**Chapter 6**

**Reading Strategies, and Reading for Detail**

**General Objective**:

* Students are able to comprehend English texts by using reading strategies.
* Students are able to develop reading skills indicated by their comprehension and ability to answer question about the information contained in reading passages

**Specific Objective**:

* Students are able to apply skimming, scanning, previewing, predicting, topic sentence, and main idea for reading strategies in fast reading practices
* Students are able to answer all types of questions about the reading passages

1. **SKIMMING**

**What is skimming?**

Skimming is a way to read quickly in order to discover the general idea of a text. When we skim, we do not read every word. We do not stop to look up words we do not know in a dictionary. Skimming is a good technique to use when we have lots of material to read in a short amount of time. The purpose of skimming is not to understand or remember everything we read. Instead, it is to get a general idea of what the passage is about. When we want to skim:

1. Read the first few sentences. We can often begin to get a general idea about the passage right from the start.
2. Read the last few sentences. These sentences often summarize information in the passage.
3. Look for key words (words that are repeated). They will give us clues about the topic.

**Skimming Questions:**

* What is the general meaning? Skimming is a way to read quickly in order to discover the general idea of a text.
* Does this agree with what we already know about this subject?

Yes, I agree with what we already know about this subject

* What is the writer’s opinion?

Skimming is a good technique to use when we have lots of material to read in a short amount of time.

* Will this information be useful to us?

Yes, this information is very useful because writers provide information when we want to skim:

1.Read the first few sentences. We can often begin to get a general idea about the passage right from the start.

2.Read the last few sentences. These sentences often summarize information in the passage.

3.Look for key words (words that are repeated). They will give us clues about the topic.

**Task 1**

***Skim the article from a travel magazine about “Jet Lag”. (Jet Lag is your body’s reaction to long plane trip across time zones). Read the questions and then skim the article for the answers. Work as quickly as you can!***

1. According to this article, is jet lag worse when you travel eastward or westward?

Yes, jet lag worse when you travel eastward or westward

Why?

because the travel is following the sun. In traveling toward the east, the body must adjust by shortening its day, going against the body’s natural tendency. This explains why trips from west to east often result in greater suffering from jet lag.

1. What causes jet lag?

Dr. Minsky points out that there are three primary causes of jet lag, and of these, two are avoidable. First, people often wear themselves out getting ready for a trip, so they are already exhausted when they get on the plane. Second, long-distance travellers often have a couple of drinks to pass the time. The alcohol can cause stomach distress and interfere with getting a good night’s sleep.

The third and unavoidable cause of jet lag is the fact that long distance air travel upsets your internal biological clock.

1. What can you do to minimize jet lag?

vitamins to special diets

1. Is there any quick cure for jet lag?

- Get plenty of rest and eat healthy meals prior to taking a long flight.

- On the plane, set your watch to your destination’s time immediately. Then allow that time to guide your behaviour. During the trip, eat and sleep according to new time zone.

- Once you arrive, begin to follow a normal routine for that time zone. Try not to take naps. Set an alarm clock to wake you in the morning. Spend time outside during the day, and sleep at night.

- Avoid sleeping pills, alcohol, or other drugs that you do not normally use.

**OVERCOMING JET LAG**

*Experts give recommendations on what works and what doesn’t in trying to escape the effects of crossing time zones.*

By MONICA BROOKS

The day before a long flight you are frantically doing last-minute chores and errands, packing, and reading guide books. Then, on the plane, you have several drinks with dinner and stay up late watching the movie. After a brief nap, it’s time for breakfast and a morning arrival in, let’s say, Paris or Rome. Adrenaline flowing, you spend the entire day sightseeing and taking pictures. By evening, exhaustion has set in, and the next morning, you can hardly wake up before noon. Jet lag has taken hold.

Most people who travel by air across multiple time zones fall victim to this affliction of modern air travel. They may suffer from any of a number of unpleasant symptoms, including insomnia, fatigue, nausea, sleepiness, and lethargy.

According to Dr. Harriet Minsky, professor of psychology at Montreal University, the symptoms of jet lag vary from person to person, and also vary according to how far a traveller has flown. Recovery from jet lag also varies, with some sufferers feeling better gradually and others experiencing alternative days of feeling better or worse.

Dr. Minsky points out that there are three primary causes of jet lag, and of these, two are avoidable. First, people often wear themselves out getting ready for a trip, so they are already exhausted when they get on the plane. Second, long-distance travellers often have a couple of drinks to pass the time. The alcohol can cause stomach distress and interfere with getting a good night’s sleep.

The third and unavoidable cause of jet lag is the fact that long distance air travel upsets your internal biological clock. Dr. Alvin Lacy, chief of general medicine at Northern Medical College, explains that our inner clock controls our cycle of sleeping and waking.

The brain takes its cues from the amount of light and other features in the environment. Without environmental cues, the brain tends to set its biological clock to a longer day. This means that, for most travellers, the effects of jet lag are less severe on trips toward the west, because the travel is following the sun. In traveling toward the east, the body must adjust by shortening its day, going against the body’s natural tendency. This explains why trips from west to east often result in greater suffering from jet lag.

Individuals are not all affected to the same degree by jet lag. For example, “night owls, ” people who are usually most alert and lively late at night, are less likely to feel the effects of jet lag. Younger people suffer less than older travellers. In terms of personality types, extroverts (people who are sociable and like to be in groups) tend to suffer less than introverts.

