

Reading Checklist

by Daniel Sansoni

The Basics

- *Pay attention to the time* – do not spend more than 20 minutes on a passage. If a question is taking you too long, move on to the next question because you will probably get that question wrong anyway.
- *Read all instructions carefully* – the question may be slightly different from similar looking ones you have practised. Pay extra attention to word limits.
- *Watch your spelling* – you will be penalised if you spell the answer incorrectly. If you are not sure of the spelling, copy the word from the passage.
- *Remember what you have read* – often the answer to one question comes from exactly the same part of the passage as the answer to another question. If you remember what you have already read you will save yourself a lot of time.
- *Mark the paper* – use a pen to circle keywords in the question and underline the answers in the passage. You will often need to go back to the same sentences, so mark them well.
- *Always work from the question to the passage* – in order to save time circle keywords, then scan the passage for them. This way you do not need to read parts of the passage that do not contain answers.
- *Do not worry about new vocabulary unless you have to* – only focus on unknown vocab if it must be understood to answer the question. Your knowledge of grammar will tell you how a specific word is related to the answer. In some cases the answer will be a new word, but you will not need to know its meaning; just that it is the answer.

The Specifics

Basic Procedure

1. *Read the title* – it gives you valuable information about the passage and what to expect.
2. *Quickly skim the passage* – find out if there are any *sub-headings, charts or tables*. Take note if there are a lot of *dates* or other *numbers*, or *names* or words in *italics* or *bold* in the text. Be aware of *how long* the passage is.
3. *Look at the questions* – work out what types of questions there are and how many of each type there are. *Read the instructions*.

Looking for Specific Information

- *Circle locator keywords in question* – *dates, numbers, names, bold, italics, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs...* in that order. Do not circle words which are likely to occur frequently in the passage.

→ *scan text for keywords*. Once found, circle in passage and locate answer in surrounding sentence(s).

Summaries & Gapfills

- *As above, but check to see what part of speech is required* – this may save you time. You should be able to guess many of these answers.

Sentence Head & Tail Matches

- *As with other specific information searches, but use your knowledge of grammar to eliminate impossible tail alternatives*.

Flow Diagrams

- *Identify locator keywords and scan the passage for them* – pay attention to the verbs and follow the process that is being described by reading backwards and forwards until you find the answers. The arrows in the diagram are represented in the text by words which describe cause or change, like: *consequence, resulting in, leads to, causing...etc...*, plus linking words, like: *hence, therefore* OR sequencing words, like: *next, then, first, second...etc...*. Be prepared for results to have multiple causes.

Yes/No/Not Given

- *Circle locator keywords* – find relevant sentences in the passage. Return to question and *circle qualifier keywords*. Then compare the *qualifiers* in the question with any that might be in the sentence(s) in the passage. If the qualifier in the question is stronger than that in the passage, the answer is *No*. If it is weaker the answer is *Yes*. If there is not enough information to say if the statement is true of the passage, the answer is *Not Given*.
- *Some common qualifiers*

Very Strong	Strong	Weak
Invariably	Most	Sometimes/ some
Always/ All	The majority	Often
Never/ None	More often than not	Occasionally
	Usually	
	Tends to/ tendency to	
	Rarely/ seldom	

Headings Matches

- *Read the headings very carefully* – think about the meaning of the heading and what kinds of information would be contained in a paragraph with this heading. *Then* read the paragraphs/sections, comparing the information contained in the paragraphs with what is suggested by each heading. If every aspect of the heading is covered by the information in the paragraph, then that is most likely the correct heading. It may help to identify the *topic sentence*, which is usually the first, second or last sentence in the paragraph.
- *Do not spend more than 12 minutes on a Headings Match.*
- *Questions that come after a Headings Match may come from any part of the text in any order.*