

Basic Reading Skill

Practice-Sheet

1. Levels of Meaning and Types of Questions

The logic of questioning in the Comprehension passages in CSAT has been analyzed and it can be seen that the most of the questions are inference-based and test for precise and thorough understanding of the passage. These passages can only be attempted by careful reading and logical evaluation. Certain guidelines to approach these comprehension passages have been included in the note.

TYPES OF COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Level of Meaning	Comprehension Questions	Related Comprehension Question
A. Literal Level of Meaning (as explicitly stated in the passage)	1. Specific Details/Ideas	
B. Inferential Level of Meaning (that logically follows from what is stated)	2. Implied Idea	5. Suitable Title
	3. Meaning in-Context	
C. Evaluative Level of Meaning (that can be evaluated based on the logical flow of the author's thought, the level of language used and other factors)	4. Primary Purpose	4. Style
	5. Main Idea/Key Argument	5. Suitable title
	6. Logical Development	6. Organization of the Passage
	7. Tone/Attitude	
	8. Application Source of Passage	
	9. Likely Source of Passage	9. Likely Audience/ Addressed to
	10. Likely Profession of Author	

The different types of questions:

- **Fact and Data Based Questions:** Such questions are based on the specific details mentioned in the passage. Generally these questions are easy to be answered as they are based on literal level of comprehension.
- **Main Idea Based Questions:** Each CSAT comprehension passage is a united whole with unity of thought and coherence. Sometimes the author explicitly states the main idea in the first paragraph itself or elsewhere in a “topic sentence”. And sometimes you are required to evaluate the main idea from the overall organization or development of the passage. You may be asked in this kind of question to recognize a correct restatement, or paraphrase, of the main idea of the passage; to identify the author’s primary

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purpose, or objective in writing the passage; or to assign a title that summarizes briefly and pointedly the main idea developed in the passage.

- **Inference Based Questions:** These questions basically measure your ability to differentiate ideas that are explicitly stated in the passage from ideas implied by the author unlike details/ideas questions which ask about information directly stated in the passage, inference questions ask about ideas or meaning that must be inferred from the information or sentences or phrases that are directly stated. Authors can make their points in indirect ways, suggesting ideas without actually stating them.

Applying BRS: Finding the Topic sentence –

The term ‘topic sentence’ is used to describe the sentence that gives the key to an entire paragraph. Usually it is given in the beginning of a paragraph; however there is no absolute rule. A writer may build his paragraph to a conclusion.

Practice Exercise for finding the Topic Sentence. Right the topic sentence of the paragraphs in the given space below it.

Passage (1)

The World faces a serious problem of overpopulation. Right now many people starve from lack of adequate food. Efforts are being made to increase the rate of food production, but the number of people to be fed increases at a faster rate.

Topic Sentence

Passage (2)

During the later years of the American Revolution, the Articles of confederation government was formed. This government suffered severely from lack of power. Each state distrusted the others and gave little authority to the central or federal government. The Articles of confederation produced a government which could not raise money from taxes, prevent Indian raids, or force the British out of the United States.

Topic Sentence

Passage (3)

They had fewer men available as soldiers. Less than one third of the railroads and only a small proportion of the nation's industrial production was theirs. For most of the war their coastline was blockaded by Northern ships. It is a tribute to Southern leadership and the courage of the people that they were not defeated for four years.

Topic Sentence

Passage (4)

There is a strong relation between limited education and low income. Statistics show that unemployment rates are highest among those adults who attended school the fewest years. Most Jobs in a modern industrial society require technical or advanced training. The best pay goes with jobs that demand thinking and decisions based on knowledge. A few people manage to overcome their limited education by personality or a "lucky break". However, studies of lifetime earning show that the average high school graduate earns more than the average high school dropout, who in turns earns more than the average adult who has not finished eighth grade.

Topic Sentence

Applying BRS: Finding the General Theme/ Main Idea – A more advanced skill is the ability to read several paragraphs and relate them to one general theme or

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main idea. You can have the right idea when it is most frequent or most important or when every sentence relates to it.

Passage - 1

Working conditions in the factories were frequently unpleasant and dangerous. A workday of 14 or 16 hours was not uncommon. The work was uncertain when the factory completed its orders, the men were laid off. Often the pay was inadequate to feed a man's family. This meant that often an entire family had to work in factories in order to survive.

