

Basic Skills - Reading Comprehension Subtest Information

Description of the Reading Comprehension Subtest:

The skills addressed in this subarea require demonstration of literal, inferential, and critical reading skills in a variety of written materials- including college-level tests and original source documents - in the areas of physical and life sciences, humanities and fine arts, and the social and behavioral sciences.

Standards Involved in Reading Comprehension Subtest:

Standard 1: Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.

a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:

Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or words with multiple meanings.

Recognize the correct use of commonly misused pairs (e.g., affect/effect) in a passage. Determine the meaning of figurative or colloquial language in a passage.

Identify appropriate synonyms or antonyms for words in a passage.

b. Descriptive Statements for Standard 1 & ICTS Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test questions reflecting the descriptive statements:

Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or words with multiple meanings.

QUESTION 13

QUESTION 25

Recognize the correct use of commonly misused pairs (e.g., affect/effect) in a passage.

QUESTION 37

Determine the meaning of figurative or colloquial language in a passage.

QUESTION 7

QUESTION 38

Identify appropriate synonyms or antonyms for words in a passage.

QUESTION 1

QUESTION 31

QUESTION 19

QUESTION 43

Standard 2: Understand the main idea and supporting details in written material.

a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:

Identify the stated main idea of a paragraph or passage.

Establish the sequence of events or steps presented in a passage.

Recognize information that supports, illustrates, or elaborates the main idea of a paragraph or a passage.

Identify the meaning of a figurative expression in a passage.

b. Descriptive Statements for Standard 2 & ICTS Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test questions reflecting the descriptive statements:

Identify the stated main idea of a paragraph or passage.

QUESTION 2

QUESTION 26

Establish the sequence of events or steps presented in a passage.

QUESTION 20

QUESTION 32

Recognize information that supports, illustrates, or elaborates the main idea of paragraph or a passage.

QUESTION 8

QUESTION 14

QUESTION 22

Identify the meaning of a figurative expression in a passage.

QUESTION 44

Standard 3: Apply skills of inference and interpretation to a variety of written materials.

a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:

Recognize a writer's implied purpose for writing (e.g., to persuade, to describe).

Identify the statement that best expresses the implied main idea of a paragraph or passage.

Recognize implied cause -and-effect relationships in a passage.

Interpret the content, word choice and phrasing of a passage to determine a writer's opinions, point of view, or position on an issue.

b. Descriptive Statements for Standard 3 & ICTS Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test questions reflecting the descriptive statements:

Recognize a writer's implied purpose for writing (e.g., to persuade, to describe).

QUESTION 3

QUESTION 21

QUESTION 33

Identify the statement that best expresses the implied main idea of a paragraph or passage.

QUESTION 9

QUESTION 45

Recognize implied cause -and-effect relationships in a passage.

QUESTION 27

Interpret the content, word choice and phrasing of a passage to determine a writer's opinions, point of view, or position on an issue.

QUESTION 10

QUESTION 39

Standard 4: Analyze relationships among ideas in written material.

a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:

Recognize similarities and differences among ideas in a passage.
Analyze relationships between ideas in opposition (e.g., pro and con).
Select solutions to problems based on information presented in written material.
Draw conclusions from information stated or implied in a passage.

b. Descriptive Statements for Standard 4 & ICTS Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test questions reflecting the descriptive statements:

Recognize similarities and differences among ideas in a passage.

QUESTION 16

Analyze relationships between ideas in opposition (e.g., pro and con).

QUESTION 40

QUESTION 46

Select solutions to problems based on information presented in written material.

QUESTION 34

Draw conclusions from information stated or implied in a passage.

QUESTION 4

QUESTION 15

QUESTION 28

Standard 5: Use critical reasoning skills to evaluate written material.

a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:

Recognize stated or implied assumptions on which the validity of an argument depends.
Determine the relevance of specific facts, examples, or graphic data to a writer's argument.
Recognize fallacies in the logic of a writer's argument.
Recognize qualifying language and distinguish between fact and opinion in written material.
Assess the credibility, objectivity, or bias of the author of a passage or the author's sources.

b. Descriptive Statements for Standard 5 & ICTS Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test questions reflecting the descriptive statements:

Recognize stated or implied assumptions on which the validity of an argument depends.

QUESTION 17

QUESTION 23

QUESTION 29

QUESTION 41

Determine the relevance of specific facts, examples, or graphic data to a writer's argument.

QUESTION 47

Recognize fallacies in the logic of a writer's argument.

