

UNIT ONE

1.5. Comprehending Passages (Literal, Inferential and Critical)

Comprehension

Comprehension is, understanding what is being said or read. When it comes to reading, It is an active process that must be developed if a learner is to become a proficient reader. Effective reading skill development is further accomplished when the learner becomes proficient in different levels of comprehension including literal, inferential, evaluative, appreciative and critical comprehensive reading.

1. Literal Comprehensive Reading

- Literal comprehension involves what the author is actually saying.
- The reader needs to understand ideas and information explicitly stated in the reading material.
- Some of this information is in the form of recognizing and recalling facts, identifying the main idea, supporting details, categorizing, outlining, and summarizing.
- The reader tries to better understand what is actually happening within the text.

The reader is supposed to locate the information by:

- Using context clues to supply meaning
- Following specific directions, following a sequence
- Identifying the stated conclusion,
- Identifying explicitly stated relationships and organizational patterns.

At the end of literal reading, the reader may be asked to attempt the following questions and activities:

- What words state the main idea of the story?
- How does the author summarize what she/he is saying?
- Outlining the first paragraph of the story.
- What happened first, second and last?
- How are these things alike? How are they different?
- What things belong together?

Task 01: Read the following text and respond to the given questions.

More than a million people immigrate to the United States to start new lives every year, and if they are arriving in New York, one of the first sights that they will see is the Statue of Liberty. The Statue of Liberty stands on Liberty Island, near Manhattan in New York. Though she is often thought to be resident of New York, Liberty Island is actually federal property, which means that the Statue of Liberty belongs to the whole country. The Statue of Liberty is not only the tallest statue in America, it is also one of the most recognizable American symbols.

The Statue of Liberty is huge. From the tip of the torch to the pedestal on which she stands, she is just over 151 feet tall. If you include the pedestal in your measurement, she stands more than 305 feet off of the ground. That's more than 30 basketball hoops or an entire football field. Her waist size is 35 feet, which would make it awfully tough to find pants, and the tablet she holds is 23 feet long. Don't worry though; she hasn't

had any trouble holding that tablet yet with her 8 foot index finger. Talk about heavy handed...

Though America financed and built the pedestal on which the Statue of Liberty stands, the statue itself was a gift from France. In this way the complete work, much like the United States, is a product of both American and French contributions. At one time America was ruled by the British. The founding fathers of America chose to fight against Great Britain for the independence of their country. France supported America by providing money, men, and weapons of war. Had it not been for French contributions during the Revolutionary War, America would not exist in the way that it does today; therefore, it is quite fitting that the Statue of Liberty, which represents freedom, came to being by a joint American and French effort. On October 28th, 1886, just over one-hundred years after America declared its independence from Great Britain, the Statue of Liberty was completed and dedicated by its designer, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi.

Perhaps no person did more to bring the statue into being than Bartholdi. Not only did Bartholdi gain both French and American approval for the project, he led the French fundraising efforts and designed the appearance of the statue. The appearance of the Statue of Liberty is somewhat derived from Libertas, the Roman goddess of freedom. The torch represents how



seven continents, and (as with the torch) how liberty enlightens the world. Though much of the statue was modeled after depictions of goddesses, Bartholdi modeled the face after his mother. Now that's a Mother's Day gift that's hard to top.

Though Bartholdi was responsible for the external appearance of statue, the internal design can be largely credited to innovative designer, Gustave Eiffel. Though Mr. Eiffel is best known for his contributions to a tower in Paris that is named after him, he also engineered the internal structure that holds up the Statue of Liberty.

Eiffel chose to use a flexible structure, so that changes in the temperature and strong winds from the ocean would not cause the statue to crack. Because of Eiffel's crafty design, the Statue of Liberty may sway as much as three inches on a windy day. If the winds exceed 50 miles per hour, the torch may sway five inches. Eiffel is also responsible for including two spiraling staircases on the interior of the statue to help visitors reach the observation point in the crown.

While most people appreciate the Statue of Liberty today, during its construction in the 1870s, many Americans were critical of the project. Some took issue with the fact that Bartholdi was French. They believed that American monuments should be designed and constructed by Americans. Others felt that the statue wasn't much of a gift since it required Americans to foot the bill for the pedestal. After the Panic of 1873, America fell into a deep economic depression that lasted through much of the 1870s. (During an economic depression people spend less money and it is harder to find jobs.) Because the nation was going through a liberty enlightens the world. The seven points or rays coming from the top of the crown represent the sun, the seven seas, the Liberty Enlightening the World, depression, many Americans thought that money should not be spent to support a giant French statue. I think most Americans would now agree that it was a good investment.

Directions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer. Refer to the text if necessary. Write your answer on the provided space.

1. Which is **not** represented by the seven points on the crown of the Statue of Liberty _____ according to the text?
 - a. The points represent how liberty enlightens the world.
 - b. The points represent the seven continents.

c. The points represent the sun.

d. The points represent the seven days of creation.

