



Test Ninjas

VOCABULARY STUDY SERIES

SAT VOCABULARY

SAT Vocabulary: Praise & Criticism

45 focused words in Praise & Criticism

45

UNIQUE WORDS

1

CATEGORIES

SAT

EXAM FOCUS



About this study guide

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 admire *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to regard with respect and approval

I **admire** her dedication to helping others in need, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: To admire someone is to place that person high in your mind and look up with respect.

002 appreciated *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

recognized the value or significance of something

Her hard work was **appreciated** by everyone on the team, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: A valued painting gains a bright price tag; appreciated means recognized as valuable or significant.

003 celebrated *adjective*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

widely known and praised; honored with festivities

The **celebrated** author received a standing ovation at the ceremony, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: A celebrated person stands beneath confetti with a trophy: widely known, praised, and honored.

004 complaining *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

expressing dissatisfaction or annoyance

Instead of **complaining**, he decided to take action, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: A squeaky wheel keeps protesting; complaining repeatedly expresses dissatisfaction.

005 complaint *noun*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

an expression of dissatisfaction or grievance

The customer filed a formal **complaint** about the defective product, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: A complaint is dissatisfaction placed into words, like a grievance written on a red form.

006 complimented *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

expressed praise or admiration

The chef was **complimented** on the exquisite presentation of the meal, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: A person who was complimented received a bright medal made of words of praise.

007 **criticism** *noun*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

the expression of disapproval based on perceived faults

She accepted the constructive **criticism** gracefully, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Criticism is disapproval expressed as red marks beside perceived faults.

008 **criticize** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to express disapproval of someone or something

It is easy to **criticize** but harder to offer solutions, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: To criticize is to point a red pen at faults and express disapproval.

009 **denigrate** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to criticize unfairly or disparage someone or something

It is unprofessional to **denigrate** your competitors in public forums, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: To denigrate is to drag someone's reputation downward with unfair criticism.

010 **despise** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to feel contempt or deep dislike for something or someone

She began to **despise** the monotonous routine of her daily commute, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: To despise is to throw away a respect medal with deep contempt and dislike.

011 **disapproving** *adjective*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

expressing an unfavorable opinion; showing displeasure

Her **disapproving** glance made it clear she was unhappy with the decision, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: A disapproving face combines a frown with a red thumbs-down.

012 **disparage** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to speak of in a disrespectful or critical way; to belittle

It is wrong to **disparage** someone based on their background or appearance, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Disparaging words push another person's respect medal downward.

ALSO · VERB: to regard as being of little worth

013 esteem *noun/verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

respect and admiration; to regard highly

She is held in high **esteem** by her colleagues and students alike, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Esteem places someone on a pedestal of respect and admiration.

014 extol *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

to praise enthusiastically and highly

Critics continue to **extol** the virtues of the classic novel, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: To extol is to lift someone high on a tower of enthusiastic praise.

015 praise *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

to express approval or admiration for someone or something

Critics **praise** the film for its innovative storytelling, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Praise places a gold approval medal around someone or something admired.

016 praises *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

expresses approval or admiration

The review **praises** the author's vivid descriptions, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Whoever praises another sends words of approval and admiration like gold medals.

017 prestige *noun***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

widespread respect and admiration based on achievement or quality

The university has gained international **prestige** for its research, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: Prestige is a high pedestal built from achievement, quality, and widespread respect.

018 reputation *noun***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

the beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something

She built her **reputation** through years of honest business dealings, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Reputation is the cluster of opinion stars that other people place beside a name.

019 respected *verb/adjective***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

admired deeply as a result of one's abilities, qualities, or achievements

He is widely **respected** in the scientific community, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: A respected person stands beside medals earned through admired ability, quality, or achievement.

020 rebuke *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

to express sharp disapproval or criticism

The manager **rebuked** the employee for arriving late repeatedly, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: A rebuke is a sharp verbal red mark of disapproval.

021 denounce *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

to publicly declare as wrong or evil

Human rights organizations **denounced** the government's actions, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Denounce wrongdoing by declaring it publicly beneath a loud WRONG sign.

