



STRATEGIES FOR
THE SAT READING
SECTION



Understand the Reading Section's Format

- Understand the timing: You have 60 minutes to answer 47 questions based on 5 passages.
- Be familiar with the four genres: literature, science, history, and social science.
 - Literature passage will always come first.
 - There will be one science, one history, and one social science. One of these three genres will be repeated in the form of a double passage.
- Be familiar with the types of questions:
 - Big Picture
 - Little Picture/Function
 - Inference
 - Vocabulary in Context
 - Author Technique
 - Evidence Support
 - Data Interpretation

Reading Passages Strategically – Three Methods

- Method #1 - Skim the Passage First - To skim effectively, just read the introductory paragraph, conclusion paragraph, and first and last sentences of each body paragraph.
- Method #2 - Skip Straight to the Questions – Allow the questions to guide your read.
- Method #3 – Read the passage in full. If you're both a quick and thorough reader, you might be able to pull this off without any problems

Hybrid of Methods Two and Three

- Take a quick glance at the one or most often two vocabulary in context questions.

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As used in line 2, “station” most nearly means

- A) region.
- B) studio.
- C) district.
- D) rank.

Passage 1

Heaven has appointed to one sex the superior, and to the other the subordinate station, and this without any reference to the character or conduct of either. It is therefore as much for the dignity as it is for the interest of females, in all respects to conform to the duties of this relation. . . . But while woman holds a subordinate relation in society to the other sex, it is not because it was designed that her duties or her influence should be any the less important, or

Don't Ignore Passage Introductions

- Introductory blurb contains valuable information, and if you skip it, you could miss out on easy points.
- At the very least, passage introductions give you context for what you're about to read so you aren't too confused about who's who or where the passage is set.

Questions 1-10 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from MacDonald Harris, *The Balloonist*. ©2011 by The Estate of Donald Heiney. During the summer of 1897, the narrator of this story, a fictional Swedish scientist, has set out for the North Pole in a hydrogen-powered balloon.

Look for Direct Evidence

- Though questions on SAT reading may sometimes seem subjective, the reality is that **you should always be able to find direct evidence in the passage or chart you are referencing to support your answers.**
- Even inference questions, which ask you to look beyond the literal facts in the passage, will be backed up by logical deductions that can be made from the evidence that is presented.

Tackling the Evidence Based Questions

1

Over the course of the passage, the narrator's attitude shifts from

- A) fear about the expedition to excitement about it.
- B) doubt about his abilities to confidence in them.
- C) uncertainty of his motives to recognition of them.
- D) disdain for the North Pole to appreciation of it.

2

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 10-12 ("For . . . moment")
- B) Lines 21-25 ("Yet . . . will")
- C) Lines 42-44 ("And . . . stand on")
- D) Lines 56-57 ("What . . . myself")

3

As used in lines 1-2, "not readily verifiable" most

- D) emphasize the length of time during which the narrator has prepared for his expedition.

5

The narrator indicates that many previous explorers seeking the North Pole have

- A) perished in the attempt.
- B) made surprising discoveries.
- C) failed to determine its exact location.
- D) had different motivations than his own.

6

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) Lines 20-21 ("Nobody . . . died")
- B) Lines 25-27 ("All . . . out")
- C) Lines 31-34 ("The . . . newspaper")
- D) Lines 51-53 ("Behind . . . bedsteads")

Interact with the Passage - ANNOTATE

- No right or wrong way to annotate
- Research based and proven to improve comprehension
- Underline, circle, symbols
- Write in the margins
 - Key words
 - Phrases
 - BRIEF summaries

Get Interested in the Passage!!!!!!!

- Treat this as a learning experience, not a chore, and you'll find it much easier to remember what happened in the passage.
- If your brain is in “wow, interesting” mode rather than “blah, blah, just have to get to the questions” mode, you'll have a more pleasant experience on the test and a better time answering the questions overall.