Many people believe that there must be some quick and easy cure for jet lag and, in fact, all kinds of cure have been popularized, from vitamins to special diets, but research has shown that none of these are very effective.

However, Dr. Minsky assures travellers that if they follow certain common sense strategies, they will overcome jet lag more quickly.

* Get plenty of rest and eat healthy meals prior to taking a long flight.
* On the plane, set your watch to your destination’s time immediately. Then allow that time to guide your behaviour. During the trip, eat and sleep according to new time zone.
* Once you arrive, begin to follow a normal routine for that time zone. Try not to take naps. Set an alarm clock to wake you in the morning. Spend time outside during the day, and sleep at night.
* Avoid sleeping pills, alcohol, or other drugs that you do not normally use.

1. **SCANNING**

**What is scanning?**

Scanning is very-speed reading. When we need information from what we read, we do not need to read every word. We can scan whenever we need a piece information from a text. For example, if we need to find a word in a dictionary, we do not read the whole dictionary. We only read what we need. We can improve our reading in English if we learn to scan and read only words we need.

Practice in scanning will help us learn to skip over unimportant words so that we can read faster. In this chapter, we will practice scanning kinds of materials. We should work as quickly as possible on all the exercises. Remember that scanning is a high-speed skill. To scan effectively we need to do several things:

1. Know the specific information we are looking for: a name, a date, a time, a key word.
2. Ignore the words and information that aren’t important for our purpose.
3. Move our eyes rapidly across the text until we find the information and then stop reading.

**Task 2.**

**Scanning Listings**

***Scan the following listings of toll-free numbers on the internet and write the number we would call for each of the following.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Toll – free Numbers** | |
| Bureau of Health and Human Services | 1 - 800 - 841- 2900 |
| Citizen Information Service | 1 - 800 -392- 6090 |
| Commission for the Blind | 1 - 800 -392- 6450 |
| Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing | 1 - 800 - 882- 1155 |
| Department of Environmental Protection | 1 - 800 - 462 -0444 |
| Department of Public Safety | 1 - 800 - 223 -0933 |
| Department of Revenue | 1 - 800 - 392 -6089 |
| Department of Telecommunications & Energy | 1 - 800 - 392 -6066 |
| Department of Veterans’ Service | 1 - 888 - 844 -2838 |
| Federal Aviation Administration | 1 - 800 - 255 -1111 (Safety Hotline) |
| Food Stamps | 1 - 800 - 645 -8333 |
| Internal Revenue Service | 1 - 800 - 829 -1040 |
| Medicare | 1 - 800 - 882 -1228 |
| National Highway Traffic Safety Administration | 1 - 800 - 327 -4236 (Auto Safety Hotline) |
| Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation | 1 - 888 - 283 -3757 |
| O’Hare Airport | 1 - 800 - 23 -LOGAN |
| Peace Corps | 1 - 800 - 424 -8580 |
| Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation | 1 - 800 - 400 -7242 |
| Registry of Motor Vehicle | 1 - 800 - 858 -3926 |
| Social Security Administration | 1 - 800 - 772 -1213 |
| United States Postal Service | 1 - 800 - 275 -8777 |
| United States Small Business Administration | 1 - 800 - 827 -5722 |
| Welfare Department | 1 - 800 - 249 -2007 |

1. O’Hare Airport 1 - 800 - 23 -LOGAN
2. Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation 1 - 888 - 283 -3757
3. Social Security Administration 1 - 800 - 772 -1213
4. United States Postal Service 1 - 800 - 275 -8777
5. Food Stamps 1 - 800 - 645 -8333
6. Federal Aviation Administration, Consumer Complaint 1 - 800 - 255 -1111 (Safety Hotline)
7. United States Small Business Administration 1 - 800 - 827 -5722
8. Registry of Motor Vehicle 1 - 800 - 858 -3926
9. Commission for the Blind 1 - 800 -392- 6450
10. Department of Veterans Services 1 - 888 - 844 -2838
11. Department of Public Safety 1 - 800 - 223 -0933
12. Internal Revenue Services 1 - 800 - 829 -1040

**Task 3.**

**Scanning Encyclopaedia Entries**

***You have an assignment to do a report on recent development in technology. Scan this passage from an encyclopaedia to answers the questions below. Work quickly!***

1. Whose idea was the satellite in the first place? The idea of satellite system for communications was first suggested in 1945 by Arthur C. Clark, an English engineer and writer. About 1954, John R. Pierce, an American Engineer, made a thorough study of all types of satellite systems for communications.
2. What was the name of the first communications satellite? The first communications satellite, called Score, was launched on Dec.18, 1958.
3. Who was president of the United States when the first communications satellite sent a Christmas message?

President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

1. Which countries cooperated to develop Echo 2 ? Echo 2, part of a cooperative program of experiments between the United States, England, and the Soviet Union, was launched on Jan.26,1964.
2. Which satellite was the first to send television broadcasts ?

Telstar 1 was the first communications satellite to relay experimental television broadcasts.

