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This lesson deals with factual and negative factual questions.



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What are Factual Questions?

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What Are Factual Questions?

Factual questions:

- Ask about **specific facts and details** given in the passage
- Often begin with the phrase *According to*
- Sometimes begin with *What point does the author make about . . . ?*
- Are based on information stated in the text
- Do not require inferences
- Are generally answered by scanning the text

What is Scanning?



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What Is Scanning?

- Looking through a text quickly to find a specific piece of information or to get a general idea of what the text contains

Some scanning techniques to help you:

- Remember one or two key words from the question (dates, names, or specific nouns) as you scan the text.
- Run your eyes over the text as you scroll down looking for these words or their synonyms. **Do not** read all the words in the passage.
- Questions generally follow the order of the passage. **Scroll down** from the last answered question. **Do not scroll up.**
- Once you spot the key words, read the full sentence carefully. You may need to read the preceding and/or following sentences too.
- Compare what you read with the answer choices.
- Remember that correct answers rarely use exactly the same words as those in the text. Look for synonyms or a different grammatical structure.

Following is a sample passage and a factual question example:

In 1928, British bacteriologist Alexander Fleming observed that a blue mold had invaded one of his bacterial cultures. He almost discarded it, but then he noticed that the area contaminated by the mold was surrounded by a zone where bacterial colonies did not grow well. The bacteria were disease organisms of the genus *Staphylococcus*, which can cause boils and skin infections. Anything that could kill them was interesting! Fleming saved a sample of the mold, a variety of

boils and skin infections. Anything that could kill them was interesting! Fleming saved a sample of the mold, a variety of *Penicillium* (blue bread mold). He isolated the antibiotic penicillin from the mold. However, he had difficulty culturing it.

Even though Fleming recognized the potential practical benefit of penicillin, he did not develop the chemical techniques needed to purify it, and more than 10 years passed before the drug was put to significant use. In 1939, Sir Howard Florey and Ernst Boris Chain developed chemical procedures to extract and produce the active agent penicillin from the mold. Florey took the process to laboratories in the United States, and penicillin was first produced to treat wounded soldiers in World War II. In recognition of their work, Fleming, Florey, and Chain shared the 1945 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

According to the passage, what prevented Fleming from producing *penicillin* as a drug?

- ☐ He was unable to get a sample of penicillin.
- ☐ He could not culture the bacterial colonies he needed.
- ☐ He was unable to get access to Florey and Chain's laboratories.
- ☐ He could not purify penicillin using the existing chemical techniques and procedures.

The key words to look for are *Fleming*, *penicillin*, and *drug*.

Each choice uses words and phrases found in the passage. Choice 1 is incorrect because Fleming saved a sample himself. Choice 2 is incorrect because the bacterial colonies are not what he needed. Choice 3 is wrong because the passage does not mention this. Choice 4 is the correct answer. Fleming was unable to develop penicillin because the techniques to purify it had not been developed yet.

What are Negative Factual Questions?



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What Are Negative Factual Questions?

Negative factual questions:

- Ask you to find which of the 4 answer choices is **not** in the text
- Usually use the words *NOT*, *EXCEPT*, or *LEAST*
- The negative words always appear in **capital** letters

Some scanning techniques to help you:

- Scan the text quickly looking for the three answer choices that **are** mentioned in the passage
- The correct answer is the one choice that **does not** appear in the text
- The three incorrect choices may be grouped together or near each other in the same or neighboring sentences
- The incorrect choices may be scattered throughout the text. In this case, it will take longer to find them.
- Negative factual questions can take longer to answer than other question types. You may want to focus on easier questions first. Use the *Review* feature to come back to these items later.

Following is a sample passage and an example of a negative factual question:

Seats on airplanes usually go for different prices. There are the high-priced, no-strings-attached fares, and there are restricted fares--tickets that require Saturday night layovers or that must be purchased weeks in advance. This airline pricing strategy allows the airlines to discriminate against business travelers, who usually have little advance warning, travel on the weekdays, and are not as willing to spend their weekends away from home and family. Because business

travelers have a high willingness to pay (a relatively inelastic demand curve), the airlines can charge them higher prices. If the airlines were to cut prices for these clients, their revenues would fall. On the other hand, the personal traveler (perhaps a vacationer) can choose among many substitutes, such as other modes of transportation and different times. In short, the personal traveler has a lower willingness to pay (a relatively elastic demand curve). Thus, the airlines can clearly make more money by charging a higher price to those who have a higher willingness to pay (less elastic demand) and a lower price to those who have a lower willingness to pay (more elastic demand)--those who are willing to book in advance and stay over on Saturday nights. If the airlines charged a higher single price to everyone, those with a lower willingness to pay would not travel; if they charged a lower single price to everyone, they would lose profits by receiving less revenue from those who were willing to pay more.

According to the passage, what is NOT true about business travelers?

- ☐ They often travel on weekdays.
- ☐ They are willing to pay more for their tickets than personal travelers.
- ☐ Their demand is more elastic than personal travelers.
- ☐ Their travel is usually made without advance warning.

Each choice uses words and phrases found in the passage. Choices 1, 2, and 4 are all stated directly in the passage. Choice 3 is false. The passage states that personal travelers have a more elastic demand curve, and that business travelers have a more inelastic demand curve.