

# SAT writing prompts for practice

Read and think carefully about the issues presented in the following excerpts and the assignments below. Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on one of these issues. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

The discovery that someone we admire has done something wrong is always disappointing and disillusioning. Yet even when people we consider heroes have been tarnished by their faults, they are no less valuable than people who appear perfect. When we learn that an admired person, even one who is seemingly perfect, has behaved in less than admirable ways, we discover a complex truth: great ideas and great deeds come from imperfect people like ourselves.

**Assignment:** Do we benefit from learning about the flaws of people we admire and respect?

*Source: www.collegeboard.com, 2009*

Some people say you should be content with what you have and accept who you are. But it is possible that too much self-acceptance can turn into self-satisfied lack of ambition. People should always strive to improve themselves and to have more in their lives — friends, things, opportunities. After all, where would we be if great people, both in history and in our own time, did not try to have more and to improve themselves?

**Assignment:** Is it best for people to accept who they are and what they have, or should people always strive to better themselves?

*Source: www.collegeboard.com, 2009*

So-called common sense determines what people should wear, whom they should respect, which rules they should follow, and what kind of lives they should lead. Common sense is considered obvious and natural, too sensible to question. But people's common sense decisions may turn out to be wrong, even if they are thought to be correct according to the judgment of vast majorities of people.

Adapted from Alain de Botton, *The Consolations of Philosophy*

**Assignment:** Can common sense be trusted and accepted, or should it be questioned?

*Source: www.collegeboard.com, 2009*