1. About how far above the earth were the experimental satellites?

up to 6,000 miles; 9,600 km

1. How many kinds of commercial satellites are mentioned in the text?

5 (*Intelsat 1*. Early Bird (Intelsat 1, Intelsat 2, Intelsat 3, Intelsat 4, Intelsat5)

1. When was the first commercial satellites placed in operation?

*Intelsat 1*. Early Bird (Intelsat 1), the world’s first commercial communications satellite, was launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla., on Apr.6,1965, and was placed in commercial operation over the Atlantic Ocean on June 28,1965.

1. Which satellite first carried both telephone calls and color television between North America and Europe? Early Bird had a capacity of 240 simultaneous telephone calls, or one color television channel, between points in North America and Europe.
2. What is the name of the newest satellite mentioned in the article?

Intelsat 5, first launched in 1980, had a capacity of 12,000 simultaneous telephone circuits plus two television channels.

**SATELLITE**

The higher powered satellite amplifier of the 1980’s made possible TV transmission into antennas small enough to be mounted on the roof of a private home or on the side of a building. With such an antenna, ghosting of the picture due to reflections from buildings or hills no longer occurs. Also, the bandwidth per channel, wider than that used for conventional TV broadcasting, makes for pictures of better quality and higher definition.

In addition to countries using their own satellites for domestic service (Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Mexico, the United States, and the Soviet Union), about two dozen countries lease satellite transponders from Intelsat for domestic communication services.

**HISTORY**

The idea of satellite system for communications was first suggested in 1945 by Arthur C. Clark, an English engineer and writer. About 1954, John R. Pierce, an American Engineer, made a thorough study of all types of satellite systems for communications. His work ultimately led to the active-repeater satellite program.

**Experimental Satellites.** The first communications satellite, called Score, was launched on Dec.18, 1958. Score which consisted of two radio receivers, two transmitters, and two tape recorders, transmitted to the world the prerecorded Christmas message of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. On Aug.12, 1960, a passive communications satellite, Echo 1, was orbited to conduct communications experiments. A ten-story-high balloon, Echo 1 was used to bounce radio and television signals between the United States, England, and France. Echo 2, part of a cooperative program of experiments between the United States, England, and the Soviet Union, was launched on Jan.26,1964.

The first electronic active-repeater satellite, Courier 1B, was launched on Oct.4, 1960. It was also the first satellite to use solar cells rather than chemical batteries for power, and it transmitted for 17 days.

After a hiatus of almost two years, the Telstar, Relay, and Syncom projects provided a series of spectacular successes that proved the feasibility of satellites for commercial communications. Telstar 1 was orbited on July 10, 1962, and Telstar 2 on May 7, 1963. Telstar 1 was the first communications satellite to relay experimental television broadcasts. Relay 1, launched on Dec.13,1962, and Relay 2, launched on Jan.21,1964, were similar to the Telstars.

Syncom 1, the first synchronous satellite, was successfully launched on Feb.14, 1963, but an electronics failure prevented it from being used. Syncom 2, launched on July 26,1963, was used to test the synchronous satellite concept thoroughly, and Syncom 3, launched on Aug.19, 1964, was used to relay telecast of the 1964 Olympic Games, held in Japan, to the United States and Europe.

The low-orbiting satellites (up to 6,000 miles; 9,600 km) such as Score, Echo, Courier, Telstar, and Relay provided many useful experiments. But the evolving technology made synchronous satellites the choice for commercial uses.

Commercial Satellites. The history of the Intelsat system comprises several successive generations of satellites.

*Intelsat 1*. Early Bird (Intelsat 1), the world’s first commercial communications satellite, was launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla., on Apr.6,1965, and was placed in commercial operation over the Atlantic Ocean on June 28,1965. Early Bird had a capacity of 240 simultaneous telephone calls, or one color television channel, between points in North America and Europe. Early Bird introduced live commercial television across oceans.

*Intelsat 2.* Three satellites of the Intelsat 2 series were successfully launched and placed in commercial service during 1967. One was placed over the Atlantic Ocean augmenting Early Bird, and two were placed over the Pacific Ocean. These satellites had the same capacity as Early Bird and each covered one third of the globe. They introduced multipoint communications capability-that is, each satellite could link earth stations in all countries within its area of coverage. These satellite extended satellite coverage to two thirds of the world.

*Intelsat 3.* A third generation of Intelsat satellites was placed in commercial operation over the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans between January and July 1969 to establish the initial global system. These satellites had a capacity of 1,200 simultaneous telephone calls or 4 television channels, or combinations thereof.

*Intelsat 4.* An even further advanced fourth generation of satellites was launched beginning in January 1971, and by July 1972 an improved global system of Intelsat 4 satellites was operating over the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. This series, larger and heavier than the Intelsat 3 series, had a capacity of 4,000 simultaneous telephone calls plus two television channels per satellite. The Intelsat 4 A version of the series was first launched in 1975 and, by using a number of satellite amplifiers, provided 6,000 telephone circuits plus two television channels per satellite.

*Intelsat 5.* Intelsat 5, first launched in 1980, had a capacity of 12,000 simultaneous telephone circuits plus two television channels. This series uses a fly-wheel driven by an electric motor, rather than a spinning satellite, to maintain stability. The Intelsat 5 A, an expanded version of the Intelsat 5, provides 14,000 telephone circuits and two television channels.

Joseph V Charyk

1. **PREVIEWING AND PREDICTING**

There are two skills that are essential for a good reader: **Previewing** and **Predicting**. When we gather information about a book by examining its cover, we are *previewing*. The aim of previewing is to help us to predict or make some “educated guesses” about what it is in the book. We should develop the habit of applying these skills whenever we read.

