

## Reading Exam Skills

By reviewing the types of questions and determining what the question is asking, testers should be able to work out the correct answers. Using the process of elimination and crossing off wrong answers first helps to make the choice simpler.

**Determine Word Meaning:** Use the surrounding sentences to determine the meaning of the words and phrases in the passage. Many of the vocabulary sections will be words with multiple meanings or figurative language. Questions will focus on deciding which answer best fits the word as it is used in the passage, so a thorough reading is essential.

**Understanding Main Idea:** Read the passage as a whole to come up with a main idea that covers the entire passage. After the main idea is found, the rest of the information should support this idea.

**Identify Purpose:** Determine the writer's reason for writing. How does the reader know this? Ask why the writer wrote this particular passage and decide which statement the writer would agree with or what information the writer uses as a basis for their stand.

**Analyze Relationship:** Recognize organizational patterns in writing to determine the difference between the types of essay patterns:

- ✓ Narrative (story)
- ✓ cause and effect (What leads to a cause? or What are the effects of something?)
- ✓ compare and contrast (Find common ground and differences in two events, people, or places)
- ✓ persuasive or argumentative (Defend a position on a question)
- ✓ sequential (Use transitional words to move through time or order)

If asked to classify a passage, explain why the writer chose that style of writing, or to predict the writer's next point, the way the passage is put together can give clues. Transitional words are crucial to this skill, so readers need to ask what words lead from one sentence, example, or paragraph to the next.

**Critical Reasoning:** Identify and assess the overall logic and credibility of the writer.

The steps of critical evaluation:

- 1) Find the main idea
- 2) Identify the underlying argument for that idea
- 3) Find the support for that idea and making sure enough information is given to back up the argument proposed
- 4.) Ask if the writer does a good job of making and supporting the main idea

**Apply Study Skills:** Condense the passage into a brief outline, summary, or chart to organize content. ✓

What are the main ideas in each paragraph?

- ✓ What is the support?
- ✓ Look for internal lists, statistics, or other detailed facts for better understanding. These items support the main idea.