

SAT VOCABULARY

These words were generated using a top-hits list and are those most likely to recur on the SAT every year. They have been organized by theme and by difficulty. The “Most Important 500 Words” is a word list of medium difficulty and a good starting point for most students. The two Basic Word Lists contain easier vocabulary for students who need an easier starting point. The two Challenging Word Lists contain more difficult vocabulary for students needing a challenge.

Most Important 500 Words

#	Word	Definition	Group
1	abstruse	difficult to understand	argument and language
2	apt	appropriate, inclined	argument and language
3	cajole	coax	argument and language
4	compendious	succinct	argument and language
5	concur	agree	argument and language
6	delineate	list, explain	argument and language
7	digress(ion)	stray from the subject at hand	argument and language
8	elucidate	clarify	argument and language
9	embroil(ed)	involve in an argument or conflict	argument and language
10	empiric(al)	based on observation and experiment (not theory)	argument and language
11	enumerate	list	argument and language
12	epitome, epitomize	representative example	argument and language
13	equivocal	ambiguous	argument and language
14	exemplar	representative example	argument and language
15	exhort	encourage	argument and language
16	expedient	useful	argument and language
17	fathom (verb)	understand	argument and language
18	flagrant	evident, obvious	argument and language
19	florid(ity)	flushed, flowery	argument and language
20	incongruity, incongruous	inappropriateness, discrepancy	argument and language
21	ineffable	impossible to express in words	argument and language
22	innuendo	implicit suggestion	argument and language
23	laconic	concise	argument and language
24	lucid	clear, easily understood	argument and language
25	nebulous	vague	argument and language
26	nuance	subtle difference	argument and language
27	paradigm	clear example	argument and language
28	prattle	babble	argument and language
29	pronouncement	formal declaration	argument and language
30	proponent	supporter	argument and language
31	prosaic	lacking imagination, dull	argument and language

32	rebuttal	defense, counterargument	argument and language
33	recant	reject	argument and language
34	repudiate	reject	argument and language
35	rescind	annul, retract	argument and language
36	rhetoric(al), rhetorician	(related to) elegant speech/writing, elegant speaker/writer	argument and language
37	scrutinize, scrutiny	examine carefully	argument and language
38	simile	comparison	argument and language
39	tangential	digressive, irrelevant	argument and language
40	treatise	extensive written argument about some topic	argument and language
41	verbose	wordy, long-winded	argument and language
42	aura	air, feeling	emotions
43	bombastic	pompous	emotions
44	buoyant	cheerful, floating	emotions
45	callous	insensitive	emotions
46	cantankerous(ness)	irritable	emotions
47	capricious	fickle	emotions
48	caustic	bitter	emotions
49	convivial	sociable, lively	emotions
50	demonstrative	openly emotional	emotions
51	despondent	sad, depressed	emotions
52	diffident, diffidence	shy	emotions
53	discomfited	disappointed, defeated	emotions
54	disillusionment	disenchantment, disappointment	emotions
55	dispassionate	unemotional	emotions
56	elated, elation	joyful	emotions
57	evoke	bring about, stir up	emotions
58	felicitous	well-suited, happy	emotions
59	forlorn	sad	emotions
60	fortitude	courage	emotions
61	furor	commotion, anger	emotions
62	histrionic	excessively dramatic or emotional	emotions
63	idyllic	simply tranquil	emotions
64	impetuous	rash, passionate	emotions
65	irate	angry	emotions
66	jaded	tired, bored	emotions
67	jocular	cheerful	emotions
68	jovial	cheerful	emotions
69	maudlin	overly sentimental	emotions
70	melancholy	bleak	emotions
71	mercurial	fickle	emotions
72	morose	depressed	emotions
73	peevish	unpleasant	emotions
74	penchant	preference	emotions
75	perfunctory	done routinely with little interest or care	emotions
76	petulant	irritable	emotions