Previewing and predicting before we read can make a big difference. We can get some ideas about what we will read. That way we will begin to process the information far more quickly. We will also be able to follow the writer’s ideas better. Though it takes a few minutes to preview and predict, those few minutes are well invested. We will find that later we save reading time and gain comprehension.

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| **Previewing** means surveying a text quickly before we read it carefully. When we preview a text, look at the title and subtitles, pictures and graphics, words in bold print or italics, and introductions. |

|  |
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| **Predicting** is making an educated guess about what we are going to read. One of the goals of previewing is to help us make prediction. We can also use what we already know about the topic to help us make predictions. Then, as we read, we can continue to make predictions about what will come next in the passage. Predicting is important because it keeps us actively involved in reading, and, therefore, helps us understand and remember more of what we read. |

**Task 4.**

***Preview the following article. When you have finished previewing, go on to answer the questions!***

**LONG LIVE WOMEN!**

Both men and women are living longer these days in the industrialized countries. However, women, on the average, live longer. In general, they can expect to live six or seven years more than men. The reasons for this are both biological and cultural.

One important biological factor that helps women live longer is the difference in hormones between men and women. Hormones are chemicals which are produced by the body to control various body functions. Between the ages of about 12 and 50, women produce hormones that are involved in fertility. These hormones also have a positive effect on the heart and the blood flow. In fact, women are less likely to have high blood pressure or to die from heart attacks.

The female hormones also protect the body in another way. They help the body to defend itself against some kinds of infections. This means that women generally get sick less often and less seriously than men. The common cold is a good example: women, on average, get fewer colds than men.

Women are also helped by their female genes. Scientists are still not exactly sure how genes influence aging, but they believe that they do. Some think that a woman’s body cells have a tendency to age more slowly than a man’s. Others think that a man’s body cells have a tendency to age more quickly. Recent research seems to support both of these possibilities.

The cultural context can also influence life expectancy for men and women. (Life expectancy is the expected length of a person’s life). For example, women generally smoke cigarettes less than men. They also drink less alcohol on average. Both cigarettes and alcohol have been proven to cause many health problems and to shorten lives.

Another factor that has influenced the lives of women is the lack of stress. Stress is well known to shorten lives. Until recently, women who worked were usually in less responsible, less stressful positions. At home, housework tends to keep women in better physical condition than men. This generally better physical condition is yet another factor in women’s longer lives.

These cultural factors have played an important part for the women who are now getting old. But the social habits of women are changing. Young women are smoking and drinking more than women used to. More women are working now and holding more responsible positions. These changes may mean that the cultural context will no longer help women live healthier lives. However, the other, biological factors in life expectancy remain unchanged. Women probably will therefore continue to live longer than men.

***Answer the questions, Remember do not look back!***

1. What is this article about?

This article about women will continue to live longer than men

1. What are some biological reasons for women’s long lives, according to this article ? female hormones help the body defend itself against certain types of infections, women produce hormones that are involved in fertility. These hormones also have a positive effect on the heart and blood flow. In fact, women are less likely to suffer from high blood pressure or die of a heart attack.
2. What are some of the other reasons mentioned?

Women generally smoke cigarettes less than men. They also drink less alcohol on average. The lives of women is the lack of stress. At home, housework tends to keep women in better physical condition than men.

1. Does the author think the situation is likely to change? Why?

Yes, because young women are smoking and drinking more than women used to. More women are working now and holding more responsible positions. These changes may mean that the cultural context will no longer help women live healthier lives.

1. Is the information in this article new to you?

Yes, the information that I got in this article is new to me.

**Task 5.**

***Preview and predict about the following passage. Then answer the questions !***

**POLES APART**

Many are surprised to learn that Antarctica is nearly twice the size of the United States. The name Antarctica was coined to mean “opposite to the Arctic. “ It is just that in many ways. Antarctica is a high, ice-covered landmass. In the Arctic the landmasses are grouped around the ice-covered Arctic Ocean.

Largely because of this difference, the climate of the two areas is very different. Antarctica is the coldest area in the world. On the average it is about 30 degrees colder than the Arctic. At the South Pole, nearly10,000 feet high, monthly mean temperatures run well below zero. Only in coastal regions do temperatures sometimes rise about freezing in the summer (December to March). In contrast, near the North Pole monthly mean temperatures often rise above freezing.

At both poles, daily temperatures may drop far below the monthly mean. At the American South Pole Station, winter temperatures sometimes fall below -100 degrees Fahrenheit. Elsewhere, on higher parts of the south polar plateau, even lower temperatures are recorded. A temperature of – 127 degrees Fahrenheit was measured in August 1960. It is the world’s record low temperature.

Partly because of this climatic difference, the land animals and plants of the two regions are very different. On the continent of Antarctica, there are very few plants. In the Arctic there are many plants. In some of the few ice-free areas of Antarctica, mosses, lichens, and algae are found. Penguins populate Antarctic coastlines but do not exist in the Arctic. The land animals of the Arctic are foxes, bears, reindeer, and lemmings. These animals are known in the Antarctic. Old rock layers show that this” oppositeness” between north and south extends far back into the early chapters of earth history.

