

Module V

ANATOMY OF READING COMPREHENSION AS TESTED ON GMAT, GRE, LSAT



"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, *"it means just what I choose to mean – neither more nor less."*

-- Lewis Carroll in *'Through the looking glass'*.

Logical Conclusion: Humpty Dumpty will not fare well in the Reading Comprehension section.

Reading Comprehension is about your ability to understand information provided in a specific context, and to pick answer choices that will be consistent with the **LITERAL** interpretations of a context specific information provided in the passage and relevant to the question, without embellishing the stated information. You are required to answer all questions strictly on the basis of information stated in the passage, not on the basis of your real-world expectations or knowledge of the matter discussed in the passages.

Our rather blasphemous and libelous reference to Humpty Dumpty is meant to drive home the point that Reading Comprehension (or, for that matter, any aspect of Graduate School Admission Tests) is about your ability to make sure that the wording of answer options is appropriate and consistent with a necessarily valid interpretation of words and phrases. Any creative or liberal interpretation of words and phrases contained in the passage or in the answer options is a sure recipe for disaster. This section of the test is about 'wordsmithing' and about your ability to determine whether an answer option using one set of words is more consistent with a literal interpretation of context-specific information than is another. For example, you will be required to determine whether the author is 'describing' a theory or 'discussing' a theory; or whether the author is providing 'a reason' for something or 'reasons' for something. The bottom line is that you must remain awake and engage in critical parsing of words and phrases in order to determine that the answer option that you are tempted to pick has the right set of words put together in it and does not have even ONE UNACCEPTABLE word or phrase in it.

You will also be required to apply all of the logical reasoning basics that we discussed in Module 4 file when you work on the Reading Comprehension Section. In fact, your ability to identify that which is necessarily implied in an explicitly stated item of information is what is tested in this section.

HOW READING COMPREHENSION IS TESTED ON THE STANDARDIZED TESTS

READING COMPREHENSION section is part of all Graduate and undergraduate school admission tests.

GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) tests Reading Comprehension as part of its Verbal Assessment. Typically, GMAT includes 4 passages, one of which is typically not scored. The comparative Reading is not tested on the GMAT because the computer-adaptive format requires the test-takers to scroll up and down for each question, and scrolling becomes cumbersome for two passages. As to which of the 4 passages is experimental is difficult to tell in the Pearson created GMAT. Usually, the experimental passages are tested early on (usually the first or the second passage, or, occasionally, the third passage) so that 'fatigue' does not become a factor in the selection of answer options.

GRE (Graduate Record Examination) tests Reading Comprehension as part of its Verbal Assessment as well. GRE verbal assessment typically includes 3 passages and 10 questions (about 1/3 of the verbal section). The comparative Reading is not tested on the GRE because of the difficulties associated with scrolling on the computer.

LSAT (LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION TEST) includes one scored section of Reading Comprehension that consists of 4 passages. Effective June 2007 administration, one of the four passages on the LSAT will be replaced by Comparative Reading (explained later in this file). LSAT allows 35 minutes for this section, and typically 24-26 questions are based on the 4 passages.

SAT (SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST) **REASONING TEST** will test Reading Comprehension in the Verbal Assessment area of the test and as part of Critical Reading. Typically, 4 passages are tested, at least one of which involves COMPARATIVE READING. It is not uncommon for the test-takers to get 2 normal passages and two comparative reading passages.

READING COMPREHENSION passages are typically about HISTORY, LANGUAGE, DEMOGRAPHICS, SCIENCE (astronomy, biology, biochemistry, medicine, physics, etc.), LAW, BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, RELIGION, and BOOK REVIEWS. Do not get intimidated by the subject of the passage. The following pages will walk you through the procedure for effectively handling ANY type of passage. Read with expectation as explained and be sure to process the elements of statements as illustrated. You will do just fine. Our introduction to this section and reference to Humpty-Dumpty are meant to underscore the importance of critically parsing words used in the passages and in the answer options. The Anchor-Phrase procedure explained in the following pages has helped thousands of trainees with this section, and made Reading Comprehension arguably the easiest section to deal with.

Now, fasten seat-belts and get ready for the adventure.

Anatomy of Information

The probability of a statement being true is inversely correlated to its information content: the less the information contained in a statement, the higher the probability that the statement may not be disconfirmed.

Consider the following statement: "We will win". The probability of this statement is a near certainty or 1 because we will prevail someday, somewhere (in some activity or game), somehow, given enough time, patience, and resources. The statement begs the question: Win What?

Let us say that we want to qualify the statement and decrease its probability by adding the complement 'the war' and stating 'We will win the war'. Notice that the probability of the new statement is less than that of the first statement because the complement 'restricts' the scope of the winning activity.

Let us say that we want to ADD more information to the second statement and answer the question: "what kind of war?", we might be inclined to state: "We will win the war on Terrorism". Notice that this brand-new statement has significantly reduced probability than even the second statement because the new statement further restricts the scope of the war activity. It is not a war on poverty or on drugs but on terrorism.

Let us say that we want to add another qualifier or complement to the above statement and further decrease its probability by stating the following: "We will win the war on terrorism being waged in Iraq". We have further diminished the probability of information by adding the new qualifier 'in Iraq'.

You get the hang of where we are headed with this line of reasoning, don't you? Technically, the more qualifiers that a statement contains, the more information it contains and the higher the probability that the statement can be verified or disproved. Qualifiers are meant to answer questions such as 'what', 'where', 'when', 'why', 'how' and to 'restrict the scope of statements' by narrowly describing them. If we want to add more information to the above set of statements, we could do so and end up with an information-laden statement such as the one below.