QUESTION 5

Recognize qualifying language and distinguish between fact and opinion in written material.

QUESTION 11

QUESTION 35

Assess the credibility, objectivity, or bias of the author of a passage or the author's sources.

Standard 6: Apply skills for outlining and summarizing written materials and interpreting

information presented in graphs or tables.

a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:

Organize the main ideas in a passage into an outline or another form of graphic or tabular organization.

Identify an accurate summary of a passage.

Interpret information presented in charts, graphs, or tables.

b. Descriptive Statements for Standard 6 & ICTS Basic Skills Diagnostic Practice Test questions reflecting the descriptive statements:

Organize the main ideas in a passage into an outline or another form of graphic or tabular organization.

QUESTION 6

QUESTION 12

QUESTION 24

QUESTION 30

Identify an accurate summary of a passage.

QUESTION 18

QUESTION 36

QUESTION 42

QUESTION 48

Interpret information presented in charts, graphs, or tables.

The consensus of reading comprehension research points to the study of what good readers do when confronted with new text. A recommended curriculum for comprehension may focus on understanding the behavior of these good readers and translate that behavior into strategies that can be taught to struggling readers.

Expert, thoughtful readers are believed to do the following:

- Use existing knowledge to make sense of new text
- Monitor their comprehension throughout the reading process
- Repair their comprehension once they realize it has gone awry
- Determine what is important in the texts they read
- Synthesize information when they read
- Constantly draw inferences during and after reading
- Ask questions

(P. David Pearson, Laura R. Roehler, Janice A. Dole, & Gerald G. Duffy)

To support students who are preparing to take or retake this test, the teaching of reading comprehension strategies may provide an adaptable, conscious plan for grappling with complex texts and questions. These strategies complement the types of questions that were

posed on the diagnostic test and if practiced frequently, should provide our students with tools to perform competently. Our aim is for most of these activities to become part of a pattern of thinking that can be accessed when needed.

Strategies

Think Alouds: use this to showcase how an expert reader is engaging the text; what connections are being made, how is confusion dealt with; recognize a purpose for reading, make predictions as one reads, “think while reading” and show what you are thinking about and if problematic, how will things be resolved; often this is the only way a novice reader of difficult text can understand what should be done as one reads

Informational Text Structure: display expository text structure and present cues used by writers when “building” text; helpful with identification and retention of information; when teaching, combine use of graphic organizers with text structure; see example below

Example

5 types of nonfiction organizational patterns and suggested graphic organizers

Description (use “sunburst” or semantic web)

Sequence (use staircase or ladder to show progression)

Comparison (use Venn Diagram)

Cause/Effect (use fishbone diagram)

Problem/Solution (use side by side boxes connected by arrows to show continuity)

Graphic Organizers/Visual Representation: demonstrate how to display one’s thinking during reading; can be helpful with recall and clarification of information; encourage struggling readers to visualize descriptions, create mental time lines, etc., as they read lengthy text; semantic mapping and feature analysis are very appropriate for strengthening vocabulary competence with test synonym and “in context” questions

Summarization: show how to synthesize information as it is read with a specific strategy; some summary activities may be engaging and enjoyable while helping students to “shrink” text yet leave the essence there e.g., students are asked to write a classified ad

whereby each word has a price attached so cost of what is to be said becomes a factor; another standard example is listed below

Example

5 step process for creating a summary

- 1. Delete Irrelevant Information.**
- 2. Delete redundant Information.**
- 3. Create a superordinate label for a list of things or actions (e.g., fruit for apples, bananas, pears, oranges and strawberries).**
- 4. Try to locate topic sentences for paragraphs and use them in your summary when appropriate.**
- 5. Invent topic sentences when you are unable to locate them.**

Outlining can be taught as an extension of a strong summarizing process.

(based on work by P. David Pearson, Laura R. Roehler, Janice A. Dole, & Gerald G. Duffy)

Questioning: help students to understand that the strategy, *Question - Answer Relationship (QAR)* is a valuable tool for students to identify types of questions and then, know what to do to best answer them; *ReQuest* is a strategy that offers good practice asking original questions of new text; the thinking being that if text is read with the purpose of asking questions, comprehension may be stronger; see *QAR* example below

Example

The Four Types of QARs

Right There Questions

Think and Search Questions

Author and Me Questions

On My Own Questions

Based on the work of Taffy E. Raphael (1982. 1986)