Ice is the great feature of Antarctica. More than 4.5 million square miles of ice sheet cover the area. Great rivers of ice, called glaciers, push down the mountains. Antarctica is the storehouse of about 85 percent of the total world supply of ice.

The icecap is very thick, averaging nearly 8,000 feet. At one spot, scientists have found the distance from the surface to the rock underneath the ice to be more than 13,000 feet.

If this great volume of ice were to melt, the volume of the world oceans would increase, and sea level would rise. Extreme atmospheric changes would have to take place for this to happen.

**Task 6.**

***Do not look back at the passage. Recalling Facts***

1. The coldest area in the world is
2. the Arctic  **b. Antarctica** c. Siberia
3. The world’s record low temperature was recorded in
4. 1950 **b. 1960** c. 1970
5. How much of the world’s ice is located in Antarctica?
6. 15 percent b. 55 percent **c. 85 percent**
7. Compared to the United States, Antarctica is
8. the same size **b. twice the size** c. four time the size
9. Some areas of Antarctica are
10. **ice free** b. very humid c. quite mild

***Understanding the Passage***

1. One type of animal found in the Arctic is the
2. **fox**  b. wolf c. opossum
3. The author develops his point through
4. **comparison and contrast**
5. theories and proof
6. characters and actions
7. The author implies that if Antarctica’s ice melted,
8. **coastal areas of the world would be flooded**
9. ocean currents would shift direction
10. climate would change drastically everywhere
11. The name Antarctica, meaning “opposite to the Arctic”. was based on
12. insufficient exploration
13. inaccurate information
14. **adequate knowledge**
15. We may conclude that \_
16. **life at the North Pole is more tolerable than at the South Pole.**
17. the Arctic is a solid land mass
18. penguins could not live at the North Pole.
19. **TOPIC AND MAIN IDEA**
20. **Topic**

Reading is a complex process, especially when we are reading something that is not in our native language. The first step to becoming a successful reader is identifying the topic of the passage. The next step is identifying the main idea.

|  |
| --- |
| The subject of a movie or a conversation is called the **topic**. The subject of a most writing is also called a topic. The topic answer the question, “ What or who is it about ?” The topic is usually just a word or a short phrase. |

**Example:**

1. ***In the group of words below, one of the words is the topic for all other words. Circle the topic!***

Elephants – Zebras – African Animals – Lions – Tigers

The topic is ***African Animals***. All of the other words are examples of this topic.

1. ***In the group of words below, one of the words is the topic for all other words. Circle the topic***

wheels – tires – brakes – steering wheel – seats – doors – car

The topic is ***car***. All of the other words are parts of a car.

**Task 7.**

***In each group of words, circle the word which is the best topic for all the other words. Work as fast as you can!***

* 1. flippers – face mask – wet suit – surf board – water skis – goggles – **water sports** – air tank
  2. referees – scoreboard – **basketball game** – clock – fans – baskets – players – coaches
  3. air bags – seat belts – stereo speakers – **car equipment** – anti-lock brakes – spare tire – windshield wipers
  4. whales – sharks – dolphins – barracudas – **sea creatures** – eels – octopus – skates
  5. **string** **quartet** – double bass – viola – violin – cello
  6. tulips – daffodils – **flowers** – hyacinths – crocuses
  7. pistachios – cashews – **nuts** – almonds – pecans – filberts
  8. Maui – Kauai – **Hawaiian** **Islands** – Oahu – Hawaii – Lanai – Molokai
  9. Biochemistry – Physiology – **Medical** **Subjects** – Neurology – Anatomy – Kinesiology
  10. The Old Man and the Sea – **Reading for Pleasure** – The Pearl – The Chocolate War – The Incredible Journey – Night

1. **Topic Sentence**

The topic tells you what the author is writing about. Learning to identify topics helps us to:

- see the connection between a text and previously formed schemata

- notice how the details in the text relate to each other

In some paragraphs, the topic is stated in one sentence (the topic sentence).

|  |
| --- |
| A topic sentence usually appears at the beginning of a paragraph, but may occur in other places as well.  The topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph, and it is often the first sentence. This is usually the case in textbook paragraphs. But the topic sentence is not always the first sentence. It can be the last sentence or even a sentence in the middle of the paragraph |

If you can find the topic sentence quickly, you can read the whole paragraph much faster and you can understand it better.

**Task 8.**

***Read each paragraph to find the topic!***

**Consequences of an Aging Population**

1. The average age of the population of many countries is getting older. That means that businesses in those countries must adjust to older customers. In fact, many companies are working to respond to the special needs of the elderly. One example of this is the medical industry. New medicines and technologies are being developed especially for the health problems of the older people. Another business that offers services for the elderly is the tourist industry. Many travel agents offer special trips for groups of older people. And, finally, there are many different kinds of products made for the elderly. These include everything from shoes and shampoos to magazines and furniture.

**Topic:**

***Underline the topic sentence. Then circle the letter in front of the best statement of the author’s main idea!***

1. The medical industry is developing new medicines for the elderly.
2. New products and services are being developed by many companies.
3. **Many companies are developing products and services for the increasing elderly population.**
4. In industrialized countries today, many elderly people suffer from depression. The main cause of this is loneliness. In the past, older people usually lived with other members of the family. They usually had some responsibilities around the home. For example, older women could help take care of the children or prepare meals. Older men could help their sons at work or around the house. These days, married children often prefer to live on their own, sometimes far away from their parents. Thus, older people may be cut off from family ties. They may feel cut off from the world around them. Life has changed so much so quickly that older people sometimes feel that they do not belong anymore.

