



The RITES FACTS

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Be Prepared: Recognize What You Will Be Asked in the Reading Section of the SAT

When tackling the reading portion of the SAT, it is important to know the types of questions you will be asked, so you can read the passage actively and recognize what to look for while reading. There are typically five reading passages, each with nine to eleven questions. Keep these question types in mind while reading the passages:

- **Main Idea:** Look in the first paragraph, where the main idea can usually be found in the first or last sentence. You should underline phrases such as “primary purpose” or “primarily concerned with.” *Example: The central claim of the passage is that...* or “*The main idea of the first paragraph is that...*”.
- **Details:** Correct answers to detail questions may be hard to find because they have been reworded. Pay attention to how information can be stated differently. *Example: “The author indicates...” or “According to the passage...”*.
- **Inference:** These questions usually have the words “infer”, “imply” or “suggest” in them. An inference is a logical conclusion based on evidence given in the passage. *Example: “What does the author suggest when he states....”*.
- **Evidence:** These often follow detail or inference questions and ask you to cite a portion of the passage to justify the answer in the previous question. *Example: “Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?”*
- **Data Graphics:** Make connections between information presented in tables or charts and the passage. *Example: “Is the author’s main argument supported by the data in the table?”*
- **Words in Context:** Finding what a word or phrase means in the context of the passage. These questions do not test your vocabulary as much as they test your ability to understand what the words mean in context. Read the entire sentence, and the sentence before and after, as the surrounding information may help you determine meaning to words you may not know. *Example: As used in line 16, “intact” mostly means...*.
- **Word Choice:** Look at how words affect the passage. Make note of words (particularly strong verbs and adjectives) that indicate tone. *Example: “The author uses the word ‘___’ to emphasize...”*.
- **Point of View:** These ask you to describe the author’s opinion, tone or attitude toward the topic. These type of questions are similar to the main idea, as you need to understand the overall point of the passage and consider the perspective of the author. *Example: “Which of the following statements would the author most likely agree with?”*
- **Purpose:** Go beyond the main idea/content with questions that ask about the author’s intent in crafting the passage to communicate ideas, arguments and/or emotions. *Example: “One of the main purposes of the last paragraph is for the author to...”*.
- **Structure:** Summarize the organization of the passage. *Example: “Which choice best reflects the developmental pattern of the passage?”*