

SSAT ANALOGY STRATEGY GUIDE

01 THE 4-STEP PROCESS — FOLLOW THIS EVERY TIME

The secret to analogies is vocab AND process.
 Even when you don't know a word, the correct steps will eliminate 3–4 wrong answers automatically. Never skip steps.

STEP	ACTION	HOW
1	Find the relationship	Look at the FIRST PAIR only. What connects them? Be specific.
2	Write a bridge sentence	One sentence, specific relationship. "A PILOT operates an AIRPLANE." NOT "they are related to flying."
3	Test every answer choice	Apply your exact bridge sentence to each answer pair. Only one will fit perfectly.
4	Eliminate — don't guess	Cross out any pair where your bridge sentence doesn't work. The remaining answer is correct.

Bridge Sentence: Bad vs. Good

Example: PILOT : AIRPLANE

✗ BAD: "A pilot and airplane are related to flying." → Too vague. Multiple answer pairs could fit.

✓ GOOD: "A PILOT operates an AIRPLANE." → Specific. Now test: DRIVER operates CAR ✓ • PASSENGER operates CAR ✗

02 PROCESS OF ELIMINATION (POE) — YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TOOL

POE works even when you don't know the words.
 If you can identify the relationship type from the first pair, you can eliminate any answer that belongs to a different relationship type — regardless of whether you know the words.

POE Rules — Apply in Order

ELIMINATE IF...	EXAMPLE
The relationship type is different from the first pair	First pair = PART:WHOLE → eliminate any SYNONYM or ANTONYM answer
The order of the relationship is reversed	If first pair is CREATOR:CREATION, eliminate CREATION:CREATOR answers
The bridge sentence doesn't work with those words	Bridge: "A pilot operates an airplane" → eliminate "passenger is to car"
One word has the wrong charge (positive vs. negative)	If first pair has positive tone, eliminate pairs with negative connotations
The relationship is too weak or too general	Bridge is specific; eliminate answers where the sentence only "kinda" works

03 WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW A WORD

Unknown words are NOT a dead end. Follow this decision tree.

STRATEGY		HOW TO DO IT
1	Use ROOT DETECTIVE™	Break the unknown word into root + prefix + suffix. Even partial knowledge helps. MAL = bad, BENE = good, etc.
2	Check for tone/charge	Does the word look positive or negative? Prefixes like UN-, DIS-, MAL- signal negative. If you can ID charge, eliminate opposite-charge answers.
3	Use the OTHER word	If you know the second word in the pair, work backwards. What relationship would make sense with a known word?
4	Use the answers	Sometimes the answer pair uses familiar words. Ask: which answer pair has the clearest, most specific relationship? That's usually correct.
5	Guess strategically	Never leave blank. If down to 2 choices, pick the one with the more specific bridge sentence — not the vaguest relationship.

04 TOP 10 RELATIONSHIP TYPES

Memorize these. Master the bridge sentence for each.

#	RELATIONSHIP	BRIDGE FORMULA	EXAMPLES
1	PART : WHOLE	" ___ is a part of ___ "	Wheel : Car • Chapter : Book • Petal : Flower
2	WORKER : TOOL / WORKPLACE	" ___ uses/works at ___ "	Chef : Knife • Surgeon : Scalpel • Teacher : School
3	ANTONYMS	" ___ is the opposite of ___ "	Hot : Cold • Subtle : Obvious • Stationary : Mobile
4	SYNONYMS	" ___ means the same as ___ "	Benevolent : Kind • Nefarious : Wicked
5	DEGREE (Mild → Extreme)	" ___ is more intense than ___ "	Dislike : Hate • Warm : Scorching • Drizzle : Downpour
6	THING : LACK OF THING	" ___ is the absence of ___ "	Silence : Sound • Blindness : Sight • Apathetic : Interest
7	CREATOR : CREATION	" ___ creates ___ "	Author : Book • Composer : Symphony • Sculptor : Statue
8	ACTION : OBJECT	"You ___ a ___ "	Read : Book • Drive : Car • Play : Instrument
9	CAUSE : EFFECT	" ___ causes/produces ___ "	Exercise : Fitness • Fire : Smoke • Study : Knowledge
10	DEFINING TRAIT	"A ___ IS ALWAYS ___ (by definition)"	Philanthropist : Benevolent • Philosopher : Virtuous • Miser : Stingy

05 ABSTRACT PAIRS — THE HARDEST TYPE

Abstract pairs use concepts, not physical objects. The relationship is logical, not visual.

Strategy: Make the bridge sentence even MORE specific. Abstract pairs often use Degree, Defining Trait, or Lack-of-Thing relationships.

ABSTRACT PAIR	TYPE	BRIDGE SENTENCE
APATHY : INTEREST	Lack of thing	Apathy is the complete absence of interest.
MALICE : KINDNESS	Antonym	Malice is the direct opposite of kindness.

DISLIKE : HATRED	Degree	Dislike is less intense than hatred.
COURAGE : COWARDICE	Antonym	Courage is the direct opposite of cowardice.
AMBIGUITY : CLARITY	Lack of thing	Ambiguity is the absence of clarity.
WISDOM : SAGE	Defining trait	A sage is defined by wisdom.
AUDACITY : BOLD	Defining trait	Audacity is what it means to be bold (noun → adj).
CHAOS : ORDER	Antonym	Chaos is the complete opposite of order.
IRONY : EXPECTATION	Cause/contrast	Irony subverts or contradicts expectation.
SATIRE : CRITICISM	Creator function	Satire is a form of social criticism.

06 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE TRAPS — MEMORIZE THESE CHARTS

These appear constantly. There is no shortcut — you must know them cold.