1. What is the main idea of the paragraph?

- (a) Dangerous and difficult working conditions in factories.
- (b) The passage of child-labor laws.
- (c) The lack of job security in early factories.
- (d) The low pay scale of early factories.

Passage-2

For most immigrants, the journey to America was long and full of hardships and sufferings. The immigrants often walked the entire distance from their villages to the nearest seaport. There the ships might be delayed and precious time and money lost. Sometimes ticket agencies or ship captains fleeced the immigrants of all they owned.

2. The above Paragraph is most concerned with:

- (a) Immigrants had to walk long distance to get to seaports.
- (b) Ship schedules were very irregular.
- (c) Ship captains often stole all the possessions of immigrant.
- (d) The journey of immigrants to America was very difficult and often painful.

Passage-3

Many who had left the Catholic Church during the Protestant upheaval eventually returned to their original faith. However, the religious struggle of the sixteenth century destroyed the unity of Western Christendom. No longer was there one Church, nor one people, or one empire.

3. The main point the author makes in this paragraph is that:

- (a) The protestant upheaval destroyed the Catholic Church.
- (b) The Protestant reformation did not affect the Catholic Church.
- (c) Some Protestants rejoined the Catholic Church.
- (d) Western Christendom was never again unified after the Protestant upheaval.

➤ Let's take the passages of multiple paragraphs.

Passage 4

True democracy means direct rule by the people. A good example can be found is a modern town meeting in many small New England towns. All citizens aged twenty one may vote they not only vote for officials , but they also get together to vote on local laws. The small size of the town and the limited number of voters make this possible.

In the cities, voters cast ballots for officials who get together to make the laws. Because the voters do not make the laws directly, this system is called indirect democracy or representative government, there is no problem of distance to travel, but it is difficult to run a meeting with hundreds of thousands of citizens.

Representation of voters and a direct voice in making laws are more of a problem in state or national governments. The number of citizens and the distances to travel make representative govt. the most practical way to make laws.

Q. 1. The main idea of this passage is that:

- a) The USA is not democratic.
- b) Citizens can't vote for law makers.

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- c) Representative Govt. does not make laws.
- d) Increasing population leads to less direct democracy.

Passage 5

Skye, 13 miles off the northeast coast of Scotland is the most famous of the Hebrides. Yet fame has neither marred its natural beauty nor brought affectation to its inhabitants. The scene and the people are almost as they were generations ago.

The first sight that impresses the visitors to Skye is its stark beauty. This is not the beauty of the usual sort for the land is not lush green. It is on the other hand almost devoid of greenery. Mountains, sky and sea combine to create an overpowering landscape. Endless stretches of rocky hills dominate the horizon. Miles of treeless plain meet the eye. Yet this scene has a beauty all of its own.

And then cutting into the stark landscape are the fantastic airborne peaks of the Collins rising into the clear sky above. The Collins, are the most beloved mountains in Scotland and are frequently climbed. Their rugged, naked- grandeur, Sculptured- ridges and acute peaks even attracted Sir Edmund Hillary.

Q1. The main idea of the passage is?

- (a) The sky over Skye
- (b) The lack of trees in Skye
- (c) The natural beauty of Skye
- (d) The Collins in the sky of Skye.

Passage 6

Trade exists for many reasons. No doubt it started from a desire to have something different. Men also realized that different men could make different products. Trade encouraged specialization which led to improvement in quality.

Trade Started from person to person, but grew to involve different towns and different lands. Some work in transporting the goods or selling them. Merchants grew rich as the demand for products increased, craftsmen were able to sell more products at home and abroad people in general had a greater variety of things to choose.

The knowledge of new products led to an interest in the lands which produced them. More daring persons went to see other lands. Others stayed at home but asked many questions. As people learned about the products and the conditions in other countries they compared them with their own. This often led to a desire for better conditions.

Q. 1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (a) Trade makes everyone rich.
- (b) Trade divides the world.
- (c) Trade changes people's lives.
- (d) People find new jobs.

Summary Paras

Directions for Questions 1 and 5: Five alternative summaries are given below each text. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the text.

1. Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism. Both words are normally used in so vague a way that any definition is liable to be challenged, but one must draw a distinction between them, since two different and even opposing ideas are involved. By 'patriotism' I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more

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power and more prestige, *not* for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality.

