

## Practice SAT Essay Questions Suggested by *Mind-Rain*

### Question #1

*“When more people read a book, the book gets better. . . . [W]e’re social creatures. We need to talk about our lives, including our friends and families. So why wouldn’t we want to talk about the characters and events we know from fiction? . . . A weird kind of magic happens thanks to all this conversation—it makes a book more real . . . a little better.”*

- Scott Westerfeld, “Introduction”

Reader-response is an approach to literary criticism that studies the interaction of the reader with the text; it suggests that a text is incomplete until it is read, and that the real meaning of a text comes from the reader, not the writer. But does a book really get better as more people read it?

Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

## Question #2

*“As a society we like to pretend that we aren’t really all that vain, that we don’t obsess about our appearances, and that we’re capable of seeing past all the superficial stuff. As Martin Luther King, Jr., would say—if, you know, he happened to live in a Scott Westerfeld novel—“People should not be judged by the prettiness of their skin, but by the content of their character.”*

*We throw around phrases to emphasize the point: Beauty is only skin deep. Beauty is as beauty does. It’s what inside that really matters. You can’t judge a book by its cover*

*Any high school freshman will tell you differently. As will your local plastic surgeon, or the person in charge of hiring models for advertisements. If you want to sell something, you show a beautiful person holding, eating, wearing, or driving it. . . .*

*We can claim we aren’t affected by looks, but the way we spend our money says differently.”*

- Janette Rallison, “Beauty Smackdown”

Rallison suggests in the passage above that everyone judges other people based on their appearance, whether you want to or not. Is it possible to *not* judge someone on their appearance? Or are people always affected by the way others look?

Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.