

READING COMPREHENSION

Reading Comprehension is a test of your ability to read and understand unfamiliar materials and to answer questions about them

What kinds of writing do the passages contain?

The passage in the examination will include one of each of the following:

Factual Passage e.g. instructions, description, (report on science).

Discursive Passage: Involving opinion e.g. argumentative, persuasive or interpretative text.

Literary Passage: Extract from fiction, drama, poetry, essay or biography.

Question formats: A variety of questions are used in order to test different reading skills some of the most common ones are:

1. Multiple choice questions.
2. Main theme of the passage.
3. Infer /Imply questions.
4. Choosing from a heading bank for paragraphs or sections of the test.
5. Searching meaning of the words and phrases.
6. Expect/No questions.

Some of the most common reading skills and the question formats in which these skills are used are as follow:

1.

Reading Skills: Skimming and Scanning.

Question format: Main Theme/Detailed Information Questions.

Skimming: It means reading very quickly. It involves selective reading of the most important parts. It helps to get a general idea of what the text is about.

Scanning: It involves scanning of the complete passage for important information like dates, places or required data.

2.

Reading Skill: Understanding the Global meaning of a text.

Question format: Paragraph headings.

Writers make use of paragraphs to divide a text into manageable sections for their readers. Each paragraph usually includes one main idea, which is then explored and developed, using examples, additional information, and so on. Being able to recognize the main idea in each paragraph, and understand how it relates to the overall meaning of the passage, is an important reading skill.

3.

Reading Skill: Identifying attitude and making inferences.

Question format: Multiple choice questions.

Reading comprehensions sometimes test whether or not you are able to identify the writer's attitude, and whether you are able to make inferences from what is stated or implied in the text. These are high level reading skills, and consequently the most common question type is the multiple choice question which offers a number of possible interpretations and asks you to select the correct one.

4.

Reading Skill: Understanding Unknown Words.

Question format: Word meaning questions.

You may not understand all the words in the reading passage. Faced with an unknown word, some readers panic and believe that they will not be able to answer the questions. Remember, however, that you often do not need to understand every word to carry out the required tasks.

If it is essential to know the meaning of an unfamiliar word in order to complete the task, you should first check whether the word is defined in a glossary at the end of the passage.

It is possible to guess the meaning from the context. One way of guessing is to use your knowledge of the possible relationships among words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. The word you do not understand may relate to other words in the passage which you do understand.

10 GOLDEN RULES FOR RC

1. The passages are the ***least important part of every RC***.
2. Begin by reading what you need. Do a topic search to determine:
 - The author's point.
 - The author's tone.
 - The passage layout.
3. The questions are not presented in order of difficulty.
4. Translate the questions in your own words, to understand what you are being asked.
5. Put your finger on the answer. Go back to the passage and find the answer to each specific question.
6. Use line references and lead words to help you find the answers. Always read five lines above and five lines below the line reference or the lead words.

7. Answer the questions in your own words before you read answer choices. In this way you can avoid incorrect answer choices by knowing what the answer is before you read any of the choices.
8. Use **Process of Elimination (POE)** to get rid of incorrect answer choices. Cross out incorrect choices as you solve the question. If you don't cross out incorrect choices, you'll waste time and energy rereading wrong answer choices.
9. Eliminate answer choices that have extreme wording (e.g. must, etc.) or violate common sense.
10. Be careful on **Except/Least/Not** questions. Correct answer is one that is '**not**' true. Use True/False technique. Always attempt them at last.

Directions: The passages below are followed by questions based on their content. Answer the questions on the basis of what is stated or implied in the passages.

PASSAGE – I

In comparison to the War for Independence, the Civil War had a more profound impact on the life of the American people, pioneering much of its political and economic change. During the Reconstruction period, which lasted from the surrender of the Confederate forces in 1865 to the withdrawal of the last Union occupation troops in 1877, the South was the scene of a bitter struggle regarding its status in the federal government and the plans for its rebuilding. From the Reconstruction period emerged new patterns of government, economy, and society that transformed the southern states. As for the readmission of Confederate states to the Union, the approaches of Congress and of Presidents Lincoln and Andrew Johnson differed so widely that a rift between the executive and the legislative branches of the government occurred that was unprecedented in the nation's history.

War is destructive, and the American Civil War was no exception to the rule. Confederate soldiers, returning home after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee, found destruction, poverty and despair.

Regarding the reconstruction of the South, the North faced a remarkable challenge. It had to address the economic chaos, the social confusion and political instability that were continuously threatening the stability of the nation. From Virginia to Texas, farmhouses, barns, mills, bridges and railroad tracks had been destroyed. Towns had been looted and their inhabitants driven out.

Business was at a standstill. Plantation owners were at a loss, for they did not have the means to borrow the capital for agricultural equipment to replace the slave labor.

The War uprooted the social structure of the South. Bankers, merchants and small farmers were quickly replacing plantation owners. The changing status of blacks, as they made the transition from slaves to wage earners, created serious social tensions between them and whites. The collapse of the Confederacy halted all political processes and consequently, state and local governments had to be reorganized. In the nation's capital and throughout the North, political leaders differed sharply as to the process of normalization with the new state governments of the South. Some members of Congress argued that secession was illegal and that the South had to pay a heavy price for its crime. Influential Republican leaders such as Thaddeus Stevens and Benjamin Wade proposed that the South be treated as "conquered provinces." Eager to strengthen the nation and help the South gain its former status in the Union, President Lincoln brushed aside the "conquered provinces theory" and proposed in 1863 the Ten Percent Plan which pardoned all Southerners except for high officials and those who had left the US government or military service to aid the Confederacy, and which authorized the establishment of a new government for any state if one-tenth of its qualified voters of 1860 would take the required loyalty oath.

