



**Test Ninjas**

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

SAT VOCABULARY

# SAT Vocabulary: Certainty & Doubt

76 focused words in Certainty & Doubt

**76**

UNIQUE WORDS

**1**

CATEGORIES

**SAT**

EXAM FOCUS



# About this study guide

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This vocabulary guide was prepared and published by Test Ninjas as an independent study resource. It is designed to help students build the precise word knowledge needed for demanding academic reading and reasoning.

## How to use this guide

Study in short, repeated sessions. Read each definition, say the word aloud, and use the example to understand how the word functions in context. Return to unfamiliar words until you can explain them without looking at the definition.

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**001 ambivalence** *noun***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

the state of having mixed or contradictory feelings

She felt **ambivalence** about moving to a new city for the job, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** Ambivalence is an emotional tug-of-war: one feeling pulls yes while another pulls no.

**002 anticipate** *verb***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

to expect or predict something will happen

We **anticipate** a large turnout for the annual festival, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** To anticipate is to mentally arrive before the event, expecting what is about to happen.

**003 anticipating** *verb***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

expecting or looking forward to something

She was **anticipating** the arrival of her guests with excitement, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** Someone anticipating a trip is already looking ahead to it before departure day.

**004 approximate** *adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

close to an exact amount but not precise

The **approximate** cost of the project is two million dollars, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An approximate measurement lands near the ruler's mark, but not exactly on it.

**ALSO · ADJECTIVE:** close to the actual but not exact

**005 choose** *verb***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

to select from available options

You may **choose** any dessert from the menu, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A hand reaches past several options and picks one; that deliberate selection is to choose.

**006 conclude** *verb***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

to bring to an end; to reach a decision through reasoning

Based on the data, we can **conclude** that the treatment is effective, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** Conclude by crossing the finish line or by following reasoning arrows to a final decision.

**007 confident** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

having strong belief in oneself or something

She felt **confident** about her chances of winning the competition, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A confident person plants both feet firmly and trusts their ability before beginning.

**ALSO · ADJECTIVE:** feeling certain about something

**008 confirm** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

to establish the truth or correctness of something

Please **confirm** your attendance by Friday, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** Confirm a claim by checking it twice and pressing a solid TRUE stamp.

**009 deciding** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

making a choice or reaching a conclusion about something

After much deliberation, she was finally **deciding** which university to attend, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** Deciding means standing at a fork and selecting one path after considering both.

**010 decision** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

a conclusion or resolution reached after consideration

The committee announced their **decision** to approve the new policy, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A decision is the final check mark placed beside one considered choice.

**011 decisive** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

settling an issue or producing a definite result; having the ability to make decisions quickly

Her **decisive** leadership helped the team navigate through the crisis, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A decisive gavel quickly ends debate and produces one definite result.

**ALSO · ADJECTIVE:** settling an issue; producing a definite result

**012 definite** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

clearly stated or decided; not vague or doubtful

We need a **definite** answer by Friday to proceed with the project, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A definite answer is written in permanent ink, clearly decided rather than vague.

**013 deliberation** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

long and careful consideration or discussion

After hours of **deliberation**, the jury reached a unanimous verdict, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** Deliberation slowly weighs every option on a scale before reaching a conclusion.

**014 determined** *verb/adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

having made a firm decision; resolved; having discovered through investigation

The **determined** athlete trained for months to compete in the marathon, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A determined person locks onto a decision; a detective determines a fact by pinning down evidence.

**015 doubted** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

felt uncertain about; questioned the truth of

Many people **doubted** his ability to complete such a challenging task, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A question mark replaces the check mark when a claim is doubted.

**016 doubts** *noun/verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

feelings of uncertainty; questions or reservations

She had serious **doubts** about the accuracy of the financial report, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** Doubts are small question marks that keep certainty from closing the case.

**017 ensured** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

made certain that something would happen or be the case

The safety measures **ensured** that no accidents occurred during construction, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A locked check mark shows the result was ensured and made certain.

**018 ensuring** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

making certain that something happens or is the case

Quality control is essential for **ensuring** customer satisfaction, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** Ensuring a result means fastening a safety lock around the final check mark.

019 **guess** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

to estimate or suppose something without sufficient information to be certain

I can only **guess** what he meant by that cryptic message, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A guess chooses beneath a question mark because there is not enough information for certainty.

020 **hypothesis** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

a proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for investigation

The researcher developed a **hypothesis** to explain the unusual phenomenon, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A hypothesis is a possible explanation pinned beside a question mark, waiting for investigation.

021 **hypothesized** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

put forward as a hypothesis; proposed as an explanation

Darwin **hypothesized** that species evolve through natural selection, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** The proposed explanation was hypothesized first and then sent to the evidence test.

022 **implication** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

a conclusion that can be drawn from something not explicitly stated; a likely consequence

The **implication** of his words was that he planned to resign, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An implication is a hidden arrow leading from stated facts to an unstated conclusion.

