

The SAT[®] with Essay

Practice Essay #9

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for the SAT Essay.

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the SAT Essay scoring rubric at sat.org/essay.

As you read the passage below, consider how Richard Schiffman 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 Richard Schiffman, “Why We Should Work Less.” ©2012 by The Washington Post Company. Originally published January 28, 2012.

- 1 Recently a friend confided over dinner that her job was “killing” her. I was surprised. She is a director of a midsize nonprofit that is doing citizen diplomacy work in the Middle East, and she has often remarked on how gratifying it is to be involved in a program that brings historical enemies face to face to share their stories.
- 2 But 2011 was a tough year for fundraisers, and my friend has been doing double duty as her understaffed organization struggles to make up the shortfall. Like many nowadays, she takes her work home with her, which has taken a toll on her personal life, health and sleep. She is thinking of leaving the nonprofit but is afraid to do so before she finds another job.
- 3 Another friend, who is employed by a large insurance company, is routinely forced to work late and at home on weekends—often without pay—on the projects she didn’t have time to finish at the office. With the threat of layoffs ever-present, she dares not complain. . . .
- 4 Americans already work hundreds of hours a year more than their counterparts in other developed countries, including workaholic Japan. They also have fewer days off than Europeans, who typically take four to six weeks of paid vacation a year.
- 5 Companies argue that grueling work schedules are necessary to boost productivity. But consider that, despite the recession, the productivity of U.S. workers has increased more than fourfold since the 1950s. Meanwhile, the buying power of wages has remained stagnant and in recent years has even begun to decline. Someone is getting rich off the exponential rise in productivity, but it is not the American worker.
- 6 In the past, unions struggled not only to raise pay but also to shorten the hours that their members had to work. The trend toward shorter hours continued unabated from the Civil War through the end of the Great Depression and the enactment, in 1938, of the Fair Labor Standard Act’s 40-hour-week provision. But during World War II work hours increased sharply, and it has not been a significant public issue since.

- 7 Given the recent troubles in the U.S. economy, this may seem an odd moment to reconsider the value of working less. But this crisis is not due to poor productivity; U.S. workers' productivity is at an all-time high. Neither is it a crisis in corporate profitability, which continues to soar despite tough economic times for ordinary Americans. It is arguably a crisis in corporate greed, one created by financial entities pushing for ever higher growth rates and levels of profitability regardless of the cost to the long-term health of the economy or for those whose hard work made that economy flourish over the past century.
- 8 Americans know that we can no longer afford a corporate culture on steroids that generates unsustainable profits by systematically cannibalizing our nation and the people who make it work. So a good place to start applying the brakes on this runaway train would be making sure that we don't have to kill ourselves at work just to make a living.
- 9 A widescale reduction in work hours would spread out the national workload and help to make more jobs available for the unemployed. Historically, shorter workweeks have been as large a creator of new jobs as market growth, sociology professor Juliet Schor argued last year.
- 10 While shorter hours would mean less income for many, nearly half of Americans surveyed in 2004 by the Center for a New American Dream said that they would be willing to accept a smaller paycheck in return for more time with their families and leisure. This would help explain the popularity of four-day workweeks; a pilot program in Utah found 82 percent of state workers surveyed said that they liked the change and wanted to stick with it.
- 11 The benefits of shortening the workweek would be incalculable for Americans' health and well being. And it would even be good for the planet. A 2006 study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research estimated that, if the United States were to emulate the shorter workweeks of Western Europe, energy consumption would decline about 20 percent and our country could significantly diminish its carbon footprint. Millions of Americans could live with less stress and more happiness and fulfillment.
- 12 With so much to gain, we need to cut work hours while there is still time.

Write an essay in which you explain how Richard Schiffman builds an argument to persuade his audience that Americans need to work fewer hours. In your essay, analyze how Schiffman uses one or more of the features listed in the box above (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 Schiffman's claims, but rather explain how Schiffman builds an argument to persuade his audience.

Directions

The essay gives you an opportunity to show how effectively you can read and comprehend a passage and write an essay analyzing the passage. In your essay, you should demonstrate that you have read the passage carefully, present a clear and logical analysis, and use language precisely.

Your essay must be written on the lines provided in your answer booklet; except for the Planning Page of the answer booklet, you will receive no other paper on which to write. You will have enough space if you write on every line, avoid wide margins, and keep your handwriting to a reasonable size. Remember that people who are not familiar with your handwriting will read what you write. Try to write or print so that what you are writing is legible to those readers.

You have 50 minutes to read the passage and write an essay in response to the prompt provided inside this booklet.



REMINDERS

- Do not write your essay in this booklet. Only what you write on the lined pages of your answer booklet will be evaluated.
- An off-topic essay will not be evaluated.



STANDARD TIME

Essay: **50 minutes**

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