

Tips for Being a Successful Reader

Always select the **BEST ANSWER FOR THE GIVEN SITUATION**, not the one “right answer.” There are often times more than one answer that “could” be right with enough justification. You want the **BEST ANSWER** that a majority of people would reasonably select. This is why you must apply comprehension (thinking) skills.

Skill	Strategy								
<p><u>1. Understanding Main Idea</u> <i>Main ideas are found in all forms of meaningful writing.</i></p> <p><i>Be able to find main ideas in letters, stories, poetry, articles, persuasive essays, expository essays, newspaper articles, etc. . .</i></p>	<p>1. Think what would be a “good title” of the passage. What is the overall meaning (not details or specific events). What ideas are being re-visited or focused on repeatedly.</p>								
<p><u>2. Recalling Facts and Details</u> <i>Examples: dates, time, names, events, numerical ,etc. .</i></p> <p><i>Facts are sometimes inferred by context clues, so don't always look for a “waving red flag” answer. Also, the question may use synonyms instead of exact words from the passage, so read questions carefully. Also, be prepared to do math computation to arrive at some facts.</i></p>	<p>2. Go back and look at passage. Underline key words/phrases as you read. Look for specific details in the question, passage, and answer choices, such as dates, times, people, or words in bold/italics. Ideas from question and passage should agree in meaning even if worded differently. Eliminate answer choices that can't be supported in text.</p>								
<p><u>3. Recognizing Cause and Effect</u> <i>Due to needed budget cuts, the meeting was lengthy and mentally exhausting. Some of the committee members were beginning to feel headaches coming.</i></p> <p><i>What would cause the committee members to get headaches?</i></p>	<p>3. A CAUSE makes something else happen. An EFFECT is the thing that happened, the result. Sometimes a question may ask about the EFFECT and you must reasonably infer what the CAUSE was. Be able to recognize CAUSE and EFFECT relationships in both directions.</p>								
<p><u>4. Making Predictions</u></p> <p><i>Susan finished stirring her hot chocolate when her toast popped from the toaster. She sat aside her steaming cup to get jelly and butter from the fridge. She was looking forward to a tasty breakfast to appease her growling stomach.</i></p> <p><i>How do you predict she will drink her beverage?</i></p>	<p>4. Using context clues and common sense to figure out what will reasonably happen next or will be the result of a situation. It is like <i>Cause and Effect</i>, except you have to predict the “effect.” Be careful not to interject what YOU would do in that situation. Your answer should relate to the passage, not your personal opinion.</p>								
<p><u>5. Drawing Conclusions</u></p> <p><i>The small child crept quietly into the kitchen carefully listening for any approaching sounds. He spied the recently filled cookie jar on the top counter.</i></p> <p><i>What is the child probably going to do next?</i></p>	<p>5. A lot like “making predictions.” Use clues in the text and keep in mind the author's purpose of the passage or the mood/theme of the passage. Base conclusions on reasonable clues from the passage; not on what you would do. Choose the answer the majority of people would reasonably select based on the passage clues.</p>								
<p><u>6. Making Inferences</u></p> <p><i>Timmy stomped to his room and tossed his books on his bed. He could not believe his science grade. He pulled out his report card and his brimmed with tears.</i></p> <p><i>Is Timmy's science grade a high one?</i></p>	<p>6. Use context clues and author's purpose to comprehend ideas that are implied (not completely or obviously stated) in passage. You are to make a reasonable interpretation of the information to “figure something out.”</p>								
