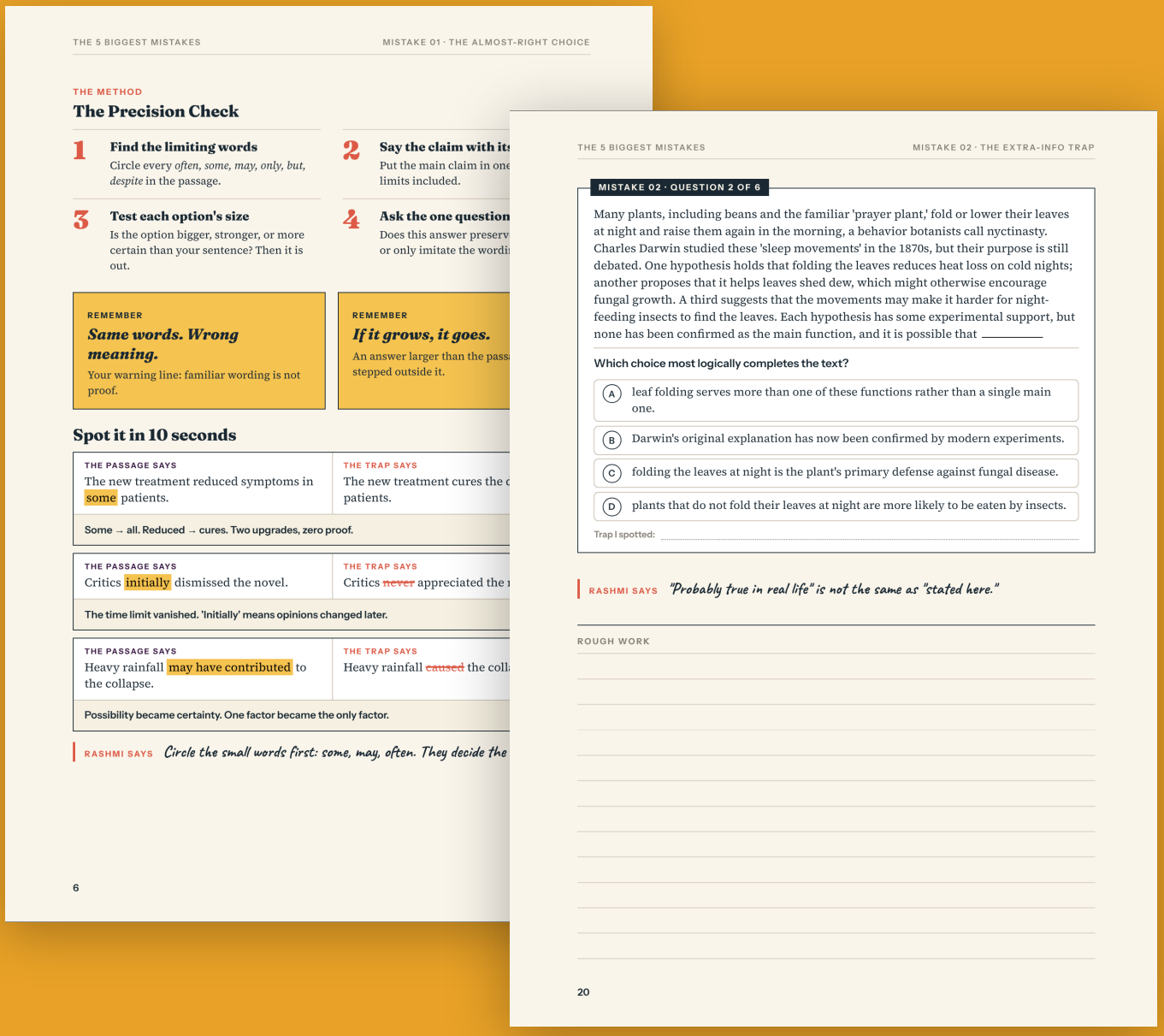
The 5 Biggest Mistakes

in Digital SAT English, and exactly how top scorers avoid them. For every student who knew the answer and still chose the wrong one.

Rashmi Sharma

40 QUESTIONS



THE 5 BIGGEST MISTAKES MISTAKE 01 · THE ALMOST-RIGHT CHOICE

THE METHOD

The Precision Check

1 **Find the limiting words**
Circle every *often, some, may, only, but, despite* in the passage.

