

# READING COMPREHENSION TIPS

- 1) **Location based** - Most questions in RC are location based. This implies that you need to go back to the relevant location, reread (maybe even a sentence before and after) and then answer the given question.

**How to find the location** - Either a line number is given or you will have to pick a specific word from the question and find where it was mentioned in the RC. This means that the location may be identified by highlighting or by scanning the passage for a particular key word given in the question. If an answer choice is in the wrong location, it can be easily eliminated. E.g. if the question says 'lines 3-5', and you notice that 2 choices say 'arboreal snakes' which weren't even mentioned till line 10, then you can easily eliminate those answer choices because they are dealing with the wrong location.

- a) **Word matching** - These questions are the most popular. The typical wording would be
- (i) According to the passage .....
  - (ii) The author mentions .....
  - (iii) The passage states that ....

Once you find the location and reread what is given, choose an answer choice that matches the words given in the specified location as closely as possible. Sometimes exact words are repeated and occasionally synonyms are used.

- b) **Inference questions**- These would have wordings such as
- (i) Implies
  - (ii) Suggest
  - (iii) Support

Once you find the location and reread what is given, the answer would require you to add 2 and 2 to get a 4.5 or 5. This means that the answer choice would not be obvious and would require you to do a bit of thinking.

- c) **EXCEPT** - The best approach to such questions is one of elimination. Read around the location, eliminate whatever is given and what is left is obviously the answer.

**Primary purpose** - One question of this type would appear with each RC. The typical wording would be

- (i) Primary purpose
- (ii) The author is primarily concerned with ...

This question requires many types of tools.

- (i) **Location** - The typical locations would be
  - a) Opening lines of the first paragraph
  - b) Opening lines of the last paragraph
  - c) Closing lines of the last paragraph

Normally whatever is talked about here would be the primary purpose.

- (ii) Tone – The tone could be positive, negative or neutral. It could be extreme or middle of the path. Another possibility is that there is a positive tone but with a few reservations/ limitations. Avoid extreme or harsh answer choices unless the given RC is equally harsh.
- (iii) Conclusion – The given RC may or may not have a conclusion. So choose accordingly. If the RC does not have a conclusion, remove all choices that offer a conclusion. Go for open-ended choices.
- (iv) The answer should refer to the RC as a whole (at least 50 %) and not just be a brief mention somewhere.
- (v) Is there any personal opinion of the author mentioned? If yes, then choose an answer based on that.
- (vi) When all answer choices are vague ones e.g. evaluate a research study, discussing different theories, then the correct answer will be the one in which not a single word is debatable. These answers are normally very short so you will have just 3-4 words to check for. In the examples above, ask yourself – Is it an evaluation or is it a discussion? Are there different theories? Eliminate anything debatable and what is left is the answer.
- (vii) Sometimes 'time' is mentioned in the RC. Eliminate all answer choices where the 'time' does not match.

Location based purpose – The typical wording would be

- (i) What is the purpose of the highlighted part/ second paragraph?
- (ii) The reference to 'meeting' serves primarily to ....
- (iii) The discussion is meant to ....
- (iv) The author would be most likely to agree with ...
- (v) The author describes in order to ....
- (vi) The author mentions .....

These are normally to prove some point( typically the answer choice would be 'example', evidence', and 'illustrate') or to show flaws. It could also be used to show tone.

The author recommends .... – In such questions, the author will specifically mention a flaw or say that something is missing in the RC. Give a solution to that. This normally occurs in the latter part of the RC.

Miscellaneous–Elimination is often the best strategy. Elimination is done based on

- a) Tone —
- b) Location —
- c) Conclusion – Is there a given conclusion or not? —
- d) Is this answer choice even mentioned in the RC. E.g. A passage exclusively on arboreal snakes has one choice mentioning sea snakes. This can easily be eliminated.



## Key indicators

|  |   |   |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| <u><b>Contrast</b></u><br>However<br>Although<br>But<br>Yet<br>Surprisingly<br>Instead<br>Rather<br>Unlike<br>X Moreover | <u><b>Positive Tone</b></u><br>Advantage<br>Laudable<br>Useful<br>Credit<br>Improved<br>Advancing our knowledge | <u><b>Negative Tone</b></u><br>Critics<br>Problem<br>Fail<br>Opposed<br>Limitation<br>Unfortunately | <u><b>Time</b></u><br>Current<br>Recent<br>Once<br>First/later<br>Past 15 years<br>In the 17 <sup>th</sup> century | <u><b>Counting</b></u><br>1, 2, 3 etc.<br>In addition<br>Additionally<br>Finally<br>On one hand/other hand<br>Not only /but also<br>Not/but rather |
| <u><b>Conclusion</b></u><br>Thus<br>Therefore  | <u><b>Reason</b></u><br>Because   | <u><b>Example</b></u><br>Illustrate<br>Evidence   | <u><b>Open Ended</b></u><br>May<br>Perhaps   | <u><b>Pairs</b></u><br>More/less<br>Most/few<br>Myth/in reality<br>Theoretically/practically   |