<p><u>7. Comparing and Contrasting</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Cup-O –Soup</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Soups On</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 oz serving</td> <td>10 oz serving</td> </tr> <tr> <td>115 calories</td> <td>130 calories</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 grams of fat</td> <td>4.5 grams of fat</td> </tr> </table> <p>Which brand of soup has fewer calories per ounce? List 2 ways these products are similar.</p>	Cup-O –Soup	Soups On	8 oz serving	10 oz serving	115 calories	130 calories	3 grams of fat	4.5 grams of fat	<p>7. Compare means how things are similar. Contrast means how they are different. Use a Venn diagram if necessary. Go back through passage and find supporting evidence for your answer.</p>
Cup-O –Soup	Soups On								
8 oz serving	10 oz serving								
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<p><u>8. Understanding Facts and Non-Facts</u></p> <p><i>Example: In 1934, Robert Nelson took a photo capturing the image of the Loch Ness Monster.</i> <i>This is a non-fact because the event actually happened, but the Loch Ness creature cannot be proven as fact.</i></p>	<p>8. Be able to determine what is a supported fact (can actually happen) and what is an exaggeration. Look for figurative language, implied meaning (inferences), or opinion based ideas.</p>
<p><u>9. Understanding Facts and Opinions</u></p> <p><i>Example: Always the stylish one, <u>Jana wore a captivating red and yellow blouse</u> that made her look simply amazing.</i></p> <p>Only the underline portions are fact; the rest are opinions.</p>	<p>9. FACT is based on evidence/can be proven. It can't change unless evidence changes. OPINION is based on feelings or beliefs, can vary person to person, and can change as one's feelings change. Look for words such as happy, laughed, believe, or words that convey personal expressions of feelings or pass a judgment.</p>
<p><u>10. Analyzing Literary Forms</u> <i>*This applies to fiction and non-fiction.</i></p> <p><i>Example: The movie <u>Titanic</u> is fiction though the setting is based on historical events.</i></p> <p><i>This makes the movie <u>Titanic</u> historical fiction.</i></p>	<p>10. Know literary terms: setting, plot, characterization, mood, literature genres (history, fiction, fable, poetry, non-fiction, etc. . .) Know forms of informational text: - almanac, Internet, encyclopedia, periodical, biography, autobiography, etc. . . . Best strategy is to know the definitions of all literary terms and examples.</p>
<p><u>11. Summarizing</u></p> <p><i>In fiction, the title is not usually helpful in summarizing as it is often a creative interpretation of the story.</i></p>	<p>11. Be able to state main idea in one sentence. Look for overall purpose and author's intent. Avoid details. Strategies for "understanding main idea" (see #1 above) may help with summarizing.</p>
<p><u>12. Understanding Sequence</u></p> <p><i>Passages with sequencing are often letters, stories, poetry, persuasive essays, expository essays, directions, journals, newspaper articles, etc...</i></p>	<p>12. Look for the order of events. Words such as next, then, first, second, afterwards, dates etc. . . Can be a timeline, day, ordinal, chronological, alphabetical, numerical formats, etc. Also, be able to work BACKWARDS with sequences. Be able to piece events backwards to find the origin of the sequence. Use similar skills as CAUSE and EFFECT.</p>
<p><u>13. Interpreting Figurative Language</u></p> <p><i>Personification- elementary example: Mickey Mouse.</i></p> <p><i>"The leaves danced and flitted along the sidewalk" is a more advanced example.. It implies the day is breezy; however, "dancing" is a human trait.</i></p>	<p>13. <u>Best strategy is to define and give an example of each:</u> onomatopoeia, metaphor, simile, irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, personification, imagery, and idioms.</p>
<p><u>14. Understanding Meaning and Context</u></p> <p><i>Example: I did not want to be in the school play; however, to <u>appease</u> my mother, I signed up for auditions anyway.</i></p> <p><i>What does appease mostly likely mean in this passage?</i></p>	<p>14. Use context clues to figure out the meaning of a new WORD or CONCEPT. Key words: <i>such as, also, like, and same as</i>. Read the sentences BEFORE and AFTER a new word or idea. Base the meaning from the text, NOT your opinion. Break a new word up by it's word parts to look for familiar words you already know. Replace the new word with a synonym. ASK: Where have you possibly heard the new word before? How was it used?</p>