**Topic:**

***Underline the topic sentence. Then circle the letter in front of the best statement of the author’s main idea!***

1. **The elderly people in industrialized countries are often depressed because of loneliness.**
2. Older people used to live with other family members and helped take care of the children.
3. Some elderly people may feel the world has changed too quickly for them.
4. **Main Idea**

The main idea is the idea which the author wishes to express about the topic. Other names the central idea, central focus, controlling idea, or main point. Reading for main ideas makes it possible for the reader to recognize what is important and what can be skipped over in a text.

|  |
| --- |
| The main idea is the author’s most important point about topic. The main idea answers the question, “What is the main point the author is making about the topic?” How do we find the main idea of a paragraph?   1. We need to read the paragraph carefully and identify the topic. 2. We need to ask ourselves, “What does the author want us to know about the topic ?” |

**Example:**

**Topic:** Cats

Possible **main ideas** about cats:

* Cats are usually very clean animals
* Cats have very expressive faces
* Cats are very adaptable animals

**Task 9.**

***Read each paragraph. Decide on the best main idea statement!***

**Automobiles: Problems and Solutions**

1. The idea of a small electric car is not new. A number of different car manufacturers already sell such cars. But now a French company, Renault, has designed a very special kind of electric car. By pushing a button, you can make it fold up! The back of the car folds into the car body. These cars were designed mainly for use in cities. They have several advantages over regular cars. Their small size makes them much easier to drive around busy, narrow streets. They are also much easier to park in city parking spaces. Like other electric cars, these autos do not pollute the air. This is an important consideration these days when many cities have serious pollution problems.

a. Electric cars do not pollute the air.

**b. The new folding electric car has many advantages over regular cars.**

c. Small cars are very convenient in narrow streets.

2. Many studies have shown that it is better to wear your seat belt when you are travelling in a car. Seat belts greatly reduce the risk of death or injury in an accident. This fact is widely recognized and many governments have passed laws requiring seat belt use. However, many people still do not wear seat belts. Researchers have found several reasons for this. Some people feel uncomfortable with the seat belt. They are afraid of being trapped in the car in an accident. Others do not think that the seat belt can protect them. They believe that people have no power over their fate. Fate will decide whether they will have an accident and whether they will be injured or die. They think that wearing a seat belt or not will make no difference.

a. **In spite of the risks, some people do not wear seat belts.**

b. All new cars must now be equipped with seat belts.

c. Some people feel uncomfortable wearing seat belts.

1. The country with the most crowded roads is Italy. In 1992, there were an average of 101.1 vehicles (cars, trucks, and buses) per kilometre of road in Italy. This can be compared with the vehicles-per-kilometer ratios of other European countries. The ratio varies from 35.8 in Franc to 74.2 in Great Britain. In the United States, the ratio is 30.6. Part of the reason for Italy’s higher ratio lies in its geography. Because much of the country is mountainous, there are fewer roads. Thus the traffic is more concentrated on those few roads. This fact has caused some serious problems. Many cities and highways are often blocked by terrible traffic jams. The heavy traffic has also meant a high accident rate for Italy. And finally, all those cars add to Italy’s air pollution.

* 1. Because of the mountains, there are fewer roads in Italy.
  2. Crowded roads create traffic jams, accidents, and air pollution.
  3. **Italy’s roads are the most crowded in the world.**

**Task 10**

***Read the following passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow!***

**Passage 1**

Hurricanes generally occur in the North Atlantic from May through November, with the peak of the hurricane season in September; only rarely will they occur from December through April in that part of the ocean. The main reason for the occurrence of hurricanes during this period is that the temperature on the water’s surface is at its warmest and the humidity of the air is at its highest.

Of the tropical storms that occur each year in the North Atlantic, only about five, on the average, are powerful enough to be called hurricanes. To be classified as a hurricane, a tropical storm must have winds reaching speeds of at least 117 kilometers per hour, but the winds are often much stronger than that; the winds of intense hurricanes can easily surpass 240 kilometers per hour.

1. The passage mainly discusses \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

a. how many hurricanes occur each year.

b. the strength of hurricanes.

c. the weather in the North Atlantic.

**d. hurricanes in one part of the world.**

2. The best title for this passage would be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The North Atlantic Ocean
2. **Storms of the Northern Atlantic**
3. Hurricanes: The Damages and Destruction
4. What happens from May through November

**II. Organization of Ideas Questions**

* In the Reading Comprehension section of the TOEFL test, there will sometimes be questions about the organization of ideas in a passage.
* In this type of question, we will be asked to determine how the ideas in one paragraph (or paragraphs) relate to the ideas in another paragraph (or paragraphs).

The following chart outlines the key information that we should remember about questions on the organization of ideas:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS** | |
| **How to identify the question** | * *How is the information in the passage* ***organized****?* * *How is the information in the second paragraph* ***related*** *to the information in the first paragraph?* |
| **Where to find the answer** | The answer to this type of question can generally be determined by looking at the first sentence of the appropriate paragraphs. |
| **How to answer the question** | 1. Read the first line of each paragraph. 2. Look for words that show the relationship between the paragraphs. 3. Choose the answer that best expresses the relationship. |

**Task.11**

***Read the following passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow!***

**Passage 2**

IQ, or Intelligence Quotient, is defined as the ratio of a person’s mental age to chronological age, with the ratio multiplied by 100 to remove the decimal. Chronological age is easily determined; mental age is generally measured by some kind of standard test and is not so simple to define.

