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In this unit, we will focus on purpose, method, and attitude questions. These questions test your ability to:

- Determine why a speaker says something
- Establish how a speaker says something
- Understand a speaker's opinion about something

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**Purpose Question Overview**

Purpose questions test your ability to figure out why a speaker says something. For example, a speaker's purpose may be to:

- Compare
- Contrast
- Discuss
- Explain
- Give an example
- Illustrate
- Apologize
- Infer
- Remind
- Suggest

Here are some examples of typical purpose questions:

- Why does the professor mention [nineteenth-century sales techniques]?
- Why does the professor talk about [pumpkins]?
- Why does the student describe [the club's funding problems]?



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**Answer Choices: Purpose Questions**

- The correct answer choice:  
Accurately describes the speaker's purpose for saying something
- The incorrect answer choices:  
Can incorrectly describe the speaker's purpose for saying something. For example, if the professor says something to *introduce* a topic, the wrong answer choice might say that the professor said something to *give an example* of the topic.  
Can accurately describe the speaker's purpose but follow up with incorrect information. For example, if the professor says something to introduce *Concept A*, the wrong answer choice might say that the professor said something to introduce *Concept B*.



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**Signal Phrases**

Certain words or phrases are used in the conversations, discussions, and lectures to signal something important to the speaker. For example, the speaker may be stating a main point, giving an example of something, or summarizing what he or she just said. Listen carefully for these phrases. In this section, we will focus on phrases that signal *the speaker's purpose for saying something* in a conversation or academic lecture:

Example 1. All right, that's the definition, but now, I . . . now I wanna **give you an example** that will help clarify what I'm talking about. -> Purpose: to signal an upcoming example

Example 2. OK, next, I'd like to give you my opinion . . . and interestingly, this is **in sharp contrast to** what's written in your textbooks, OK? Here we go . . . -> Purpose: to refute something; to offer a differing opinion

Example 3. **I'd like to start by** not talking about economics at all . . . rather, I'm going to describe a problem you've probably all experienced . . . -> Purpose: to introduce a topic



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**Hints**

- Listen for information that seems to be off-topic. There is usually a reason for giving this information, and there is sometimes a question about this information.
- Purpose questions often appear as replays (see Lesson 12). Listen very carefully to the context of these replays.



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**Sample**

Listen to part of a lecture in a literature class and take notes as you listen. Sample notes are given. After listening to the lecture, answer the purpose question using your notes.

*Professor**Important lit. devices**Setting = mood**Affects characters, plot*

- *Scenario 1: Scary book, spooky old farmhouse*
- *Scen. 2: Friendly conv. store in mid. of nowhere*

*Unexpec. settings OK, but mood changes**Doesn't build tension - setting important!*

Listen to part of a lecture in a literature class.



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**Purpose Question**

Why does the professor mention the convenience store?

- [\*] To emphasize the importance of selecting the proper setting
- [ ] To recommend a more unexpected setting for the story
- [ ] To suggest a typical setting that is familiar to the students
- [ ] To introduce the effects of setting on a reader's reaction

**Answer Choice Breakdown:**

- Answer Choice 1: This is the correct answer choice; the professor's point is that setting affects plot and characters by communicating a mood.
- Answer Choice 2: Although the professor does mention that the convenience store is an unexpected setting, he does not recommend it for the setting of the scary story.
- Answer Choice 3: We are not provided with the information necessary to assume this setting is familiar.
- Answer Choice 4: Reader *reaction* has nothing to do with the main point, which is how setting affects the rest of the story.



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**Method Question Overview**

In method questions, you will be asked the method by which a speaker conveys an idea--often a *major* idea of the conversation or academic lecture. For example, a speaker may compare two things to highlight similarities or differences, use an example to illustrate a key idea, or offer a counterexample to refute a point.

- Here are some examples of typical method questions:
  - How does the speaker open [his discussion of Venus]?
  - How does the professor [explain the causes of the Great Depression]?



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**Answer Choices: Method Questions**

- The correct answer choice:  
Accurately describes the speaker's method of conveying an idea, concept, etc.
- The incorrect answer choices:  
Can incorrectly describe the speaker's method of communicating some idea. For example, the professor might introduce a key classification of reptiles by giving an example of lizards. The wrong answer choice might say that the professor introduced the key classification by describing a personal experience with lizards.  
Can accurately describe the speaker's method of communicating some idea but follow up with incorrect information. For example, the professor might introduce a classification of reptiles by giving an example of a type of lizard. The wrong answer choice might say that the professor introduced the reptile classification by giving an example of a type of snake.



