

国外考生的 SAT 作文范例

Issue 1

"We can usually learn much more from people whose views we share than from people whose views contradict our own; disagreement can cause stress and inhibit learning."

Do we learn more from people whose ideas we share in common than from those whose ideas contradict ours? The speaker claims so, for the reason that disagreement can cause stress and inhibit learning. I concede that undue discord can impede learning. Otherwise, in my view we learn far more from discourse and debate with those whose ideas we oppose than from people whose ideas are in accord with our own.

Admittedly, under some circumstances disagreement with others can be counterproductive to learning. For supporting examples one need look no further than a television set. On today's typical television or radio talk show, disagreement usually manifests itself in meaningless rhetorical bouts and shouting matches, during which opponents vie to have their own message heard, but have little interest either in finding common ground with or in acknowledging the merits of the opponent's viewpoint. Understandably, neither the combatants nor the viewers learn anything meaningful. In fact, these battles only serve to reinforce the predispositions and biases of all concerned. The end result is that learning is impeded.

Disagreement can also inhibit learning when two opponents disagree on fundamental assumptions needed for meaningful discourse and debate. For example, a student of paleontology learns little about the evolution of an animal species under current study by debating with an individual whose religious belief system precludes the possibility of evolution to begin with. And, economics and finance students learn little about the dynamics of a laissez-faire system by debating with a socialist whose view is that a centralized power should control all economic activity.

Aside from the foregoing two provisos, however, I fundamentally disagree with the speaker's claim. Assuming common ground between two rational and reasonable opponents willing to debate on intellectual merits, both opponents stand to gain much from that debate. Indeed it is primarily through such debate

that human knowledge advances, whether at the personal, community, or global level.

At the personal level, by listening to their parents' rationale for their seemingly oppressive rules and policies teenagers can learn how certain behaviors naturally carry certain undesirable consequences. At the same time, by listening to their teenagers' concerns about autonomy and about peer pressures parents can learn the valuable lesson that effective parenting and control are two different things. At the community level, through dispassionate dialogue an environmental activist can come to understand the legitimate economic concerns of those whose jobs depend on the continued profitable operation of a factory. Conversely, the latter might stand to learn much about the potential public health price to be paid by ensuring job growth and a low unemployment rate. Finally, at the global level, two nations with opposing political or economic interests can reach mutually beneficial agreements by striving to understand the other's legitimate concerns for its national security, its political sovereignty, the stability of its economy and currency, and so forth.

In sum, unless two opponents in a debate are each willing to play on the same field and by the same rules, I concede that disagreement can impede learning. Otherwise, reasoned discourse and debate between people with opposing viewpoints is the very foundation upon which human knowledge advances. Accordingly, on balance the speaker is fundamentally correct.

Issue 2

"No field of study can advance significantly unless outsiders bring their knowledge and experience to that field of study."

I strongly agree with the assertion that significant advances in knowledge require expertise from various fields. The world around us presents a seamless web of physical and anthropogenic forces, which interact in ways that can be understood only in the context of a variety of disciplines. Two examples that aptly illustrate this point involve the fields of cultural anthropology and astronomy.

Consider how a cultural anthropologist's knowledge about an ancient civilization is enhanced not only by the expertise of the archeologist--who unearths the evidence--but ultimately by the expertise of biochemists, geologists, linguists, and even astronomers. By analyzing the hair, nails, blood and bones of mummified bodies, biochemists and forensic scientists can determine the life expectancy, general well-being, and common causes of death of the population. These experts can also ensure the proper preservation of evidence found at the archeological site. A geologist can help identify the source and age of the materials used for tools, weapons, and structures--thereby enabling the anthropologist to extrapolate about the civilization's economy, trades and work habits, life styles, extent of travel and mobility, and so forth. Linguists are needed to interpret hieroglyphics and

extrapolate from found fragments of writings. And an astronomer can help explain the layout of an ancient city as well as the design, structure and position of monuments, tombs, and temples--since ancients often looked to the stars for guidance in building cities and structures.

An even more striking example of how expertise in diverse fields is needed to advance knowledge involves the area of astronomy and space exploration. Significant advancements in our knowledge of the solar system and the universe require increasingly keen tools for observation and measurement. Telescope technology and the measurement of celestial distances, masses, volumes, and so forth, are the domain of astrophysicists. These advances also require increasingly sophisticated means of exploration. Manned and unmanned exploratory probes are designed by mechanical, electrical, and computer engineers. And to build and enable these technologies requires the acumen and savvy of business leaders, managers, and politicians. Even diplomats might play a role--insofar as major space projects require international cooperative efforts among the world's scientists and governments. And ultimately it is our philosophers whose expertise helps provide meaning to what we learn about our universe.

In sum, no area of intellectual inquiry operates in a vacuum. Because the sciences are inextricably related, to advance our knowledge in any one area we must understand the interplay among them all. Moreover, it is our non-scientists who make possible the science, and who bring meaning to what we learn from it.

Issue 3

"A nation should require all its students to study the same national curriculum until they enter college rather than allow schools in different parts of the nation to determine which academic courses to offer."

The speaker would prefer a national curriculum for all children up until college instead of allowing schools in different regions the freedom to decide on their own curricula. I agree insofar as some common core curriculum would serve useful purposes for any nation. At the same time, however, individual states and communities should have some freedom to augment any such curriculum as they see fit; otherwise, a nation's educational system might defeat its own purposes in the long term.

