

TYPES OF READING AND REASONING QUESTIONS

- 1. Questions that ask about the main idea of a passage.** These are a part of your basic understanding of the selection. Questions may refer to the main idea or general concept of the text or the author's primary purpose in writing. Questions of this type often make use of a paraphrase or restatement of the passage

Stem Phrases:

...primary purpose of the passage...
...is the principal topic of the passage...
...best title for the selection...
...author primarily concerned with...

Questions to ask yourself:

What/who is the entire passage about?
What does the author want you to do, believe or understand? (What is the author doing in this passage?)
What is the author primarily concerned with?
Why did the author write this?

- 2. Questions that ask about the supporting ideas presented in a passage.** It is important to differentiate between main ideas and supporting details as you read. Questions are usually concerned with information explicitly stated in the text.

Stem Phrases:

...according to the passage...
...fact supports the author's...
...supported by info from the passage...
...would answer the following question...
...author asserts that...
...author mentions all of the following except...
...mentions as evidence...

Questions to ask yourself:

What specific facts or opinions are used to clarify or prove the main thought?
What is the precise meaning of a word as used in the passage?

- 3. Questions that ask about the logical structure of the passage.** You must analyze and evaluate the organization and logic of the text. This is the third component to a basic understanding of the material. Think of the writer as architect or construction worker and try to discover how the argument or story was built.

Stem Phrases:

...best describes the organization of the last par...
...which argument does the author use to...

...author develops the passage primarily by...

Questions to ask yourself:

What cues to sequence and meaning does the author give?

What structure does the author use: cause and effect, chronological order, problem-solution, etc?

- 4. Questions that ask how information given in a passage can be applied to a context outside the passage itself.** These questions ask you to discern the relationship between the author's example and another hypothetical or new situation. You are asked to recognize similar ideas the author would probably agree with, ideas not explicitly taken from the passage. Try to look at it from the writer's point-of-view.

Stem Phrases:

...would be of least concern to author...

...is most probable that....

...from the facts we conclude that...

...which passage would be similar in purpose...

...would not be a definition...

...based on the text you would expect...

...author would agree with...

Questions to ask yourself:

How can conclusions about the passage be applied to new situations?

- 5. Questions that ask for inferences based on information presented in a passage.** Can you recognize ideas the author would agree with, ideas that go beyond the literal meaning of the text? You may be asked to find the opposite of what is stated by the author, to identify the meaning of a figurative passage, to find the cause for explicitly stated effects.

Stem Phrases:

...inferred from the passage that...

...the author views...

...author most likely agrees...

...contrasts X with Y to show...

...best solution to the issues...

...best criticism of author's argument...

...assumptions of the author...

...uses quote in order to...

Questions to ask yourself:

What conclusions can be drawn from the passage based on generalizations not explicitly stated in the passage?

What is the attitude of the author toward the subject matter of the passage?

- 6. Questions that ask about the style and tone of a passage.** These deal mainly with language, with choice of words and with the ideas expressed through these verbal symbols. You may be asked to make deductions about the author or about the intended audience. Many of these questions can be considered inferential ones.

Stem Phrases:

...the author views the idea...

...the term X refers to which of the following...

...passage would appear in ...(publication)

...info most relevant to...

...author's attitude...

Questions to ask yourself

What is the attitude of the author toward the subject?

What are the connotations of this word?

What is your personal reaction to this passage?