77	profound, profundity	intense, significant	emotions
78	propensity	inclination, tendency	emotions
79	repugnant	offensive, disgusting	emotions
80	reticent, reticence	emotionally reserved	emotions
81	sanguine	cheerfully confident, optimistic	emotions
82	solace	comfort, consolation	emotions
83	somber	bleak	emotions
84	temperamental	moody	emotions
85	trepidation	apprehension	emotions
86	truculent, truculence	aggressive, bad-tempered	emotions
87	vicarious	felt indirectly by imagining someone else's experiences	emotions
88	wrath	anger	emotions
89	alacrity	eagerness	energy
90	dormant	inactive	energy
91	ebullient	enthusiastic	energy
92	equanimity	calmness	energy
93	hardy	robust, sturdy	energy
94	indolent	lazy	energy
95	insipid	dull, boring	energy
96	instigate	provoke, start	energy
97	invoke	call forth, appeal to	energy
98	lackadaisical	lacking energy, lethargic	energy
99	laggard	lazy person	energy
100	languid	inactive, dreamy	energy
101	listless	languid, sluggish	energy
102	lull	short period of calm	energy
103	pacify	soothe, calm	energy
104	placate	calm someone down	energy
105	placid	calm	energy
106	raucous	harsh, rowdy	energy
107	rouse, rousing	provoke, excite	energy
108	scintillating	lively, effervescent	energy
109	stagnant, stagnation	not moving	energy
110	static (adjective)	not moving	energy
111	torpor	drowsiness, apathy	energy
112	unruly	boisterous, unrestrained	energy
113	vapid	dull, uninteresting	energy
114	abhor, abhorrence	hatred	friends and enemies
115	acrimony	bitter animosity	friends and enemies
116	amiable	friendly	friends and enemies
117	amicable	friendly	friends and enemies
118	antipathy	dislike	friends and enemies
119	congenial	pleasant	friends and enemies
120	disputatious	quarrelsome	friends and enemies

121	distaste	dislike, aversion	friends and enemies
122	empathetic, empathy	compassionate	friends and enemies
123	estrangle, estrangement	alienate, alienation	friends and enemies
124	exacting	demanding, severe requirements	friends and enemies
125	genial	friendly	friends and enemies
126	officious	meddlesome, interfering	friends and enemies
127	parody	intentional mockery	friends and enemies
128	rancor(ous)	bitter resentment	friends and enemies
129	rapport	relationship	friends and enemies
130	recluse, reclusive	hermit	friends and enemies
131	satire, satirical, satirize	sarcastic imitation	friends and enemies
132	solicitous(ness)	expressing care or concern, often too much	friends and enemies
133	unwitting	unintentional	friends and enemies
134	amenable	yielding	give up?
135	aspire	strive for	give up?
136	assiduous	diligent	give up?
137	assuage	relieve, appease	give up?
138	compliant, compliance	yielding	give up?
139	dauntless	courageous	give up?
140	debacle	failure	give up?
141	debilitate(d)	weaken(ed)	give up?
142	debunk	prove wrong	give up?
143	deference, deferential	respectful submission, yielding	give up?
144	deterrent	hindrance, impediment	give up?
145	disheartening	discouraging	give up?
146	dispel	to drive away or disprove	give up?
147	disquiet(ing)	(causing) anxiety	give up?
148	facile	superficial, effortless	give up?
149	futile, futility	hopeless	give up?
150	gallant(ry)	courageous	give up?
151	impasse	obstacle	give up?
152	indomitable	too strong to be defeated	give up?
153	intrepid	courageous	give up?
154	onerous	difficult, trying	give up?
155	servile	submissive, subservient	give up?
156	steadfast	not yielding	give up?
157	subservient	yielding	give up?
158	tenacious, tenacity	stubborn, determined	give up?
159	tenuous	insignificant, flimsy	give up?
160	tribulation	suffering	give up?
161	vying	striving	give up?
162	acumen	insightfulness	knowledge and skill