2 **Say the claim with its**
Put the main claim in one
limits included.

3 **Test each option's size**
Is the option bigger, stronger, or more certain than your sentence? Then it is out.

4 **Ask the one question**
Does this answer preserv
or only imitate the wordi

REMEMBER
Same words. Wrong meaning.
Your warning line: familiar wording is not proof.

REMEMBER
If it grows, it goes.
An answer larger than the pass
stepped outside it.

Spot it in 10 seconds

THE PASSAGE SAYS	THE TRAP SAYS
The new treatment reduced symptoms in some patients.	The new treatment cures the c patients.
Some → all. Reduced → cures. Two upgrades, zero proof.	
THE PASSAGE SAYS	THE TRAP SAYS
Critics initially dismissed the novel.	Critics ~~never~~ appreciated the r
The time limit vanished. 'Initially' means opinions changed later.	
THE PASSAGE SAYS	THE TRAP SAYS
Heavy rainfall may have contributed to the collapse.	Heavy rainfall ~~caused~~ the coll
Possibility became certainty. One factor became the only factor.	

RASHMI SAYS *Circle the small words first: some, may, often. They decide the*

6

THE 5 BIGGEST MISTAKES MISTAKE 02 · THE EXTRA-INFO TRAP

MISTAKE 02 · QUESTION 2 OF 6

Many plants, including beans and the familiar 'prayer plant,' fold or lower their leaves at night and raise them again in the morning, a behavior botanists call nyctinasty. Charles Darwin studied these 'sleep movements' in the 1870s, but their purpose is still debated. One hypothesis holds that folding the leaves reduces heat loss on cold nights; another proposes that it helps leaves shed dew, which might otherwise encourage fungal growth. A third suggests that the movements may make it harder for night-feeding insects to find the leaves. Each hypothesis has some experimental support, but none has been confirmed as the main function, and it is possible that _____

Which choice most logically completes the text?

(A) leaf folding serves more than one of these functions rather than a single main one.

(B) Darwin's original explanation has now been confirmed by modern experiments.

(C) folding the leaves at night is the plant's primary defense against fungal disease.

(D) plants that do not fold their leaves at night are more likely to be eaten by insects.

Trap I spotted: .....

RASHMI SAYS *"Probably true in real life" is not the same as "stated here."*

ROUGH WORK

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MEET YOUR TEACHERS

Who wrote this book



Rashmi Sharma

SAT READING & WRITING · AUTHOR

3 Master's degrees · Gold medallist, LLB & LLM · 10+ years teaching. Has taught law, sociology, history, psychology, political science, and SAT English.

How I teach

The humanities taught me how memory really works. Students hold cases, theories, dates, and thinkers in their heads, and the ones who remember are never the ones who crammed. When a student understands *why* a rule exists and attaches it to a short, sharp trick, the rule stays, even under exam pressure. That is the method behind every chapter of this book.



Ronak

SAT MATH

Master's, Applied Mathematics · 8+ years teaching SAT Math. Shows students which questions Desmos solves faster and which are quicker by hand.

Why Stuck in SAT

During our own academic journeys, Ronak and I kept noticing the same thing: students don't fail because the material is impossible. They get stuck at very specific points. So we split the work the way we split it at home. Ronak takes Math. I take English. Our job is to find the exact place you are stuck and get you out of it.

RASHMI SHARMA

Logic first. Then a memory hook for every rule.

The 5 Biggest Mistakes in Digital SAT English · First Edition · 2026 · Published by Stuck in SAT
All practice passages and questions in this book are original and were written for this book. Factual passages are based on published historical and scientific sources; passages describing unnamed researchers or institutions are illustrative. Emily Dickinson's "'Hope' is the thing with feathers," quoted in Mistake 03, was first published in 1891 and is in the public domain. SAT® is a trademark registered by the College Board, which is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, this book.
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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to use this book

1 **Read the trap**
Each chapter opens by showing you how the mistake works, and why it works on *you*.

2 **Learn the method**
A short, step-by-step check you can run in seconds on test day.

3 **Keep the line**
Every chapter ends its teaching with a memory line. Say it out loud. It is built to come back under pressure.