A national core curriculum would be beneficial to a nation in a number of respects. First of all, by providing all children with fundamental skills and knowledge, a common core curriculum would help ensure that our children grow up to become reasonably informed, productive members of society. In addition, a common core curriculum would provide a predictable foundation upon which college administrators and faculty could more easily build curricula and select course materials for freshmen that are neither below nor above their level of educational experience. Finally, a core curriculum would ensure that all

schoolchildren are taught core values upon which any democratic society depends to thrive, and even survive--values such as tolerance of others with different viewpoints, and respect for others.

However, a common curriculum that is also an exclusive one would pose certain problems, which might outweigh the benefits, noted above.

First of all, on what basis would certain course work be included or excluded, and who would be the final decision-maker? In all likelihood these decisions would be in the hands of federal legislators and regulators, who are likely to have their own quirky notions of what should and should not be taught to children--notions that may or may not reflect those of most communities, schools, or parents. Besides, government officials are notoriously susceptible to influence--peddling by lobbyists who do not have the best interests of society's children in mind.

Secondly, an official, federally sanctioned curriculum would facilitate the dissemination of propaganda and other dogma which because of its biased and one-sided nature undermines the very purpose of true education: to enlighten. I can easily foresee the banning of certain text books, programs, and websites which provide information and perspectives that the government might wish to suppress--as some sort of threat to its authority and power. Although this scenario might seem far-fetched, these sorts of concerns are being raised already at the state level.

Thirdly, the inflexible nature of a uniform national curriculum would preclude the inclusion of programs, courses, and materials that are primarily of regional or local significance. For example, California requires children at certain grade levels to learn about the history of particular ethnic groups who make up the state's diverse population. A national curriculum might not allow for this feature, and California's youngsters would be worse off as a result of their ignorance about the traditions, values, and cultural contributions of all the people whose citizenship they share.

Finally, it seems to me that imposing a uniform national curriculum would serve to undermine the authority of parents over their own children, to even a greater extent than uniform state laws currently do. Admittedly, laws requiring parents to ensure that their children receive an education that meets certain minimum standards are well justified, for the reasons mentioned earlier. However, when such standards are imposed by the state rather than at the community level, parents are left with far less power to participate meaningfully in the decision-making process. This problem would only be exacerbated were these decisions left exclusively to federal regulators.

In the final analysis, homogenization of elementary and secondary education would amount to a double-edged sword. While it would serve as an insurance policy against a future populated with illiterates and ignoramuses, at the same time it might serve to obliterate cultural diversity and tradition. The optimal federal approach, in my view, is a balanced one that imposes a basic curriculum yet leaves the rest up to each state--or better yet, to each community.

Issue 7

"The video camera provides such an accurate and convincing record of contemporary life that it has become a more important form of documentation than written records."

According to the speaker, the video recording is a more important means of document ha contemporary life than a written record because video recordings are more accurate and convincing. Although I agree that a video provides a more objective and accurate record of an event's spatial aspects, there is far more to document ha life than what we see and hear. Thus the speaker overstates the comparative significance of video as a documentary tool.

For the purpose of documenting temporal, spatial events and experiences, I agree that a video record is usually more accurate and more convincing than a written record. It is impossible for anyone, no matter how keen an observer and skilled a journalist, to recount ha complete and objective detail such events as the winning touchdown at the Super Bowl, a Ballanchine ballet, the Tournament of Roses Parade, or the scene at the intersection of Florence and Normandy streets during the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Yet these are important events in contemporary life the sort of events we might put ha a time capsule for the purpose of capturing our life and times at the turn of this millennium. The growing documentary role of video is not limited to seminal events like those described above. Video surveillance cameras are objective witnesses with perfect memories. Thus they can play a vital evidentiary role in legal proceedings--such as those involving robbery, drug trafficking, police misconduct, motor vehicle violations, and even malpractice in a hospital operating room. Indeed, whenever moving images are central to an event the video camera is superior to the written word. A written description of a hurricane, tornado, or volcanic eruption cannot convey its immediate power and awesome nature like a video record. A diary entry cannot "replay" that wedding reception, dance recital, or surprise birthday party as accurately or objectively as a video record. And a real estate brochure cannot inform about the lighting, spaciousness, or general ambiance of a featured property nearly as effectively as a video.

Nonetheless, for certain other purposes, written records are advantageous to and more appropriate than video records. For example, certain legal matters are best left to written documentation: video is of no practical use ha documenting the terms of a complex contractual agreement, incorporation, or the establishment of a trust. And video is of little use when it comes to documenting a person's subjective state of mind, impressions, or reflections of an event or experience. Indeed, to the extent that personal interpretation adds dimension and richness to the record, written documentation is actually more important than video. Finally, a video record is of no use in documenting statistical or other quantitative information. Returning to the riot example mentioned earlier, imagine relying on a video to document the financial loss to store owners, the number of police and firefighters involved, and so forth. Complete and accurate video documentation of such information would require video cameras at every street corner and in every aisle of every store.

In sum, the speaker's claim overstates the importance of video records, at least to some extent. When it comes to capturing, storing, and recalling