163	adept	skillful	knowledge and skill
164	adroit	skillful	knowledge and skill
165	anthropology	study of human beings	knowledge and skill
166	boorish, boorishness	crude	knowledge and skill
167	cerebral	intellectual	knowledge and skill
168	churlish	vulgar, boorish	knowledge and skill
169	conscientious	careful	knowledge and skill
170	cosmopolitan	sophisticated, urbane	knowledge and skill
171	credulity, credulous	the trait of trusting others too much	knowledge and skill
172	didactic	(often excessively) morally instructive	knowledge and skill
173	discern, discerning	perceive, perceptive	knowledge and skill
174	epiphany	sudden realization	knowledge and skill
175	erudite, erudition	scholarly	knowledge and skill
176	esoteric	understood only by a few	knowledge and skill
177	fastidious	careful	knowledge and skill
178	finesse	tact, elegant skill	knowledge and skill
179	flummox	confuse	knowledge and skill
180	folly	foolishness	knowledge and skill
181	foolhardy	recklessly daring	knowledge and skill
182	grandiose	pompous, pretentious	knowledge and skill
183	inane	senseless, stupid	knowledge and skill
184	ineptitude	incompetence	knowledge and skill
185	ingenuous	unsophisticated and trusting, naïve	knowledge and skill
186	lithe	graceful, supple	knowledge and skill
187	neophyte	beginner	knowledge and skill
188	oversight	mistake	knowledge and skill
189	painstaking	careful	knowledge and skill
190	pedant, pedantic, pedantry	a person who makes a great show of his knowledge	knowledge and skill
191	precocious	early development in maturity and intelligence	knowledge and skill
192	provincial	narrow-minded, unsophisticated	knowledge and skill
193	punctilious	meticulous, attentive to detail	knowledge and skill
194	pundit	a knowledgeable commentator	knowledge and skill
195	quixotic	foolish	knowledge and skill
196	sage	wise	knowledge and skill
197	scrupulous	very careful and precise	knowledge and skill
198	shrewd	astute, smart	knowledge and skill
199	slipshod	careless, sloppy	knowledge and skill
200	stupefy, stupefaction	bewilder	knowledge and skill
201	susceptible	easily influenced or affected	knowledge and skill
202	tractable	easily managed or controlled	knowledge and skill
203	uncanny	extraordinary, weird	knowledge and skill
204	uncouth	crude	knowledge and skill
205	unfathomable	incomprehensible, unbelievable	knowledge and skill

206	ungainly	clumsy	knowledge and skill
207	urbane	elegant, sophisticated	knowledge and skill
208	venerable	commanding respect because of age, dignity	knowledge and skill
209	virtuoso, virtuosity	one with exceptional musical skill	knowledge and skill
210	wry	clever or grim sense of humor	knowledge and skill
211	corroborate	strengthen or support with additional evidence	law and order
212	decorum, decorous	order, politeness	law and order
213	equitable	even-handed	law and order
214	illicit	illegal	law and order
215	incriminate	accuse someone of a crime	law and order
216	indict(ment)	formally accuse of a crime	law and order
217	indignant	angered (by injustice)	law and order
218	indulgent	lenient	law and order
219	judicious	fair	law and order
220	ratify	approve, confirm	law and order
221	sanction (verb)	formally approve	law and order
222	vindicate, vindication	clear of blame or suspicion	law and order
223	altruistic, altruism	generous	money
224	avarice	greed	money
225	benevolent	generous	money
226	bequeath	hand down (through a will)	money
227	depreciation, depreciatory	decrease in value	money
228	destitute	poor	money
229	exorbitant	too expensive	money
230	frugal(ity)	cheap(ness)	money
231	lucrative	profitable	money
232	luxuriant	lush, elaborate	money
233	magnanimity, magnanimous	generosity, generous	money
234	mercenary	motivated by money	money
235	miserly	cheap, stingy	money
236	patronize	financially support, be condescending towards	money
237	penurious	cheap, stingy	money
238	perquisite	additional payment, bonus	money
239	philanthropist, philanthropic	someone who supports charity	money
240	procure	get or provide	money
241	provident	prudent, frugal	money
242	squander	waste	money
243	venal(ity)	willing to accept bribes	money
244	vocation	career	money
245	aberration	deviation, not normal	politics and tradition
246	accost	confront	politics and tradition