023 **implicit** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

implied though not directly expressed; absolute and unquestioning

There was an **implicit** understanding between them that needed no words, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An implicit message travels beneath the words instead of being directly stated.

024 **inconclusive** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

not leading to a definite conclusion or result

The test results were **inconclusive**, requiring further investigation, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** Inconclusive evidence ends with a question mark instead of a final verdict.

025 **indications** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

signs or pieces of evidence that suggest something

There were clear **indications** that the economy was recovering, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** Indications are signposts or evidence arrows suggesting what lies ahead.

026 **indicator** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

a thing that indicates the state or level of something

Rising unemployment is often an **indicator** of economic trouble, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** An indicator is the gauge needle that reveals a machine's current state or level.

027 **indisputable** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

unable to be challenged or denied; unquestionable

The evidence against the defendant was **indisputable**, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An indisputable fact sits beneath an unbreakable proof seal.

028 **inevitable** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

certain to happen; unavoidable

Change is **inevitable** in a rapidly evolving industry, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** An inevitable train has only one track and must arrive at its destination.

029 **notional** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

existing only in theory or as an idea; not based on reality

The budget figures are **notional** and may change significantly, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A notional building floats as a blueprint cloud because it exists only in theory.

030 **opinion** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

a personal view or judgment not necessarily based on fact

In my **opinion**, the book was better than the movie adaptation, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An opinion belongs inside one person's thought bubble rather than under a universal FACT stamp.

031 **precariousness** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

the state of being uncertain, unstable, or insecure

The **precariousness** of her financial situation caused great stress, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** Precariousness is a chair balanced on one narrow leg, uncertain and unstable.

032 **predetermined** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

established or decided in advance

The outcome seemed **predetermined** before the trial even began, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A predetermined route is locked into the map before the trip begins.

033 **predictable** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

able to be expected or foreseen; behaving as expected

The movie's ending was **predictable** from the very first scene, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A predictable clock strikes exactly when the schedule says it will.

034 **predicted** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

stated that something would happen in the future

Scientists **predicted** the storm would make landfall by evening, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A forecast arrow showed the future event before it happened; it was predicted.

035 **predicting** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

stating what will happen in the future based on evidence

Economists are **predicting** a recession within the next year, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** Predicting means drawing an evidence-based arrow from today into tomorrow.

036 **prediction** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

a statement about what will happen in the future

Her **prediction** about the election results proved to be accurate, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A prediction is a statement placed on tomorrow's calendar before the event occurs.

**037 predictive** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

relating to or capable of predicting future events

The software uses **predictive** analytics to forecast sales trends, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A predictive instrument points its evidence needle toward a future event.

**038 premeditated** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

planned or thought out beforehand

The jury found that the crime was **premeditated** murder, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A premeditated action follows a plan written before the act.

**039 probability** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

the likelihood that something will happen

There is a high **probability** of rain tomorrow according to forecasts, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** Probability is the needle on a likelihood gauge running from impossible to certain.

**040 question** *noun/verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

a sentence or phrase used to find out information; to ask or express doubt about something

She raised an important **question** during the meeting, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A question mark asks for information and can also cast doubt on a claim.

**041 questionable** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

doubtful or uncertain; open to question or dispute

His **questionable** business practices raised concerns among investors, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A questionable claim sits beneath a large question mark instead of a firm check.

**042 questioned** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

asked questions of someone; expressed doubt about something

The detective **questioned** the witness for several hours, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** The witness was asked for answers while the claim's truth was also questioned.

**043 realistic** *adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

having a sensible and practical idea of what can be achieved; representing things as they actually are

We need to set **realistic** goals for the project, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A realistic plan keeps both feet on solid ground and depicts things as they are.

**044 select** *verb/adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

to carefully choose as being the best or most suitable

Please **select** the items you wish to purchase, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** Select by comparing the alternatives and placing a check beside the best fit.

**045 selecting** *verb***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

carefully choosing from a number of alternatives

The committee is **selecting** candidates for the scholarship, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** Selecting means carefully moving one preferred option out of a larger group.

**046 selects** *verb***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

carefully chooses as being the best or most suitable

The chef **selects** only the freshest ingredients for the dish, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A careful hand selects the best-fitting choice from several alternatives.

**047 skeptical** *adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

not easily convinced; having doubts or reservations

Scientists remain **skeptical** of the unproven treatment, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A skeptical mind keeps the question mark raised until convincing evidence arrives.

**048 speculate** *verb***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

to form a theory without firm evidence; to invest in risky ventures

It would be unwise to **speculate** about the outcome of the election, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** Speculate by placing a theory beneath question marks before firm evidence exists.

049 **speculated** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

formed a theory without firm evidence; engaged in risky financial transactions

Analysts **speculated** that the company would merge with its competitor, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** The theory was speculated inside a question bubble rather than established by proof.

050 **speculates** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

forms theories without firm evidence; engages in risky financial transactions

The article **speculates** about future technological developments, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** Whoever speculates builds uncertain theories or risks money on an uncertain outcome.

