

## Practice SAT Essay Questions Suggested by *Through the Wardrobe*

### Question #1

*Studying [authors'] lives often reveals some of the history that shaped and informed the magic worlds they created to delight their readers. Authors, it turned out, take bits and pieces of their real lives to breath life into their characters and settings. Dickens's all too real experience with a London poorhouse, Twain's life on the Mississippi River and his experience growing up in Missouri before and after the battle to end slavery was finally won—the authors turned out to be characters as interesting as those they created on the page. In turn, the characters they created became more real when I learned how much they shared with their creators in experience.*

- From Kelly McClymer's "Serious Action Figures"

One school of literary criticism says that pieces of writing are best read paired with knowledge of their authors: who they were, when they lived, and what their life was like. Another school of literary criticism argues that pieces of writing are best read knowing only what the author chose to put on the page. Which do you think is the best way to read?

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

## Question #2

*Eustace isn't very well-prepared for the adventures that await him [in Narnia, and] Eustace's sudden lack of salient knowledge is an irony that Lewis takes great pleasure in. . . . Lewis reminds us three times that Eustace had "read none of the right books" . . . as the Dawn Treader travels through the unknown seas east of the Lone Island, she isn't sailing so much into foreign lands as into foreign stories—places where a knowledge of the everyday is irrelevant or even encumbering, and the more involved you are with fantasy, folklore, and children's tales, the more likely you are to survive.*

- From Ned Vizzini's "Reading the Right Books"

What are the "right books"? Which educates us more effectively, non-fiction or fiction writing? Which is more useful in real life?

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