2. Information in the second paragraph is *mainly* organized using which text structure? _____

a. Spatial order

b. Order of importance

c. Chronological order

d. Cause and effect

3. Which *best* expresses the main idea of the third paragraph? _____

a. France assisted the United States in the Revolutionary War.

b. The statue was a joint effort between France and the U.S. just like U.S. independence.

c. The U.S. was once a colony of Great Britain.

d. The statue of liberty was dedicated 100 years after America declared its independence. _____

4. Which is **not** a reason why people criticized the Statue of Liberty during its construction?

a. Some people felt that the statue should have been bigger.

b. Some people felt that the statue should have been built by an American.

c. Some people felt that France should have paid for the statue and the pedestal. _____

d. Some people felt that America shouldn't spend money on a statue during a depression.

5. Which of the following statements is false?

a. The tablet that the Statue of Liberty holds is 23 feet long.

b. The Statue of Liberty's waist size is 35 feet.

c. The pedestal underneath the Statue of Liberty is 305 tall.

d. The Statue of Liberty is over 151 feet tall.

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6. Why is it significant or important that the Statue of Liberty is a product of both French and American efforts? Make your point, quote text to support it, explain your quote, and connect it back to your point.

The importance of the Statue of Liberty being a joint project between France and America is in how it symbolizes freedom and the strong friendship between the two countries. The statue honors the help that France gave during the American Revolutionary War, which was essential for America's independence. "France supported America by providing money, men, and weapons of war. Had it not been for French contributions...America would not exist in the way that it does today." This quote shows that France's help was crucial for America's success in gaining freedom, making the Statue of Liberty a lasting symbol of the values they both share. Building the statue together shows that both nations treasure freedom, and it stands as a monument to their friendship and commitment to this ideal.

7. Why were Gustave Eiffel's contributions to the Statue of Liberty important? Make your point, quote text to support your point, explain your quote, and connect it back to your point.

Gustave Eiffel's contributions were essential for the statue's strength. His design allowed the statue to withstand natural stresses like strong ocean winds and temperature changes, protecting it from damage. "Eiffel chose to use a flexible structure, so that changes in the temperature and strong winds from the ocean would not cause the statue to crack." This quote highlights Eiffel's creative approach, which ensured the statue's durability and stability against harsh weather. Eiffel's design helped the statue last over time, making his work crucial to its long-term preservation.

8. Why were some Americans against the construction of the Statue of Liberty? Make your point, quote text to support your point, explain your quote, and connect it back to your point.

Here's a simplified and coherent version of your text while keeping the quoted text intact:

Some Americans were against the construction of the Statue of Liberty for several reasons, including its foreign origin, the financial burden of the pedestal, and the timing during an economic depression. "Some took issue with the fact that Bartholdi was French...Others felt that the statue wasn't much of a gift since it required Americans to foot the bill for the pedestal." This quote highlights the concerns about the designer's nationality and the financial strain on Americans due to the cost of the pedestal. These issues show that during difficult economic times, some Americans felt it was not the right time

to invest in a large foreign project, and they preferred local projects that would directly help American citizens.

2. Inferential Comprehensive Reading

- Inferential comprehension deals with what the author means by what is said.
- The reader must simply read between the lines and make inferences about things not directly stated.
- Certain ideas and concepts may be implied by the text, and they may not be apparent at first glance.

In Inferential comprehension reading, the reader is supposed to work on:

- Interpreting figurative language
- Drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes
- Determining the mood
- Judging the author's point of view.

At the end of inferential comprehensive reading, the reader may be asked to answer the following questions:

- What does the author value?
- What is the theme?
- What effect does this character/event have on the story?
- How do you think this story will end?

Task 02:

Directions: Read each passage and then respond to the questions. Each question will ask you to make a logical inference based on textual details. **Explain your answer by referencing the text.**

(a) *Screech!* Karen stomped on the gas pedal the moment the light turned green. She looked over her left shoulder and zigged past a semi-truck. She zoomed ahead and looked over her right shoulder and then zagged past a motorbike. She glanced at the clock on the console and darted

into the parking lot. Whipping into a parking spot, she grabbed her suitcase and ran through the lot, up the escalator, and into the terminal. Her heavy suitcase was bumping and bouncing the whole way. Just as she entered the terminal, she heard an announcement over the loudspeaker, "*Final boarding call for flight 205 to JFK...*" Karen looked at her ticket and then at the line to get through the security checkpoint, which wrapped around several turnstiles and slithered like a lethargic snake. Karen sighed and then slowly walked to the customer service desk.

1. Why is Karen in a hurry?

Karen was in hurry because she wants to catch her flight.

How do you know this?

The passage mention *Final boarding call for flight 205 to JFK...* which describes that she was heading towards airport's terminal.

2. Why does she start walking slowly at the end of the passage?

She starts walking slowly because she realizes that her flight had been missed.

How do you know this?

The long security line and her reaction of "sighing" suggest she's accepted she won't make it in time and gives up on rushing.

3. What is Karen going to do at the customer service desk?

Karen will likely to reschedule or book another flight.

How do you know this?

Since she missed her current flight, she may go to the customer service desk to discuss her options for the next available flight.