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**Sample**

Listen to part of a lecture in a theater class and take notes as you listen. Sample notes are given. After listening to the lecture, answer the method question using your notes.

*Professor**Acting boost - makeup helps aud. see role**Paint or artifice**Painting makeup categories**Describe function: age, char./reg., race/eth., spec. effects*

Listen to part of a lecture in a theater class.



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**Method Question**

How does the speaker introduce the topic of stage makeup?

- ☐ By comparing the different kinds of stage makeup
- ☐ By listing the categories of stage makeup
- ☐ By describing the work of a successful makeup artist
- ☒ By discussing the benefits and uses of stage makeup

**Answer Choice Breakdown:**

Answer Choice 1: The professor does talk about the different kinds of stage makeup but never compares them.

Answer Choice 2: Although the categories of stage makeup are mentioned, the professor does not use them to introduce the topic.

Answer Choice 3: The professor never talks about the work of successful makeup artists.

Answer Choice 4: This is the correct answer; the professor describes both of these.



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**Attitude Question Overview**

Attitude questions test your ability to determine the author's stance on some information given in a conversation or academic lecture. For instance, a speaker may:

- Give his or her opinion on an academic theory
- Give his or her position on an issue
- State whether he or she likes/dislikes something
- Describe his or her amount of certainty about something

Here are some examples of typical attitude questions:

What is the man's attitude toward [his roommate]?

What does the woman think about [her professor's grading policy]?

How certain is the man [that the funding will be approved]?





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**Answer Choices: Attitude Questions**

- The correct answer choice:
  - Accurately describes a speaker's position on an issue, idea, etc.
  - Accurately describes a speaker's emotion or feelings about something.
- The incorrect answer choices:
  - Can incorrectly describe a speaker's position on an issue, idea, etc. For example, a professor may mention to the class that not completing a reading assignment is OK, since the material will not appear on the test. The wrong answer choice might say that the professor requires the students to complete the reading assignment.
  - Can incorrectly describe the speaker's degree of certainty about some issue, idea, etc. For example, a professor may say that a theory is still being debated. The wrong answer choice might say that the professor is certain that the theory is true.
  - Can give the wrong interpretation of the speaker's tone of voice.



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**Hints**

- Listen closely to words in the listening passage that deal with feelings, levels of certainty, and likes/dislikes.
- Listen to the speaker's tone of voice. It will often give you clues about the speaker's attitude.

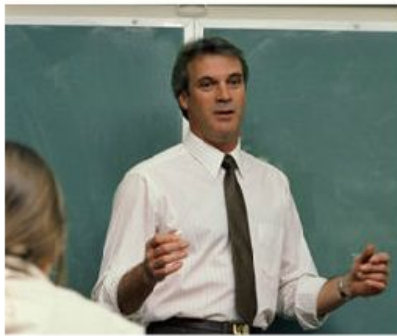


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**Sample**

Listen to part of a lecture in an economics class and take notes as you listen. Sample notes are given as well. After listening to the academic lecture, answer the attitude question using your notes.



|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> |  |
| <input type="radio"/> | <i>Professor</i>   |
|                       | <i>Externalities - affected by s/o else</i>  |
|                       | <i>No way around it - EXT will affect you</i>  |
|                       | <i>Econ. costs: money/business, etc</i>  |
|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>Ex. Gum - affects you, even tho you didn't spit it out</i></li><li>▪ <i>Ex. Canned spinach - Comp's lousy product affects your product - externality!</i></li></ul> |
|                       |  |
|                       |  |

Listen to part of a lecture in an economics class.



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What is the professor's attitude toward economic externality?

- ☐ The professor believes it is dependent upon one's own actions.
- ☐ The professor feels it is a dynamic part of the economic process.
- ☒ The professor thinks that it is an unavoidable aspect of economics.
- ☐ The professor strongly suggests that aggravation is an externality.

**Answer Choice Breakdown:**

Answer Choice 1: The professor states the opposite: it is out of one's own control.

Answer Choice 2: The professor talks about a kind of economic cost but does not mention an economic process.

Answer Choice 3: This is the correct answer; the professor does not like externality, but he realizes that in economics, externalities are inevitable.

Answer Choice 4: Aggravation is a result of externality, but is not actually an externality.