247	adamant	not yielding	politics and tradition
248	apathetic, apathy	lacking interest	politics and tradition
249	ascendancy	influence, domination	politics and tradition
250	ascetic, asceticism	one who practices self-denial as a spiritual discipline	politics and tradition
251	august	dignified	politics and tradition
252	autocrat, autocratic	dictator, dictatorial	politics and tradition
253	automaton	a person who acts like a robot	politics and tradition
254	banal	common	politics and tradition
255	bipartisanship	supported by two opposing groups (political parties)	politics and tradition
256	depose	dethrone, remove from power	politics and tradition
257	derivative	not original	politics and tradition
258	desecration	violate the sacredness of	politics and tradition
259	despot	dictator	politics and tradition
260	doctrine	religious, political, or philosophical principles or teachings	politics and tradition
261	dogmatic	tending to force one's own opinions on other people	politics and tradition
262	eclectic	from diverse sources	politics and tradition
263	egalitarian	belief in equality	politics and tradition
264	exhibitionist, exhibitionistic	deliberately behaving a certain way to attract attention	politics and tradition
265	faction	group within a larger group	politics and tradition
266	fanaticism	excessive enthusiasm	politics and tradition
267	hackneyed	common	politics and tradition
268	heresy, heretic	belief contrary to the established opinion	politics and tradition
269	idiosyncrasy, idiosyncratic	unique personal trait, quirky	politics and tradition
270	orthodox	conservative, traditional	politics and tradition
271	pacifist	one who completely opposes violence	politics and tradition
272	partisan	someone with biased beliefs	politics and tradition
273	piety, pious	religious devotion	politics and tradition
274	polemical	controversial	politics and tradition
275	renounce	reject	politics and tradition
276	reverent	respectful, pious	politics and tradition
277	sanctity	holiness	politics and tradition
278	staunch	strong and loyal	politics and tradition
279	stock (adjective)	standard, hackneyed	politics and tradition
280	strident	loud and harsh	politics and tradition
281	subversive	one who intends to overthrow the government	politics and tradition
282	supplant	to take the place of	politics and tradition
283	sycophant	suck up, flatterer	politics and tradition
284	toady	suck-up	politics and tradition
285	totalitarian	undemocratic, rigid political control	politics and tradition

286	trite	common	politics and tradition
287	usurp	seize power without authority	politics and tradition
288	zealot	fanatic	politics and tradition
289	assail	belittle	praise and criticism
290	berate	scold harshly	praise and criticism
291	castigate	belittle	praise and criticism
292	ensorious	harshly critical	praise and criticism
293	censure	scold	praise and criticism
294	chastise	belittle	praise and criticism
295	chide	belittle	praise and criticism
296	consternation	dismay	praise and criticism
297	contempt(uous)	disdainful	praise and criticism
298	contemptible	despicable	praise and criticism
299	culpable	blameworthy	praise and criticism
300	denigrate	belittle	praise and criticism
301	deprecate	disapprove, belittle	praise and criticism
302	deride	make fun of	praise and criticism
303	derogatory, derogate	disparaging, belittling	praise and criticism
304	discount (verb)	disregard	praise and criticism
305	disparage	belittle	praise and criticism
306	eulogy, eulogize	praising speech	praise and criticism
307	extol	praise	praise and criticism
308	laud, laudatory	praise	praise and criticism
309	noxious	poisonous	praise and criticism
310	reprehensible	blameworthy	praise and criticism
311	reprimand	belittle	praise and criticism
312	reproach	scold	praise and criticism
313	scathing	harshly critical	praise and criticism
314	slight (verb)	insult, snub	praise and criticism
315	spurn	reject with contempt	praise and criticism
316	tirade	critical speech	praise and criticism
317	tout	praise	praise and criticism
318	affected	haughty	pride
319	chagrin	mortification	pride
320	complacency, complacent	self-satisfaction, smugness	pride
321	conciliate, conciliatory	compromising, apologizing	pride
322	degradation	humiliation	pride
323	demure, demurrer	overly modest	pride
324	flippant, flippancy	disrespectful	pride
325	hubris	arrogance	pride
326	ignominy, ignominious	dishonor, humiliation	pride
327	imperious	arrogant	pride
328	impudence, impudent	disrespectful, insolent	pride