(b) Brenda reached for the box of tissue. She blew her nose with a thunderous force and then tried breathing through it again. It was still clogged. She stood up and got a head rush that almost knocked her back down to the bed, but she regained her balance. As she tottered over to the phone

on her dresser, all of her muscles ached. She located the contact labeled "Work" and pressed send. A couple of rings later, a familiar voice answered the phone, "Happy Fun Land, this is Deidra speaking. How can I help you have a happy fun day?" Brenda moaned, "Oh, Deidra, it's Brenda." Deidra responded with pep, "Hey, Brenda! I can't wait to see you this afternoon." Brenda grunted and replied, "Yeah, well, actually, I need to talk to the manager."

1. Why is Brenda moving so slowly?

Brenda is moving so slowly because she was sick.

How do you know this?

The passage describes symptoms such as a clogged nose, muscle aches, and a head rush, all of which suggest she is unwell.

2. What is Brenda going to talk about with the manager?

Brenda will talk about her sickness and will request her manager time off from work.

How do you know this?

She calls her workplace and, after briefly talking to her colleague, asks to speak with the manager, which is a common step when requesting sick leave.

Critical Comprehensive Reading

Critical thinking means not just passively accepting what you hear or read, but instead actively questioning and assessing it.

As you read you should ask yourself the following questions:

- (a) What are the key ideas in this?*
- (b) Does the argument of the writer develop logically, step by step?*
- (c) Are the examples given helpful? Would other examples be better?*
- (d) Does the author have any bias?*
- (e) Does the evidence presented seem reliable, in my experience and using common sense?*

(f) *Is this argument similar to anything else I have read?* (g) *Do I agree with the writer's views?*

Critical reading is an essential part of the information gathering process that is required to create an academically sound assignment. At its most basic level, critical reading involves not taking for granted anything you read. Whenever you read a journal article, or other piece of text, you need to be convinced by the author's argument.

An argument can be defined as a 'series of statements intended to establish a definite proposition' (Monty Python, 1972). The series of statements that an author delivers in their text forms the basis of the article. Each of these statements should be accompanied by relevant evidence to back it up. You need to decide whether or not the evidence is sufficient to convince you of the point the author is making.

Task 03

Read the following text, thinking critically about the sections in bold. Then answer questions 1-9.

The growth of the World Wide Web

*In the history of civilisation there have been many significant developments, **such as the invention of the wheel, money and the telephone,** but the development of the internet is perhaps the most crucial of all. In the space of a few years the world wide web has linked buyers in New York to sellers in Mumbai and teachers in Berlin to students in Cairo, so that few people can imagine life without it. It is estimated that over 70 per cent of North Americans, for instance, have internet access, and this figure is steadily increasing. **Physical shops are under threat, as growing numbers shop online.** In areas such as travel it is now impossible to buy tickets on certain airlines except on the internet. The web also links together millions of individual traders who sell to buyers through websites such as Ebay.*

*Beyond the commercial sphere, the internet is also critically important in the academic world. A huge range of journals and reports are now available electronically, meaning that researchers can access a vast amount of information through their computer screens, **speeding up their work and***

allowing them to produce better quality research. *In addition, email permits academics to make effortless contact with fellow researchers all over the world, which also assists them to improve their output. There is, of course, a darker side to this phenomenon, which is the use criminals have made of their ability to trade illegal or fraudulent products over the internet, with little control over their activities. But such behaviour is hugely compensated for by the benefits that have been obtained by both individuals and businesses. We are reaching a situation in which all kinds of information are freely available to everyone, which must lead to a happier, healthier and richer society.*

1 **‘... such as the invention of the wheel, money and the telephone ...’**

Are these really critical developments?

Yes, because these are revolutionary inventions and are basic source of other inventions

2 **‘... the development of the internet is perhaps the most crucial of all.’**

Is this true?

Yes it is true as the internet has enabled unprecedented global connectivity.

3 **‘... so that few people can imagine life without it.’** *Is this claim*

credible?

No this claim is not credible as no one living in this era can imagine their lives without internet.

4 **‘It is estimated that over 70 per cent of North Americans, for instance, have internet access ...’**

No source given. Does this figure seem likely?

No this figure does not seem likely as no source is given which question its credibility.

5 ‘Physical shops are under threat, as growing numbers shop online.’

Is the first part true, and if so, is it caused by online shopping?

Yes physical shops are under threat as more and more people are buying things from online stores.

6 ‘... speeding up their work and allowing them to produce better

quality research.’ *If the first part is true, does the result logically follow?*

Faster access to resources may improve research efficiency but doesn’t necessarily ensure better quality.

7 ‘We are reaching a situation in which all kinds of information are

freely available to

everyone, which must lead to a happier, healthier and richer society.’

Is the conclusion justified?

While access to information can benefit society, it does not automatically lead to happiness or health. Outcomes depend on how people use the information and address challenges like misinformation and privacy.

8 *Is the writer objective or biased?*

The writer is biased since he only talk about the positive impacts of internet.

9 *Do I agree with this argument overall?*

Partially I agree with argument as it could be seen as valid in terms of the internet’s advantages but may overlook some negative impacts like privacy concerns and digital addiction.