In theory, a standardized IQ test is set up to measure an individual’s ability to perform intellectual operations such as reasoning and problem solving. These intellectual operations are considered to represent intelligence.

In practice, it has been impossible to arrive at consensus as to which types of intellectual operations demonstrate intelligence. Furthermore, it has been impossible to devise a test without cultural bias, which is to say that any IQ test so far proposed have been shown to reflect the culture of the test makers. Test takers from that culture would, it follows, score higher on such a test than test takers from a different culture with equal intelligence.

1. What type of information is included in the first paragraph?
2. An argument.
3. **A definition.**
4. An opinion.
5. A theory.
6. How does the information in the third paragraph differ from that in the second paragraph?
7. It presents a contrasting point of view.
8. It follows chronologically from the ideas in the second paragraph.
9. **It presents real information rather than a premise.**
10. It presents an example of the ideas in the second paragraph.

**III. Directly Answered Questions**

**3.a. Stated Detail Questions**

* A stated detail question asks about one piece of information in the passage rather that the passage as a whole.
* The answers to these questions are generally given in order in the passage, and the correct answer is often a restatement of what is given in the passage.
* This means that the correct answer often expresses the same idea as what is written in the passage, but the words are not exactly the same.

The following chart outlines the key information that we should remember about stated detail questions, as the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STATED DETAIL QUESTIONS** | |
| **How to identify the question** | ***According*** *to the passage, …*  *It is* ***stated*** *in the passage …*  *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 in the appropriate part of the passage for the *key word* or *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. |

**Task. 12**

***Read the following passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow!***

**Passage 3**

The human heart is divided into four chambers, each of which serves its own function in the cycle of pumping blood. The atria are the thin-walled upper chambers that gather blood as it flows from the veins between heartbeats. The ventricles are the thick-walled lower chambers that receive blood from the atria and push it into the arteries with each contraction of the heart. The left atrium and ventricle work separately from those on the right. The role of the chambers on the right side of the heart is to receive oxygen-depleted blood from the body tissues and send it on to the lungs; the chambers on the left side of the heart then receive the oxygen-enriched blood from the lungs and send it back out to the body tissues.

1. The passage indicates that the ventricles \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. have relatively thin walls
3. send blood to the atria
4. are above the atria
5. **force blood into the arteries**
6. According to the passage, when is blood pushed into the arteries from the ventricles ?
7. **As the heart beats**
8. Between heartbeats
9. Before each contraction of the heart
10. Before it is received by the atria
11. According to the passage, which part of the heart gets blood from the body tissues and passes it on to the lungs ?
12. The Atria
13. The ventricles
14. **The right atrium and ventricle**
15. The left atrium and ventricle

**3.b. Unstated Detail Questions**

* We will sometimes be asked in the Reading Comprehension section of the TOEFL test to find an answer that is *not stated* or *not mentioned* or *not true* in the passage.
* This type of question really means that three of the answers are *stated, mentioned,* or *true* in the passage, while one answer is not.
* Our actual job is to find the three correct answers and then choose the letter of the one remaining answer.
* We should note that there are two kinds of answers to this type of question:
  1. there are three true answers and one answer that is not discussed in the passage, or
  2. there are three true answers and one that is false according to the passage.

The following chart outlines the key information that we should remember about “unstated” detail questions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **“UNSTATED” DETAIL QUESTIONS** | |
| **How to identify the question** | *Which of the following is* ***not stated*** *…?*  *Which of the following is* ***not mentioned*** *…?*  *Which of the following is* ***not discussed*** *…?*  *All of the following are true* ***except*** *…* |
| **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. Scan in the appropriate place in the passage for the *key word* (or related *idea*) 3. Read the sentence that contains the *key word* or *idea* carefully. 4. Look for answers that are definitely true according to the passage. Eliminate those answers. 5. Choose the answer that is *not true* or *not discussed* in the passage. |

**Task.13**

***Read the following passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow!***

**Passage 4**

Blood plasma is a clear, almost colourless liquid. It consists of blood from which the red and white blood cells have been removed. It is often used in transfusions because a patient generally needs the plasma portion of the blood more than the other components.

Plasma differs in several important ways from whole blood. First of all, plasma can be mixed for all donors and does not have to be from the right blood group, as whole blood does. In addition, plasma can be dried and stored, while whole blood cannot.

1. All of the following are true about blood plasma EXCEPT \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. **it is a deeply coloured liquid**
3. blood cells have been taken out of it
4. patients are often transfused with it
5. it is generally more important to patient than other parts of whole blood
6. Which of the following is NOT stated about the whole blood?
7. It is different from plasma.
8. It cannot be dried.
9. It is impossible to keep it in storage for a long time.
10. **It is a clear, colourless liquid.**

**3.c Pronoun Referents**

* In the Reading Comprehension section of the TOEFL test, we will sometimes be asked to determine which noun a pronoun refers to.
* In this type of question it is important to understand that a noun is generally used first in a passage, and the pronoun that refers to it comes after.
* Whenever we are asked which noun a pronoun refers to, we should look *before* the pronoun to find the noun.