- (a) Nationalism and patriotism differ. Patriotism is defensive whereas nationalism is offensive. The emotions behind both the ideas are the same.
 - (b) Nationalism and patriotism differ.- Patriotism demands the individual to be submissive; nationalism demands a dominant attitude.
 - (c) Nationalism and patriotism differ. Patriotism is defensive and nationalism is power-centric. This is due to the difference in the underlying emotions and motives.
 - (d) Nationalism and patriotism differ. Patriotism demands people to feel strongly about the country; nationalism demands a fanatical devotion to the nation.
2. The changes I was so conscious of had actually begun some time before I went away. I had dismissed them as passing fads. I returned, however, to what had become a revolution in public language. The likes of my colleagues no longer thought of this new tongue as an alien one, into which they translated thoughts originally composed in a more familiar idiom. They had become native speakers. Today, this language pervades both the public and private sectors, and much of the working population is fluent in it. We may joke about the cliched absurdity of mission statements and standardized phone greetings, but we find it hard to remember a time when these were not cliches - when we reacted 'to them with genuine incomprehension, and sometimes with genuine outrage.
- (a) The language of mission statements and standardized phone greetings has spread widely. People are so inured of it that they don't recall the time when it sounded out of place.
 - (b) The language of mission statements and standardized phone greetings has spread fast. People are now making their additions to the language and pretend to forget the time when all this seemed alien.
 - (c) Mission statements and standardized phone greetings were initiated so as to make people feel comfortable. Ironically, they have descended into becoming a cliche.
 - (d) The changes sweeping the world are fast as revealed with the example of mission statements and how fast this idiotic idea swept across the world.
3. "The old stereotype that the head of the household is a male who makes all the financial decisions is sorely out of date," says Dan Richards, president of Marketing Solutions Inc. "Any financial institution that ignores women is fundamentally missing the point." His company's survey of 5,000 mutual fund holders was one of the largest of its kind in Canada, and held some surprises for the investment community, he says. "This is a natural market that has been waiting to be discovered for a long time," admits Peter Wallace, president of Midland Walwyn Inc., which this summer launched "Women and Wealth," a program specifically aimed at female investors.
- (a) Although women now control a large portion of any country's wealth and they are being neglected at everyone's peril.
 - (b) It's beginning to dawn on financial institutions that women represent a huge untapped market of potential investors.
 - (c) The banks are trying to be more sensitive- to the burgeoning market comprising of female investors and its different needs and aspirations.
 - (d) Financial planning has been a gender issue till date.

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4. Our words are amalgams of some sound and meaning, and put in some order to express our feelings, thoughts, information, beliefs and so on, for different purposes in life. We also understand others by interpreting their words, which may involve certain background knowledge, perspectives, and presuppositions. Chomsky is well aware that in actual circumstances, language use is guided and affected by many factors, which he thinks are not amenable to scientific studies. But in his view, some general properties of meaning and sound can be identified and explained by internal principles and rules.

- (a) Many people tend to think that linguistic activities are instances of the use of a *common language* or publicly accessible set of well-formed sentences.
- (b) Linguistic phenomena have their origin in the human mind/brain, which contains the language faculty as one of its components.
- (c) Words are a fusion of language performance, which we can trace back to knowledge of language and further, to the internal mechanism that is recognised by a language user.
- (d) Words have an internal structure, and are analytically related.

5. Many people view drug abuse and addiction as strictly a social problem. Parents, teens, older adults and other members of the community tend to characterize people who take drugs as morally weak or as having criminal tendencies. They believe that drug abusers and addicts should be able to stop taking drugs if they are willing to change their behaviour. These myths are damaging for individuals with drug-related problems, their families, their communities and the healthcare professionals who work with them. Addiction does begin with drug abuse, but addiction is not just "a lot of drug use." Recent research provides strong evidence that not only do drugs interfere with normal brain functioning by creating powerful feelings of pleasure, but they also have long-term effects on brain metabolism and activity. At some point, changes occur in the brain that can turn drug abuse into addiction. Those addicted to drugs suffer from a compulsive craving and need treatment to end the compulsive behavior.