1. The main purpose of the passage is to
 - (1) introduce the American Civil War and its aftermath
 - (2) depict the Reconstruction phase of the South
 - (3) explain how the Civil War revolutionized the American political and cultural scenes
 - (4) discuss the policies adopted by the North regarding the defeated South
2. The Reconstruction period lasted from
 - (1) 1856 – 1877
 - (2) 1865 – 1878
 - (3) 1865 – 1877
 - (4) 1865 – 1887
3. The word 'struggle' in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - (1) chaos
 - (2) strife
 - (3) collision
 - (4) quarrel
4. The passage supports which of the following statements?
 - (1) President Lincoln and President Johnson were leaders of the North and South respectively.
 - (2) General Robert E. Lee was head of the Union forces.
 - (3) Congress was eager to admit the South back to the Union.
 - (4) The Civil War ended in 1865.
5. The word 'remarkable' in the passage can be best replaced by
 - (1) formidable
 - (2) impossible
 - (3) hopeless
 - (4) desperate
6. It can be inferred from the passage that before the Civil War, the South
 - (1) used both human labor and machinery
 - (2) depended solely on slave labor
 - (3) imported overseas labor
 - (4) in addition to slave labor, hired workers at minimum wage
7. According to the passage, President Lincoln proposed the Ten Percent Plan in order to
 - (1) convince Northern politicians to integrate the South back into the Union
 - (2) demonstrate to the South that the North was in full command
 - (3) help the South integrate itself into the Union
 - (4) punish high Confederate officers and Union members who had helped the South
8. Which of the following did not support the "conquered provinces" theory?
 - (1) Wade
 - (2) Republican leaders
 - (3) Stevens
 - (4) Lincoln
9. It can be inferred from the "conquered provinces" theory that
 - (1) the North was pleased to admit the South back to the Union
 - (2) the North was reluctant to grant legitimacy to the South
 - (3) the North wanted the South to secede from the Union
 - (4) the North sought to pardon the South
10. The word "Confederacy" in the passage refers to
 - (1) the North
 - (2) the thirteen original states
 - (3) the South
 - (4) Virginia, Texas, Ohio and Pennsylvania

PASSAGE – II

Visitors to a zoo are always amused by the sight of chimpanzees. No other animal attracts so much laughter. Why should this be? Are they really such clowns, or does their appearance make them ridiculous? The hilarity is perhaps a camouflage for quite different feelings – a nervous reaction, caused by the marked resemblance between human beings and chimpanzees.

It is not only visitors to the zoo who are fascinated and uneasy in the presence of chimpanzees. The same is true of scientists. The more they learn about these great apes, the deeper our identity crisis seems to become. The resemblance between humans and chimpanzees is not only external. If we look straight into a chimpanzee's eyes, an intelligent, self-assured personality looks back at us. If they are animals, what must be?

A whole series of facts are now known which reduce the gap between humans and animals. Gordon Gallup has shown that great apes recognize themselves in the mirror. Monkeys and other animals lack this form of self-awareness, who regard their reflection as if it were someone else. Through ingenious intelligence tests, Wolfgang Kohler concluded that they are capable of solving new problems on the basis of a sudden realization of cause and effect (the aha! experience). Jane Goodall saw wild chimpanzees using self-made tools. She also saw that they hunted, ate meat, resorted to warfare to extend their territory and were even capable of cannibalism. The husband-and-wife team of R. Allen and Beatrix Gardner succeeded in teaching chimpanzees a large amount of symbols in the form of hand gestures. These studies revealed the significant conclusion that the ape mind was accessible to man.

However impressive all these discoveries may be, one important link is still missing: the social organization. There is evidence that chimpanzees lead a highly subtle and complex social life, but this picture is still vague. This is due to the fact that it is impossible to follow social processes in every detail in the jungle. Presently, there is one place in the world where such a comprehensive study of chimpanzees is possible. This study is the result of careful observation of the chimpanzees at Burgers' Zoo in Arnhem, Netherlands. It proves what has been suspected all along: that the social organization of chimpanzees is almost too human to be true.

11. What is the subject of the passage?
 - (1) Scientific studies on chimpanzees
 - (2) Comparative studies on humans and chimpanzees
 - (3) Current trends in the study of chimpanzees
 - (4) Introduction to the latest study on chimpanzees
12. The word 'regard' in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - (1) believe
 - (2) think
 - (3) ignore
 - (4) consider
13. The passage mentions the following researchers EXCEPT
 - (1) Goodall
 - (2) Kohler
 - (3) Gallagher
 - (4) Gallup
14. The passage implies that before Goodall's research, experts believed that
 - (1) chimpanzees made tools
 - (2) chimpanzees shared food
 - (3) chimpanzees were complete vegetarians
 - (4) chimpanzees recognized their reflection

15. Which of the following is an example of the expression aha! experience?
(1) Fire : heat (2) Sail : boat (3) Chicken : egg (4) Sun : moon
16. This passage is most likely to appear in which of the following publications?
(1) Newspaper
(2) Academic journal of anthropology
(3) Introduction to college textbook on life sciences
(4) Journal of education

ANSWERS

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|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (3) | 2. (3) | 3. (2) | 4. (4) | 5. (1) | 6. (2) | 7. (3) | 8. (4) |
| 9. (2) | 10. (3) | 11. (2) | 12. (4) | 13. (3) | 14. (3) | 15. (1) | 16. (2) |