The following chart outlines the key information that we should remember about pronoun referents:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PRONOUN REFERENTS** | |
| **How to identify the question** | *The* ***pronoun*** *“ . . .” in line X* ***refers*** *to which of the following?* |
| **Where to find the answer** | The line where the pronoun is located is generally given in the question.  The noun that the pronoun refers to is generally found ***before*** the pronoun. |
| **How to answer the question** | 1. Find the pronoun in the passage. (The line where the pronoun can be found is generally stated in the question.) 2. Look for nouns that come *before* the pronoun. 3. Read the part of the passage *before* the pronoun carefully. 4. Eliminate any definitely wrong answers and choose the best answer from the remaining choices. |

**Task.14**

***Read the following passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow!***

**Passage 5**

The full moon that occurs nearest the equinox of the Sun has become known as the harvest moon. It is a bright moon which allows farmers to work late into the night for several nights; they can work when the moon is at its brightest to bring in the fall harvest. The harvest moon, of course, occurs at different times of the year in the northern and southern hemispheres. In the northern hemisphere, the harvest moon occurs in September at the time of the autumnal equinox. In the southern hemisphere, the harvest moon occurs in March at the time of the vernal equinox.

1. The pronoun “It” in line 2 refers to …………….
2. the equinox
3. the Sun
4. **the harvest moon**
5. the night
6. The pronoun “they” in line 3 refers to …………….
7. **farmers**
8. several nights
9. different times
10. the northern and southern hemisphere

**IV. Indirectly Answered Questions**

**4.a. Implied Detail Questions**

* We will sometimes be asked to answer a question by drawing a conclusion from a specific detail or details in the passage.
* Questions of this type contain the words *implied, inferred, likely,* or *probably* to let you know that the answer to the question is not directly stated.
* In this type of question it is important to understand that we do not have to “*pull the answer out of thin air*.”
* Instead, some information will be given in the passage, and we will draw a conclusion from that information.

The following chart outlines the key information that we should remember about implied detail questions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **IMPLIED DETAIL QUESTIONS** | |
| **How to identify the question** | *It is* ***implied*** *in the passage that …*  *It can be* ***inferred*** *from the passage that …*  *It is most* ***likely*** *that …*  *What* ***probably*** *happened …?* |
| **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. Scan in the passage for the key word (or a related idea) 3. Carefully read the sentence that contains the key word. 4. Look for an answer that *could be* true, according to that sentence. |

**Task.15**

***Read the following passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow!***

**Passage 6**

Probably the most recognized board game around the world is the game of Monopoly. In this game, players vie for wealth by buying, selling, and renting properties; the key to success in the game, in addition to a bit of luck, is for a player to acquire monopolies on clusters of properties in order to force opponents to pay exorbitant rents and fees.

Although the game is now published in countless languages and versions, with foreign locations and place names appropriate to the target language adorning its board, the beginnings of the game were considerably more humble. The game was invented in 1933 by Charles Darrow, during the height of the Great Depression. Darrow, who lived in Germantown, Pennsylvania, was himself unemployed during those difficult financial times. He set the original game not as might be expected in his hometown of Germantown, but in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the site of numerous pre-Depression vacations, where he walked along the Boardwalk and visited at Park Place. Darrow made the first games by hand and sold them locally until *Parker Brothers* purchased the rights to Monopoly in 1935 and took the first steps toward the mass production of today.

1. The French version of Monopoly might possibly include a piece of property entitled \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Atlantic City, New Jersey
3. Germantown, Pennsylvania
4. Boardwalk
5. **The Eiffel Tower**
6. It is implied that Darrow selected Atlantic City as the setting for Monopoly because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. **it brought back good memories**
8. his family came from Atlantic City
9. the people of Germantown might have been angered if he had used Germantown
10. Atlantic City was larger than Germantown
11. Parker Brothers is probably \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
12. a real estate company
13. **a game manufacturing company**
14. a group of Charles Darrow’s friends
15. a toy design company

**Task. 16**

***Read the following passage and choose the best answers to the questions that follow!***

**Passage 7**

When a strong earthquake occurs on the ocean floor rather than on land, a tremendous force is exerted on the seawater and one or more large, destructive waves called *tsunamis* can be formed. *Tsunamis* are commonly called tidal waves in the United States, but this is really an inappropriate name in that the cause of the *tsunami* is an underground earthquake rather than the ocean’s tides.

Far from land, a tsunami can move through the wide open vastness of the ocean at a speed of 600 miles (900 kilometers) per hour and often can travel tremendous distances without losing height and strength. When a tsunami reaches shallow coastal water, it can reach a height of 100 feet (30 meters) or more and can cause tremendous flooding and damage to coastal areas.

1. The paragraph preceding this passage most probably discusses
2. *tsunamis* is various parts of the world
3. the negative effects of *tsunamis*
4. **land-based earthquakes**
5. the effect of tides on *tsunamis*
6. Which of the following is most likely the topic of paragraph following the passage?
7. The causes of *tsunamis*
8. **The destructive effects of *tsunamis* on the coast**
9. The differences between *tsunamis* and tidal waves
10. The distances covered by *tsunamis*