329	insolence, insolent	disrespectful	pride
330	irreverent, irreverence	disrespectful	pride
331	notoriety, notorious	infamous, ill fame	pride
332	obdurate	stubborn	pride
333	obstinate, -acy	stubborn(ness)	pride
334	opportunist, opportunistic	a person who takes advantage of opportunities, often unethically	pride
335	peremptory	bossy, decisive	pride
336	presumptuous	too bold, arrogant	pride
337	recalcitrant	stubborn	pride
338	self-righteous	smug, holier-than-thou	pride
339	self-serving	selfish	pride
340	supercilious	arrogant	pride
341	unabashed	not embarrassed	pride
342	wayward	selfish, stubborn	pride
343	bog	marsh, swamp	science
344	coalesce	blend, fuse	science
345	confluence	a place where things merge or flow together	science
346	disseminate	scatter widely	science
347	effervesce	bubble, fizz	science
348	elicit	bring about	science
349	indigenous	native to a region	science
350	induce	cause	science
351	inert, inertia	not moving or active	science
352	inherent	intrinsic, natural	science
353	multifarious	many types	science
354	precipitate	outcome	science
355	abate	lessen	size, amount, location
356	allocate	assign, portion	size, amount, location
357	atrophy	waste away	size, amount, location
358	attenuate	weaken, reduce	size, amount, location
359	burgeon	grow, flourish	size, amount, location
360	circumscribe	restrict	size, amount, location
361	copious	abundant	size, amount, location
362	dearth	scarcity	size, amount, location
363	devoid	lacking	size, amount, location
364	diffuse	spread out	size, amount, location
365	diminutive, diminution	extremely small	size, amount, location
366	efface(ment)	erase	size, amount, location
367	encompass	include, surround	size, amount, location
368	encroaching	intrusive	size, amount, location
369	excavate	unearth, dig up	size, amount, location
370	extricate	disentangle	size, amount, location
371	gargantuan	gigantic	size, amount, location

372	germinate	(cause to) grow	size, amount, location
373	hamper (verb)	hinder, restrict	size, amount, location
374	incubate	develop, grow	size, amount, location
375	indiscriminate	unselective, random	size, amount, location
376	inhibit(ing)	restrain(ing)	size, amount, location
377	innate	intrinsic, natural	size, amount, location
378	innocuous	harmless	size, amount, location
379	insular(ity)	related to or similar to an island	size, amount, location
380	inundate	flood	size, amount, location
381	latent, latency	the state of being not yet evident or active	size, amount, location
382	mitigate, mitigator	moderate, alleviate	size, amount, location
383	modicum	small amount	size, amount, location
384	motley	diverse, heterogeneous	size, amount, location
385	parch	make dry	size, amount, location
386	paucity	scarcity	size, amount, location
387	peripheral	outermost, secondary	size, amount, location
388	plasticity	malleability, the ability to be shaped or molded	size, amount, location
389	plethora, plethoric	surplus	size, amount, location
390	pliable, pliant	easily shaped or influenced	size, amount, location
391	preclude	prevent	size, amount, location
392	prodigious	huge	size, amount, location
393	profuse, profusion	plentiful	size, amount, location
394	prohibitive, prohibition	restrictive	size, amount, location
395	proliferate, proliferation	grow, increase	size, amount, location
396	prolific	fertile, fruitful	size, amount, location
397	quell	suppress, quench	size, amount, location
398	rampant	unrestrained, growing	size, amount, location
399	ravenous	insatiable, having a huge appetite	size, amount, location
400	reap	harvest, gather	size, amount, location
401	recessive	tending to go backward	size, amount, location
402	relegate	demote	size, amount, location
403	relinquish	give back	size, amount, location
404	repertory	collection	size, amount, location
405	satiate	satisfy fully	size, amount, location
406	saturate	flood, soak	size, amount, location
407	scanty	barely sufficient	size, amount, location
408	scope	opportunity, range	size, amount, location
409	superfluous	more than necessary	size, amount, location
410	surfeit	surplus	size, amount, location
411	teem, teeming	abundant	size, amount, location
412	trifling	frivolous, unimportant	size, amount, location
413	ubiquitous	ever-present, pervasive	size, amount, location
414	vacuous, vacuity	empty	size, amount, location
415	viscous	thick, sticky	size, amount, location

