

Gellerisms

on the SAT Critical Reading Passages

- UNDERLINE: As you read the passage, underline strong words, especially adjectives and loaded verbs; sentences containing *but*, *not*, *however*, etc.; and sentences beginning with the conjunctions “And” or “But.”
- Use the structure of the passage to help you locate answers; do not focus on merely the lines referenced. Before selecting your answer choice, always read at least five lines before and five lines after the line(s) referenced. Remember that all of the paragraphs are connected to the theme of the passage and that the sentences of each paragraph are connected to the main idea of the individual paragraph.
- Treat the introduction with respect - perhaps a main idea lurks there.
- Use punctuation clues. Let the meaning of a word, phrase or thought to the left of a semicolon, colon or comma help you understand the meaning of an unfamiliar word, phrase or thought to the right and vice-versa.
- “Weigh the wording” or think what each word means in each answer choice.
- Remember that critical-reading passage sections are the only ones on the PSAT/SAT in which the questions are NOT arranged by degree of difficulty. Do not give up; if one question seems difficult to answer, remember that the next question probably will be easier and that you can handle it!
- Maturity is important. The passages are NOT “boring,” “awful,” “dry” or any of those other adjectives you can imagine. They reflect college level reading material, not some romance novel. Confront the passages with a mature attitude and PRACTICE if you find the passages and questions difficult to comprehend.

