

Multiple-choice comprehension

Responding to the questions

- ❑ **I start with the passage.** I read the whole passage slowly and carefully before even glancing at the questions. If it's a fictional story, I try my best to imagine the story and empathise with the characters; if it's non-fiction, I try my best to evaluate the main ideas and what the piece is really about.
- ❑ **I read the question carefully.** I read the question at least two times and work out exactly what it is asking before I look at any of the options.
- ❑ I highlight key words and phrases. I highlight key information that I have to find in the passage. I underline words in the question like not, except, always, never and most likely.
- ❑ **I use the line references.** When a question points to a line or paragraph, I focus on that part of the passage only.
- ❑ **Skimming.** I can skim the passage with speed, reading in a zig-zag pattern to quickly identify the section in the passage which is relevant to the question.
- ❑ **I skim, then scan.** I skim the text to find the key words or phrases to zoom in on, then scan that part very slowly and carefully to assess the different options given.

Types of questions

- ❑ **Hunter.** I find the exact fact the question asks for, and I remember the correct option often rephrases words from the passage.
- ❑ **Detective.** I read between the lines to work out feelings, motives and things the text only implies, and I reject options that add ideas that aren't in the passage.
- ❑ **Teacher.** For a question asking for the definition of a word, I pick the meaning that fits this passage, not just the most familiar dictionary meaning.
- ❑ **Writing techniques.** I can recognise the device a writer is using and pick the option that best describes its effect on the reader. I can also correctly identify all of the techniques in the acronym SHAMPOO.
- ❑ **Fact and opinion.** I separate objective fact from opinion, especially in non-fiction and persuasive passages.
- ❑ **The main idea.** I can step back and evaluate the author's overall purpose for writing, and I consider what they want readers to think and feel by the end of the passage.

Strategies

- ❑ **I use the process of elimination.** I rule out the options that are clearly wrong so I'm left with the two or three which are most likely to be correct.
- ❑ **I test the final two.** When two options both look good, I check each against the passage one last time.
- ❑ **I ask which option is best supported.** I compare the two options which I think are most likely and evaluate which one has more supporting evidence or is most strongly supported by the passage.
- ❑ **I reverse the question.** If no option stands out, I turn the question around and ask which options have the least supporting evidence, and rule those out first.
- ❑ **Synonyms.** The answer is rarely written word for word in the passage, so I scan for synonyms of the key words in the question and the options.
- ❑ **I never leave a blank.** I know marks are not taken away for wrong answers, so I make an educated guess even if I'm unsure of the answer.



Exam technique

- ❑ **I mark the answer sheet cleanly.** I fill the lozenge with one firm pencil line, mark only one answer per question, and rub out any changed answer completely so my sheet can be read easily.
- ❑ **I keep my place.** Every few questions I check that the question number in the booklet matches the row on my answer sheet, especially after skipping a question.
- ❑ **I work to time.** I work out roughly how long I have per question from the number of questions and the total amount of time available, and I keep an eye on the clock throughout the exam.
- ❑ **I keep to one minute.** As a rule of thumb, I spend no more than a minute on any question.
- ❑ **I move on when I'm stuck.** I go with my instinct or take a best guess, put a light mark next to the question and come back to it at the end.
- ❑ **Final review.** I use any spare time to return to the questions I flagged, make sure no answer is left blank, and I check I've only chosen one option for each question.