- (a) Drug addiction, contrary to popular belief, is not a result of willful inclination towards violation of accepted norms or insufficiency of morality but a consequence of physiological change in the addicts metabolic functioning.
- (b) Myths regarding drug abuse are affecting the lives of all those who are related to drug related problems.
- (c) Research shows that metabolic activity has a direct bearing on emotional responses of a drug addict.
- (d) Although addiction begins with drug abuse, which may stem from social problems, it may take place due to reasons other than just a lot of drug use by drug dependant individuals.

Writing Style-

A distinctive way of writing or speaking or doing something; the manner in which something is done.

Types : Descriptive; Narrative; Expository and Persuasive.

Tone and Mood-

Tone and mood are similar!! Tone is the author's attitude toward the writing (his characters, the situation) and the readers.

A work of writing can have more than one tone. An example of tone could be both serious and humorous.

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Tone is set by the setting, choice of vocabulary and other details.

Mood: (sometimes called atmosphere) the overall feeling of the work

Mood is the emotions that you (the reader) feel while you are reading. Some literature makes you feel sad, others joyful, still others, angry. The main purpose for some poems is to set a mood. Writers use many devices to create mood, including images, dialogue, setting, and plot. Often a writer creates a mood at the beginning of the story and continues it to the end. However, sometimes the mood changes because of the plot or changes in characters. Examples of MOODS include: suspenseful, joyful, depressing, excited, anxious, angry, sad, tense, lonely, suspicious, frightened, disgusted

Tone: the way feelings are expressed

Tone is the attitude that an author takes toward the audience, the subject, or the character. Tone is conveyed through the author's words and details. Use context clues to help determine the tone.

In literature an author sets the tone through words. The possible tones are as boundless as the number of possible emotions a human being can have. Has anyone ever said to you, "Don't use that tone of voice with me?" Your tone can change the meaning of what you say. Tone can turn a statement like, " You're a big help!" into a genuine compliment or a cruel sarcastic remark. It depends on the context of the story.

Words That Describe Mood Fanciful; Melancholy; Frightening; Mysterious; Frustrating; Romantic; Gloomy; Sentimental; Happy; Sorrowful; Joyful; Suspenseful; etc.

Words That Describe Tone Amused; Humorous; Pessimistic; Angry; Informal; Playful; Cheerful; Ironic; Pompous; Horror; Light; Sad; Clear; Matter-of-fact; Serious; Formal; Resigned; Suspicious; Gloomy; Optimistic; Witty; etc.

Identifying Tone

Case – 1: A teenager neighbor was arrested for theft. His friends reacted in various ways. Identify the correct tone from the options.

Q1. "He has been arrested? I'm afraid he is headed downhill. This is not the first time, it gets worse. I'm worried about him"

- (a) Angry
- (b) fearful
- (c) sarcastic
- (d) surprised

Q2. "Great! Soon he will be able to steal his mom's gold without her knowing it"?

- (a) Praising
- (b) Happy
- (c) Sentimental
- (d) Sarcastic

Q3. "Damn! that boy, won't he ever straighten up?"

- (a) Depressed
- (b) angry
- (c) Sarcastic
- (d) Serious

Q4. "He has never been arrested before, maybe, God willing; this will teach him his lesson. I see a better day coming"

- (a) hopeful
- (b) hopeless
- (c) Sentimental
- (d) Saddened

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Q5. "I showed him just how to do it. He blew it! He could have got away with it if he had just listened to me"

- a. Disappointed
- b. Hopeless
- c. Depressed
- d. Sarcastic

Case-2: A Certain cricket team won a tournament for the first time in many years. People reacted differently. Identify the appropriate tone.

1. "Wow! I can't believe it, this is the best thing that could have happened."
 - a. Serious
 - b. Excited
 - c. Sarcastic
 - d. Amazed
2. Ah! this is like when I was a boy . It makes my chest swell with pride again and brings tears to my eyes"
 - (a) Sentimental (b) Excited
 - (c) Sarcastic (d) Amazed
3. "The team's manager and coach have had a lot of influence throughout the season, they deserve a lot of credit for this victory."
 - (a) Serious (b) Excited
 - (c) Sarcastic (d) Amazed
4. "What? they won! and they started off so poorly this season. I just can't believe it,"
 - (a) Serious (c) Excited
 - (b) Sarcastic (d) Amazed
5. "It could not have been skills since they don't have that. It couldn't have been bribery as they don't have any money; the other team must have been sick .It's the only way they could have won."
 - (a) Serious (b) excited
 - (c) Sarcastic (d) Laudatory