



READING COMPREHENSION Session



GENERAL STRATEGIES

- **Be familiar with the directions.**
- **Do not spend too much time reading the passages!**
- **Do not worry if a reading passage is on a topic that you are unfamiliar with.**
- **Never leave any questions blank on your answer sheet.**



STRATEGIES FOR THE READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Skim the reading passage to determine the main idea and the overall organization of ideas in the passage.

Look ahead at the questions to determine what types of questions you must answer.

Find the section of the passage that deals with each question.



Read the part of the passage that contains the answer carefully.

Choose the best answer to each question from the four answer choices listed in your test book.



How to Prepare for the Reading Section

#Tip 1

In order to be a better reader, you need to read a lot in the target language. Read about a variety of topics that are relevant to this test, such as:

- Social science**
- Science and technology**
- North American history, geography, government and history**
- Art**
- Biography**



How to Prepare for the Reading Section

#Tip 2

Practice speed-reading techniques such as *skimming* and *scanning*.

Skimming: is the skill used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. Quite often the first question after a reading passage refers to a main idea.

Skimming is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading.



How to Prepare for the Reading Section

#Tip 2

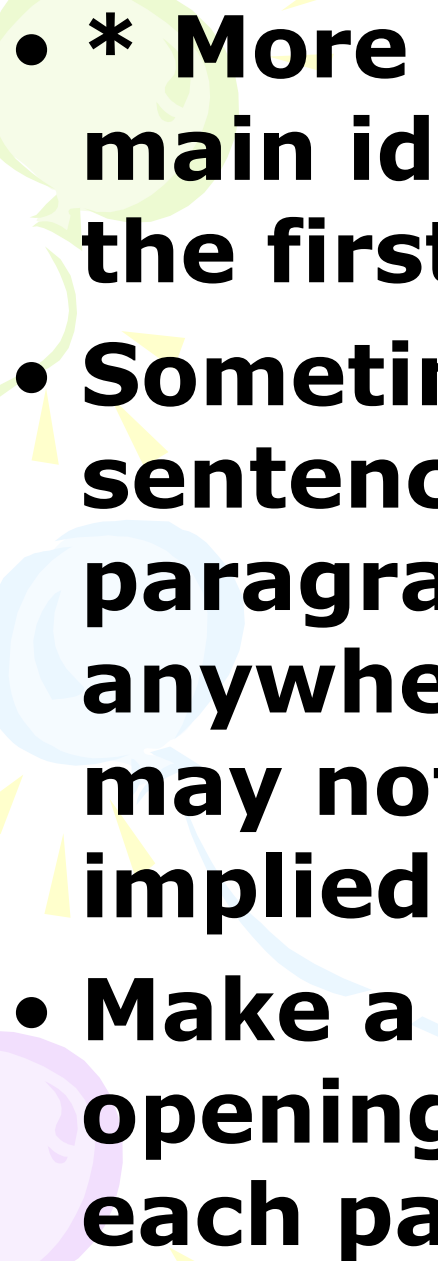
Practice speed-reading techniques such as *skimming* and *scanning*.

Scanning: is a technique you often use when looking up a word in a telephone book or a dictionary. You search for key words or ideas. In most cases you know what you're looking for, so you're concentrating on finding a particular answer.



SKILL 1: MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS

- . The most effective way to answer the main idea question is to ask yourself what the whole passage is about, not just a portion of it. The answers that cover specific details are either too narrow or too broad.**

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- *** More than 50% of the time, the main idea of a passage is stated in the first sentence of the paragraph.**
 - **Sometimes the main idea or topic sentence comes at the end of the paragraph and, on occasion, anywhere in the paragraph. They may not be stated at all, but simply implied.**
 - **Make a habit of reading the opening and closing statement of each paragraph.**

Example

Basketball was invented in 1891 by a physical education instructor in Springfield, Massachusetts, by the name of James Naismith. Because of the terrible weather in winter, his physical education students were indoors rather than outdoors. They really did not like the idea of boring, repetitive exercises and preferred the excitement and challenge of a game. Naismith figured out a team sport that could be played indoors on a gymnasium floor, that involved a lot of running, that kept all team members involved, and that did not allow the tackling and physical contact of American-style football.

The question:

What is the main idea of this passage?

- (A) The life of James Naismith
- (B) The history of sports
- (C) Physical education and exercise
- (D) The origin of basketball.

MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS

How to identify the question	<p>What is the topic of the passage?</p> <p>What is the subject of this passage?</p> <p>What is the main idea of the passage?</p> <p>What is the author's main point in the passage?</p> <p>With what is the author primarily concerned?</p> <p>Which of the following would be the best title?</p>
Where to find the answer	<p>The answer to this type of question can generally be determined by looking at the first sentence of each paragraph.</p>
How to answer the question	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read the first line of each paragraph.2. Look for common theme or idea in the first lines.3. Pass your eyes quickly over the rest of the passage to check that you really have found the topic sentence(s).4. Eliminate any definitely wrong answers and choose the best answer from the remaining choices.

SKILL 2: STATED DETAIL QUESTIONS

Flutes have been around for quite some time, in all sorts of shapes and sizes and made from a variety of materials. The oldest known flutes are about 20,000 years old; they were made from hollowed-out bones with holes cut in them. In addition to bone, older flutes were often constructed from bamboo or hollowed-out wood.

Today's flutes are generally made of metal, and in addition to the holes they have a complicated system of keys, levers, and pads. The instrument belonging to well-known flautist James Galway is not just made of any metal; it is made of gold.

The questions:

according to the passage, the oldest flutes

- (A) had holes cut in them
- (B) were made of metal
- (C) were made 200,000 years ago
- (D) had a complicated set of levers and pads.

The passage indicates that James Galway's flute is made of

- (A) bones
- (B) bamboo
- (C) Wood
- (D) gold

STATED DETAIL QUESTIONS

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE QUESTION

According to the passage,...
*It is **stated** in the passage that...*
*The passage **indicates** that...*
The author mentions that...
*Which of the following is **true**...?*

WHERE TO FIND THE ANSWER

The answers to these questions are found in order in the passage.

HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION

1. Choose a *key word* in the question.
2. Skim the appropriate part of the passage for the *key word* (or related *idea*).
3. Read the sentence that contains the *key word* or *idea* carefully.
4. Look for the answer that restates an idea in the passage.
5. Eliminate the definitely wrong answers and choose the best answer from the remaining choices.

SKILL 3: UNSTATED DETAIL QUESTIONS

The Florida Keys are a beautiful chain of almost 1,000 coral and limestone islands. These islands form an arc that heads first southwest and then west from the mainland. U.S. Highway 1, called the Overseas Highway, connects the main islands in the chain. On this highway, it is necessary to cross 42 bridges over the ocean to cover the 159 miles from Miami, on the mainland, to Key West, the farthest island on the highway and the southernmost city in the United States.

The questions:

- Which of the following is NOT mentioned about the Florida Keys?
 - (A) The Florida Keys are a chain of islands.
 - (B) The Florida Keys contain coral and limestone.
 - (C) The Florida Keys are in the shape of an arc.
 - (D) The Florida Keys are not all inhabited.
- Which of the following is NOT true about U.S. Highway 1?
 - (A) It is also known as the Overseas Highway.
 - (B) It joins all of the islands in the Florida Keys.
 - (C) It has more than 40 bridges.
 - (D) It connects Miami and Key West



References

Phillips, Deborah. 2001. *Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test*. New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, Inc.

and

Any sources from the internet and books