A · Baby Animal Names

ANIMAL	BABY	ANIMAL	BABY
Cat	Kitten	Horse	Foal / Colt (♂) / Filly (♀)
Dog	Puppy	Cow	Calf
Bear	Cub	Kangaroo	Joey
Lion	Cub	Sheep / Ewe	Lamb
Eagle / Hawk	Eaglet	Goat	Kid
Swan	Cygnets	Deer	Fawn
Frog	Tadpole	Pig	Piglet
Fish	Fry	Fox	Kit / Cub
Duck	Duckling	Whale / Dolphin	Calf
Chicken / Hen	Chick	Goose	Gosling

B • Male / Female Animal Names

ANIMAL	MALE ♂	FEMALE ♀	BRIDGE
Horse	Stallion	Mare	A stallion is a male horse
Cattle / Cow	Bull	Cow	A bull is a male bovine
Pig	Boar	Sow	A boar is a male pig
Sheep	Ram	Ewe	A ram is a male sheep
Chicken	Rooster / Cock	Hen	A rooster is a male chicken
Duck	Drake	Duck	A drake is a male duck
Dog	Dog	Bitch	A bitch is a female dog
Deer	Buck / Stag	Doe	A buck is a male deer
Lion	Lion	Lioness	A lioness is a female lion
Tiger	Tiger	Tigress	A tigress is a female tiger
Fox	Fox / Tod	Vixen	A vixen is a female fox
Goose	Gander	Goose	A gander is a male goose

C • Animal Homes / Habitats

ANIMAL	HOME	ANIMAL	HOME
Dog	Kennel	Bee	Hive
Horse	Stable / Stall	Bird	Nest
Pig	Sty	Lion	Den / Lair
Cow	Barn / Byre	Fox	Earth / Den
Rabbit	Warren / Burrow	Bear	Den / Cave
Fish	Aquarium / Pond	Eagle	Eyrie / Aerie

D • Specialist : Field of Study

Bridge: "A ___ studies/treats ___" or "A ___ specializes in ___"

SPECIALIST	FIELD / SUBJECT	MEMORY TIP
Cardiologist	Heart	CARDIO = heart (cardiology, cardiac)
Dermatologist	Skin	DERM = skin (dermatitis)
Neurologist	Nervous system / Brain	NEURO = nerve
Ophthalmologist	Eyes	OPHTHALM = eye
Orthopedist	Bones / Skeleton	ORTHO = straight, correct
Anesthesiologist	Pain / Sensation (removes it)	AN + ESTHESIA = without feeling
Oncologist	Cancer / Tumors	ONCO = tumor, mass
Botanist	Plants	BOTANY = plant science
Entomologist	Insects	ENTOMO = insect
Ornithologist	Birds	ORNITHO = bird
Geologist	Rocks / Earth	GEO = earth
Meteorologist	Weather	METEOR = sky phenomenon
Anthropologist	Humans / Culture	ANTHROP = human
Etymologist	Word origins	ETYMO = true meaning (of words)
Seismologist	Earthquakes	SEISMO = earthquake

E • Symbolism — What Things Represent

Bridge: "A ___ symbolizes / represents ___"

SYMBOL	REPRESENTS	ANALOGY BRIDGE
Dove	Peace	A dove symbolizes peace
Owl	Wisdom	An owl symbolizes wisdom
White flag	Surrender / Truce	A white flag symbolizes surrender
Olive branch	Peace / Reconciliation	An olive branch symbolizes peace
Scales	Justice / Law	Scales symbolize justice
Skull & crossbones	Danger / Poison / Death	A skull symbolizes danger

Laurel wreath	Victory / Honor	A laurel wreath symbolizes victory
Rainbow	Hope / Promise / Diversity	A rainbow symbolizes hope
Torch	Knowledge / Enlightenment	A torch symbolizes enlightenment
Cross	Christianity / Sacrifice	A cross symbolizes Christianity

F · Job / Role → What They Do or Produce

Bridge: "A ___ creates/performs/produces ___"

ROLE	CREATES / DOES	BRIDGE
Author / Writer	Book / Novel	An author writes a book
Composer	Symphony / Score	A composer writes a symphony
Sculptor	Statue	A sculptor creates a statue
Architect	Blueprint / Building	An architect designs a building
Choreographer	Dance / Routine	A choreographer creates a dance
Poet	Poem / Verse	A poet writes a poem
Playwright	Play / Drama	A playwright writes a play
Chef / Cook	Meal / Dish	A chef prepares a meal
Tailor	Garment / Suit	A tailor makes a garment
Carpenter	Furniture	A carpenter builds furniture

07 WATCH THE ORDER — A COMMON TRAP

PART : WHOLE ≠ WHOLE : PART

Wheel : Car → "A wheel is a PART of a car" (Part → Whole)

Car : Wheel → "A car CONTAINS a wheel" (Whole → Part) — DIFFERENT relationship!

Rule: Always make your bridge sentence match the EXACT order of the words. If the pair is reversed, your bridge must be reversed too — and the correct answer must match that reversed structure.

08 QUICK REFERENCE — COMMON TRAPS & REMINDERS

TRAP	WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Picking an answer because the words "feel" related	Write the bridge sentence FIRST. Always. No exceptions.
Confusing DEGREE with SYNONYM	Drizzle and downpour are NOT synonyms — one is stronger. Check intensity.
Missing the order (Part:Whole vs Whole:Part)	Say your bridge aloud. Does the order match the given pair exactly?
Guessing when you don't know a word	Use ROOT DETECTIVE™ → check charge → use the other word → then guess.
Picking the "most similar topic" answer	Topic similarity is irrelevant. Only RELATIONSHIP TYPE matters.
Stopping at one correct-seeming answer	Always test ALL 5 choices. The trap answer is designed to come first.