

## READING COMPREHENSION

### READING COMPREHENSION MADE EASY:

1. Take the reading comprehension part last.
2. Look at the length of all the passages provided.
3. Focus on the passage.
4. Read the passage first, and then read the questions. In an attempt to save time, some students do the other way around. It may be helpful when answering questions regarding details. However, it prevents you from understanding the whole passage and you might encounter problems when dealing with questions on inferring details and predicting results/conclusions.
5. Read passages with more questions.
6. Read the short passages first, save the long ones last. One of the most annoying things about this type of the test is that some entrance tests would provide a very long passage, about a page in length, then asking just 2 – 3 questions.
7. Familiarize yourself with transition words.
8. Understand the questions.

### TRANSITION WORDS

Type	Example
Continuing Idea Words	Similarly; Moreover; Additionally; In the same way; Likewise
Conclusion Words	Thus; Therefore; Hence; So; In summary; In conclusion
Contradiction or Contrast Words	Nevertheless; Nonetheless; However; But; Yet; Although; Even though; Notwithstanding; Despite; In spite of; On the other hand; While; Unlikely

**COMMON QUESTIONS** – Know what the question is asking for and then learn best how to attack them. Major reading question types would include the following:

### MAIN TOPIC

In main idea questions, you will be asked to determine the unifying theme or main topic of the passage. The questions often begin with:

- "The article is about the..."
- "The main topic of the passage is..."
- "The main theme of the passage is..."
- "Which of the following statements would best describe the central idea of the paragraph?"
- Which of the following most accurately states the main idea of the passage?"

- ✓ Look in the first and last paragraphs (when applicable). Some authors use the inverted pyramid style of writing where they present ideas from broad to specific.
- ✓ Look for words that would state the author's conclusion. The main idea is sometimes presented during the concluding part of the passage.

You may encounter questions that would ask you to identify the author's intention or purpose. Usually, the questions are in these forms:

- "The primary purpose of the passage is to..."
- "The main concern of the paragraph is to..."
- "In the passage above, the author is primarily concerned with..."

### OBJECTIVE DETAILS

These questions are primarily concerned with who, what, when, why, where and how or simply the nitty-gritty details presented by the writer in the passage. The questions are in these forms:

- "According to the passage/ author..."
- "The author states the following, except..."

- ✓ Go to the specific paragraph in the passage that is being referred to. Don't forget to read a few lines before and after it.



### VOCABULARY

These questions test your ability to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context of the passage. These questions might look like this:

- "The underlined word/ phrase in the passage means..."

- ✓ Look for nearby context clues and understand how the word is being used in the passage.

### MAKING CONCLUSIONS

These questions will ask you to identify an assumption on what the author is trying to present in the passage. The question might look like this:

- "The author implies that..."
- "It can be inferred in the passage that..."
- "According to the article, it is likely that..."
- "With which section of the passage would the author most likely agree with?"

- ✓ Any answer that opposes the main idea of the passage is wrong.

### TONE/ ATTITUDE/ MOOD

These questions ask you to identify the author or character's emotional state. These questions often take the following forms:

- "Which of the following best describes the tone of the author?"
- "What emotion is expressed in the article?"
- "The author's attitude towards the issue in the passage could be described as..."

- ✓ Look for words that suggest positive or negative conditions, neutrality and emotions.

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- ✓ Use the same guidelines in answering main idea questions.
- ✓ Eliminate choices that are too broad or too specific.

### PREDICTING RESULTS

Simply, this type of question would ask you what could probably come next based on the context/ situation being given in the paragraph. These questions may look like the following:

- "Based on the situation, what do you think would happen next?"
- "Based on the situation, what would you expect the character to do next?"

- ✓ Use the same guidelines in answering inference questions.
- ✓ Choose the answer that logically develops from the information in the paragraph.

### LOGICAL ORGANIZATION

Some exams scrabbles the organization of a certain paragraph and would ask you to determine the specific sequence/ arrangement of the components to make a well versed paragraph.

- ✓ Identify the topic sentence
- ✓ Pinpoint the repeated key words and phrases. Writers repeat words and phrases to connect sentences and establish that one subject is being discussed.
- ✓ Connect pronouns with their antecedents. Writers use conjunctions (and, but, for, so, nor, yet, after, since, until, when, if, because, etc.) to provide smooth transition from one sentence to another or to establish specific logical relationships among sentences. Transitions within a paragraph take a reader back to what he has just read or forward to what is still to come. So a sentence with a conjunction used as a transition is related to a sentence before or after it.

## HOW ARE PARAGRAPHS ORGANIZED:

### 1. TIME SEQUENCE

- This sequence is observed in telling stories or writing narratives. The situation is describe first, then the intervening incidents are recounted one after the other, as they happened. Finally, comes the clincher or surprise ending.
  - a. Situation or backgrounder (Ex: Once upon a time, there lived a princess...)
  - b. Incidents:
    - Incident 1 (what happened?)
    - Incident 2 (what happened next?)
    - Incident 3 (what else happened?)
  - c. Clincher (How did the story end?)

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## 2. SPACE

- This organization is used in describing an object in a certain place. There is no hard and fast order observed in the organization of the sentences. It could be from near to far, from below upward, from center outward, etc.
  - a. Presentation of the object (What is it?)
  - b. How it looks from afar (How can it be recognized at that distance?)
  - c. Close-up view: main features (What are its principal distinguishing features?)
  - d. Other features
  - e. Concluding impression (What is the relevance of it all?)

## 3. CAUSE-AND-EFFECT/ INDUCTIVE REASONING

- This is the pattern in organizing sentences that discuss a problem, hypothesis or an issue. First comes the supposition (If...) part, followed by one or more supporting facts, evidences or proofs. Finally, all this is concluded with the generalization (Then,... or Therefore...) statement.

## 4. DEDUCTIVE REASONING

- The reverse of the inductive reasoning process is taken in organizing a discussion. The principle is stated first. This is followed by the relevant facts, evidences or proofs, at the end of which is a restatement of the principle in another way.

## 5. EXPOSITORY SELECTIONS

- This makes use of description. The description may be objective just like the editorials in newspapers and magazines.
  - a. Introduction of the subject (What is being discussed?)
  - b. Principal features/ characteristics (What's so special about it?)
  - c. Other relevant points and/ or comments.
  - d. Summary statement or concluding comment.

## Relax when you read and try the following techniques:

- Read as rapidly as you can but do not take short cuts. Read with understanding.
- While reading the opening sentences, anticipate what the passage is about. Who or what is the author talking about?
- As you read, try to remember the author's major point and where they are located in the passage. This way, you can always go back to them when verifying your answers.
- Always verify your answer by going back to the passage. Your first reading will give you an idea about the theme of the passage but it may not enable you to answer all the questions correctly.
- Underline if you must, but only sparingly. Underlining may be confusing and time-consuming.

# 2

## Know what the question is asking for.

Familiarize yourself with the major question types: Main Idea, Specific Details, Drawing Inferences, Tone or Attitude, Vocabulary.

# 3

## Look for nearby context clues when answering a vocabulary question.

When answering a vocabulary question, do not just rely on your familiarity with the word. This is because the word could have more than one meaning, depending on its usage. To identify the appropriate meaning of a word used in the paragraph, study the context in which it is used by the author.

## READING TIPS:

- 1** **Read the paragraph; then read the questions.** Do not try to read the questions first before you read the paragraph. This will distract you as you will read not to comprehend but to locate the answer to the questions. Spotting the answers to the questions may increase your anxiety preventing you from understanding the passage fully.

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