022 censure *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

to express severe disapproval formally

The senate voted to **censure** the politician for misconduct, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Formal severe disapproval arrives as a red CENSURED stamp.

023 commend *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

to praise formally or officially

The mayor **commended** the firefighters for their bravery, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: A formal medal and citation commend a person's achievement.

024 condemn *verb***PRAISE & CRITICISM**

to express complete disapproval of

World leaders **condemned** the terrorist attack, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: A judge's severe CONDEMNED stamp expresses complete disapproval.

025 **laud** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to praise highly

Critics **lauded** her performance as magnificent, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Laud an achievement by lifting it high on a tower of praise.

028 **exalt** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to hold in very high regard

The culture **exalted** warriors above all others, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: Exalt a person by raising them to the highest pedestal of regard.

026 **acclaim** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to praise enthusiastically and publicly

The film was **acclaimed** by critics worldwide, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Public cheers and raised approval signs show enthusiastic acclaim.

029 **deprecate** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to express disapproval of

She **deprecated** the use of violence, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: A downward red thumb expresses deprecation and disapproval.

027 **vilify** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to speak or write about in an abusively disparaging manner

The tabloid **vilified** the celebrity unfairly, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Vilify someone by covering their name with abusive, degrading words.

030 **glorify** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to describe as more splendid than in reality

The movie was accused of **glorifying** violence, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Glorify a small achievement by painting an unreal golden halo around it.

031 **venerate** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to regard with great respect

The community **venerated** their elders, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Venerate a figure by bowing before a pedestal of great respect.

034 **scorn** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to feel or express contempt for

She **scorned** his attempts to apologize, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Scorn turns up its nose and throws away the respect medal.

032 **malign** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to speak about someone in a spitefully critical manner

Competitors tried to **malign** his reputation, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: A spiteful voice maligns someone by throwing dark criticism at their name.

035 **eulogize** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to praise highly in speech or writing

The minister **eulogized** the deceased at the funeral, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: A eulogy builds a speech from high praise for the person remembered.

033 **revere** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to feel deep respect for

The students **revered** their inspiring teacher, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Revere a person by holding their name carefully beneath a deep-respect light.

036 **castigate** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to reprimand severely

The review **castigated** the director's poor choices, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: A severe verbal lash represents castigating someone with harsh reprimand.

037 **adulate** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to praise excessively or uncritically

Fans **adulated** the rock star, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Adulation piles praise so high that it becomes excessive and uncritical.

038 **berate** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to scold or criticize angrily

The coach **berated** the players for their mistakes, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: Berating words arrive as an angry storm of scolding criticism.

039 **deride** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to express contempt through ridicule

Critics **derided** the film as pretentious, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: Derision points and laughs in order to express contempt.

040 **applaud** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to show approval or praise

The audience **applauded** the brilliant performance, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: Applause turns clapping hands into a public sign of praise and approval.

041 **ridicule** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to subject to mockery and derision

Colleagues **ridiculed** his unconventional ideas, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: Ridicule uses mocking laughter to make someone an object of derision.

042 **compliment** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to politely express praise or admiration

She **complimented** him on his excellent work, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: A compliment is a polite verbal medal of praise or admiration.

043 **insult** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to speak or treat disrespectfully

His remarks **insulted** the entire community, shaping how the audience judged the person or achievement being discussed.

MEMORY CUE: An insult throws disrespectful words that crack another person's dignity.

044 **flatter** *verb*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

to lavish insincere praise on

He **flattered** the boss to gain favor, making the speaker's evaluation unmistakable to everyone who heard the response.

MEMORY CUE: Flattery coats a person in lavish praise that may be insincere.

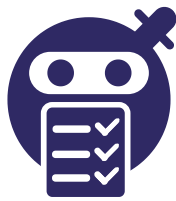
045 **laudable** *adjective*

PRAISE & CRITICISM

deserving praise and commendation

Their **laudable** efforts improved the community, revealing whether the work received approval or disapproval from the people reviewing it.

MEMORY CUE: A laudable achievement deserves a raised trophy of praise.



SAT VOCABULARY

Keep building your edge.

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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