4 **Practice like the real test**
Six questions per chapter, written in the length and style of the Digital SAT. Name the trap under every question before you check.

5 **Study the solutions**
Every option is explained, the right one and the three wrong ones, so you learn the pattern, not just the answer.

6 **Take the Final Challenge**
Ten mixed questions at the end of the book. The traps no longer come with labels.

ONE RULE FOR THE WHOLE BOOK

Attempt every question before you turn to its solution. A trap you have fallen into once is a trap you will recognize forever.

Mistake 01 · The Almost-Right Choice Same words. Wrong meaning. 4

Mistake 02 · The Extra-Info Trap No proof? No permission. 16

Mistake 03 · The True-But-Not-Useful Trap Right idea, wrong job. 28

Mistake 04 · The Sounds-Right Grammar Trap Rule first. Ear second. 40

Mistake 05 · The Fake-Logic Transition Trap Relationship first. Transition second. 51

The Final Challenge Ten mixed questions, 12 minutes 62

Answers and score tracker Every option explained 73

MISTAKE

01

The Almost-Right Choice

Protect the exact claim of the passage: not larger, not stronger, not looser. Just precise.

Same words. Wrong meaning.

Why this mistake happens

There are wrong answers that announce themselves at once. They are too wild, too careless, too obviously disconnected from the passage to do much harm. Most students learn to avoid those early.

The more dangerous answers are quieter. They arrive dressed in the language of the text. They borrow its subject, echo its phrasing, and stand so close to the original idea that they seem, for a moment, to belong to it. A hurried reader feels relief on seeing them. The mind recognizes a familiar word, a familiar claim, a familiar direction of thought, and settles too soon.

That small moment of comfort is exactly where the mistake begins. The Digital SAT does not reward resemblance. It rewards precision.

THE WARNING LINE

Same words. Wrong meaning.

How the trap works

We rarely misread the topic. We misread the limits. We remember the visible parts of a sentence (the nouns, the names, the broad subject) while overlooking the quiet words that control meaning: **only, often, may, some, despite, rather than**.

These are small words, but they do large work. Lose them, and the meaning changes shape. The almost-right answer keeps the topic and quietly drops the limit.

The anatomy of the trap

The passage or the rule	The trap answer	What changed
A result appeared under certain conditions.	Keeps the result, drops the condition.	**Limited claim becomes universal.**
Critics began to see a writer differently.	Says critics proved the earlier view false.	**Nuance becomes reversal.**
One possible explanation exists.	Presents it as the only explanation.	**Possibility becomes certainty.**
One factor matters.	Makes it the only factor.	**Contribution becomes sole cause.**

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Put the main claim in one sentence, limits included.

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Is the option bigger, stronger, or more certain than your sentence? Then it is out.

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Does this answer preserve the meaning, or only imitate the wording?

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Spot it in 10 seconds

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The new treatment reduced symptoms in some patients.	The new treatment cures the disease in ~~all~~ patients.

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Heavy rainfall may have contributed to the collapse.	Heavy rainfall ~~caused~~ the collapse.

Possibility became certainty. One factor became the only factor.

RASHMI SAYS *Circle the small words first: some, may, often. They decide the answer.*

MISTAKE 01 · QUESTION 1 OF 6

Across two summers, researchers compared herb gardens grown on city rooftops with similar gardens planted at ground level in the same neighborhoods. On average, the rooftop gardens produced larger harvests, likely because they received more hours of direct sunlight. The advantage, however, was not consistent. When rooftop plants were grown in deep containers that held moisture through long stretches of high heat, they clearly outperformed the ground-level plots; when they were grown in shallow containers, which dried out quickly, their yields were no better than those at ground level. The researchers concluded that container depth deserves as much attention from urban growers as rooftop location does.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

(A) Rooftop herb gardens produce larger harvests than ground-level gardens regardless of how they are planted.

(B) Rooftop herb gardens can outperform ground-level gardens, but that advantage depends on using containers that retain moisture in hot weather.

(C) Ground-level gardens perform poorly in cities mainly because they receive too little direct sunlight during the summer.

(D) Container depth is the only factor that determines how well an urban herb garden performs.

Trap I spotted: .....

HOW TO PRACTISE

Six questions at real-test length. Attempt all six before you look at the solutions, and write the name of the trap you spotted under each one.

ROUGH WORK