416	waning	lessening	size, amount, location
417	byzantine	convoluted, complex	the senses
418	cacophonous, cacophony	discordant sound	the senses
419	cursory	hasty, superficial	the senses
420	gait	manner of walking	the senses
421	garish	tastelessly showy	the senses
422	glutton(ous)	someone who eats and drinks too much	the senses
423	lurid	sensational, shocking	the senses
424	malleable	capable of being shaped, pliable	the senses
425	ramshackle	poorly constructed	the senses
426	redolent	reminiscent, having smell	the senses
427	shroud	hide, obscure	the senses
428	stark(ness)	harsh, plain	the senses
429	succulent	delicious	the senses
430	antediluvian	very old	time
431	dilatory	tending to waste time	time
432	ephemeral	short-lived	time
433	hasten	speed up the progress of	time
434	oracle	prophet	time
435	prospective	likely or expected to become	time
436	regressive	tending to return or revert	time
437	sporadic	occurring at irregular intervals	time
438	temporize	delay, evade	time
439	transient	lasting for only a short time	time
440	arcane	mysterious, known only by a few	truth
441	belie	give a false impression	truth
442	charlatan	swindler	truth
443	circuitous	indirect	truth
444	clandestine	secretive	truth
445	demystify	make clear and comprehensible	truth
446	disingenuous	insincere	truth
447	divulge	make known	truth
448	dupe	deceive	truth
449	duplicitous, duplicity	deliberately deceptive	truth
450	enigma(tic)	mystery, mysterious	truth
451	exposé	a report designed to reveal the truth to the public	truth
452	fallacious	deceitful, incorrect	truth
453	fallacy	false belief	truth
454	fraudulent	deceitful	truth
455	furtive	sneaky	truth
456	incredulous, incredulity	skeptical	truth
457	indeterminate	left doubtful, inconclusive	truth
458	inscrutable	mysterious	truth

459	irony, ironic	incongruity between what is expected and what actually results	truth
460	ostensible	apparent, seeming	truth
461	plausible, plausibility	likely true	truth
462	pretext	misleading claim or appearance	truth
463	prevaricator	liar	truth
464	rectify, rectitude	put right, correct	truth
465	refutation, refute	arguing that a claim is false	truth
466	sanctimonious	pretending to be religious, hypocritical	truth
467	sophistry	deceptive reasoning	truth
468	spurious	false, inauthentic	truth
469	substantiate	confirm, establish as genuine	truth
470	auspicious	favorable	war and peace
471	barrage	bombardment, torrent	war and peace
472	belligerent	aggressive, warlike	war and peace
473	blighted	destroyed	war and peace
474	bolster	support	war and peace
475	buttress	support	war and peace
476	circumvent	escape, avoid	war and peace
477	conflagration	large destructive fire	war and peace
478	contentious	belligerent, quarrelsome	war and peace
479	decimate	destroy	war and peace
480	deleterious	harmful	war and peace
481	depravity	moral corruption	war and peace
482	dire	urgent, dreadful	war and peace
483	divergent	different, conflicting	war and peace
484	divisive	creating conflict	war and peace
485	elude	evade	war and peace
486	elusive	difficulty to catch or define	war and peace
487	embitter(ed)	make worse	war and peace
488	encumbrance	burden	war and peace
489	fortuitous	fortunate, lucky	war and peace
490	marred	scarred	war and peace
491	nefarious	evil	war and peace
492	palliate, palliative	relieve pain without curing	war and peace
493	precarious	dangerous, unstable	war and peace
494	raze	destroy, demolish	war and peace
495	serendipity	luck	war and peace
496	spartan	simple, self-disciplined	war and peace
497	vanquish	conquer, defeat	war and peace
498	vigilant	watchful, alert	war and peace
499	vindictive	seeking revenge	war and peace
500	virulent	poisonous	war and peace