **Directions for Writing**

Write your parents a letter in which you try to convince them that you should be given another chance to improve your grades without giving up your job and car. Make your argument clear, complete, and convincing.