051 **supposition** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

an uncertain belief; an assumption or hypothesis

His theory is based on **supposition** rather than evidence, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A supposition is an uncertain belief balanced on an assumption and a question mark.

052 **surmised** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

supposed that something is true without having evidence to confirm it

She **surmised** from his expression that the news was bad, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A detective surmised an answer from clues but had no confirming proof.

053 **suspect** *noun/verb/adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

to believe something is likely or true without proof; a person thought to be guilty

Police **suspect** the fire was started deliberately, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A suspect stands beneath an evidence question mark because guilt is believed but not proved.

054 **tenuous** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

very weak, slight, or insubstantial; lacking a sound basis

The connection between the two events was **tenuous** at best, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A tenuous connection hangs from one thin, fraying thread.

**055 uncertain** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

not able to be relied on; not known or definite

The outcome of the election remained **uncertain** until the final votes were counted, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** An uncertain answer balances between two question marks with no firm footing.

**056 uncertainty** *noun*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

the state of being unsure or doubtful; something that is not known

There was great **uncertainty** about what the future would bring, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** Uncertainty is fog surrounding a decision that cannot yet be known.

**057 undeniable** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

unable to be denied or disputed; unquestionable

Her talent as a pianist was **undeniable** from a very young age, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An undeniable fact sits beneath a proof seal that cannot be broken.

**058 unpredictable** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

not able to be predicted; changeable or erratic

The weather in the mountains can be quite **unpredictable** during spring, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** An unpredictable arrow jumps randomly around the chart with no forecastable pattern.

**059 vacillate** *verb*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

to waver between different opinions or actions

She **vacillated** between accepting and rejecting the offer, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** Vacillate like a pointer wavering repeatedly between two choices.

**060 dubious** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

hesitating or doubting; questionable

The **dubious** claim required verification, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A dubious claim wobbles beneath a question mark and cannot earn confidence.

**061 unequivocal** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

leaving no doubt; unambiguous

The evidence was **unequivocal**, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An unequivocal arrow points only one way and leaves no room for doubt.

**064 categorical** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

unqualified; absolute

He issued a **categorical** denial, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A categorical statement is stamped ABSOLUTE with no qualification attached.

**062 equivocal** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

open to more than one interpretation

His **equivocal** response raised suspicions, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An equivocal sign points in two directions and permits multiple meanings.

**065 ambivalent** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

having mixed feelings about something

She felt **ambivalent** about accepting the job, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** An ambivalent heart is pulled equally toward YES and NO.

**063 tentative** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

not certain or fixed; provisional

They made **tentative** plans for the weekend, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A tentative answer is written lightly in pencil beside a question mark.

**066 resolute** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

admirably purposeful and determined

She remained **resolute** in her decision, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A resolute person anchors both feet and points firmly toward the chosen goal.

**067 wavering** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

becoming unsteady or uncertain

His **wavering** commitment concerned the team, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A wavering decision needle trembles unsteadily between choices.

**068 hesitant** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

tentative, unsure, or slow in acting

She was **hesitant** to speak up in meetings, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A hesitant foot pauses above the threshold, unsure whether to act.

**069 indecisive** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

unable to make decisions quickly

His **indecisive** nature frustrated colleagues, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** An indecisive person remains frozen at a fork and cannot choose quickly.

**070 convinced** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

completely certain about something

She was **convinced** of his innocence, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** A convinced mind places an unshakable CERTAIN seal on the conclusion.

**071 doubtful** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

feeling uncertain about something

The outcome remained **doubtful**, making the degree of certainty clear from the surrounding circumstances and available evidence.

**MEMORY CUE:** A doubtful thought wobbles beneath a question mark.

**072 adamant** *adjective*

## CERTAINTY &amp; DOUBT

refusing to be persuaded

He was **adamant** that he was right, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** Adamant is diamond-hard: the decision refuses to bend under persuasion.

**073 unwavering** *adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

steady or resolute; not wavering

Her **unwavering** support sustained him, leaving the audience to weigh carefully what could and could not be known.

**MEMORY CUE:** An unwavering compass needle holds one steady direction through every shake.

**076 positive** *adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

with no possibility of doubt; certain

She was **positive** she had seen him before, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A positive answer carries a firm YES with no possibility of doubt.

**074 vacillating** *adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

wavering between different opinions

His **vacillating** stance confused supporters, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

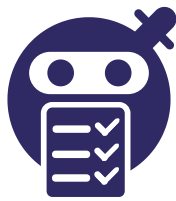
**MEMORY CUE:** A vacillating pointer swings back and forth between two opinions.

**075 certain** *adjective***CERTAINTY & DOUBT**

known for sure; established beyond doubt

It is **certain** that changes will occur, shaping how confidently the people involved could reach a defensible conclusion.

**MEMORY CUE:** A certain fact stands beyond doubt beneath a locked check mark.



SAT VOCABULARY

# Keep building your edge.

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Vocabulary grows through repeated exposure and deliberate use.  
Revisit this list, write with the words, and practice recognizing their  
meaning in context.

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