"We will win the war on terrorism being waged in Iraq by March 2007 by surging the troop levels currently deployed there and by installing a stable, functioning, secular, and western-friendly democracy there." Notice that the more qualifiers such as complements and adjectives there are in a statement, the more the statement becomes amenable to critical interpretation and questioning.

Why is this analysis relevant? Because Reading Comprehension is about your ability to process INFORMATION that is essentially a matter of processing the complements and qualifiers contained within a statement. But then, a statement does not exist in a vacuum but in conjunction with other statements within a passage. Therefore, information must be also about CONNECTING ELEMENTS such as CONJUNCTIONS and TRANSITIONAL PHRASES that are used between statements. Conjunctions such as

HOWEVER, YET, BUT, NEVERTHELESS and transitional phrases such as 'in contrast', 'therefore', 'thus', 'rather' must be processed as critical to placing statements within the larger context of what the passage is attempting to state. Also, within a statement, some aspects may be EMPHASIZED using ADVERBIAL qualifiers ("Islamic law SIGNIFICANTLY differs from other sacred laws"). PRONOUNS are frequently used in statements as substitutes for words ("IT is believed to attack an already declining population, not cause the decline itself") and information ("THIS forced the shoguns to turn to city's merchants for raising revenues"). Even some punctuation marks such as colon (:) and semi-colon (;), and parentheses take on significance when used in passages to connect items of information.

TONE OF THE PASSAGE

Therefore, when you 'read' passages, your objective is to 'look for and process information' that is communicated by the qualifiers, complements, connecting elements and phrases, and by the TONE implied in the use of words and phrases, **including Verbs and Nouns**. The tone could be positive, neutral, or negative (as in criticism). As you read through the passage, **actively look for the TONE** implied in the words used. Verbs and Nouns must be processed in terms of whether they connote information that is consequential or inconsequential or neutral. "He was an **artist**" is a statement in which the noun 'artist' is rather neutral and does not have any major 'consequence'. "He as a **genius**", however, is a statement in which the noun '**genius**' appears to have major consequence. "As Governor-General, he **represented** the King" is a sentence in which the verb 'represented' is used rather neutrally or inconsequentially. However, in the sentence, 'Many small businesses have been **devastated** by their reliance on one large company', the verb 'devastated' connotes information having serious consequence or TONE. "He **participated** in a political **campaign**" is a statement that is rather neutral in tone because the noun '**campaign**' or the verb '**participate**' do not connote a strong tone. However, if the statement were to read, 'he was **involved** in a **conspiracy**', then the tone is dramatically different. **Conspiracy** implies that more than one person was involved in the act, and connotes a secret agreement among two or more people to perpetrate a wrongful or unlawful act. The **TONE** here is **consequential** and must be processed. *When you process information, be sure to recognize verbs and nouns that imply information of consequence, and, therefore, a significant TONE.*

TONAL variations are also implied in the QUALIFIERS and COMPLEMENTS. Adjectives and Adverbs also communicate TONAL variations in terms of whether or not the information containing the elements has any consequence. For example, if the passage goes as follows, you should know that the tone is VERY POSITIVE: "The life and career of Miles Davis have been ASTONISHINGLY PRODUCTIVE and NOTEWORTHY. Yet, his GENIUS has not been recognized by some of his ardent critics who view his departure from the genre of traditional Jazz as heretical." Note that words such as 'productive' (preceded by an emphasizing adverb 'astonishingly'), 'noteworthy', and 'genius'

communicate a POSITIVE TONE. Also, we should note that the author's tone toward the ardent critics of Miles Davis is somewhat critical or not positive.

Consider another example:

"Recent years have brought minority-owned businesses in the United States **unprecedented opportunities**—as well as **new and significant risks**." Notice that the tone here is one of concern as evidenced by the use of the qualifiers 'new and significant' before 'risks'.

Consider another example:

"Reform" in America has been **sterile** because it can imagine no change except through the extension of this **metaphor of a race**, wider inclusion of competitors, "a piece of the action," as it were, for the disenfranchised.

Notice that the tone here is critical as evidenced by the use of the word 'sterile' meaning 'unproductive'.

Take a look at a section of another passage:

"**Most economists** in the United States seem **captivated by the spell** of the free market. Consequently, nothing seems good or normal that does not accord with the requirements of the free market. A price that is determined by the seller or, **for that matter**, established by anyone other than the aggregate of consumers seems pernicious. Accordingly, **it requires a major act of will** to think of price-fixing (the determination of prices by the seller) as both "normal" and having a valuable economic function." What kind of tone do we sense here? Critical, of course. How can we tell? Notice that the author is referring to economists as 'captivated by the SPELL of free market'. As professionals, the economists are not supposed to be under the MAGICAL POWER of the free market. Also, notice the reference that they are not READILY PRONE to looking at price-fixing as normal and having an economic function. The tone of the author toward the economists is certainly not positive and one of critical in nature.

Let us take a look at another segment:

"Archaeology as a profession faces two major problems. First, **it is the poorest of the poor**. Only **paltry sums** are available for excavating and even less is available for publishing the results and preserving the sites once excavated. **Yet archaeologists deal with priceless objects every day**. Second, there is the problem of illegal excavation, resulting in museum-quality pieces being sold to the highest bidder." What kind of tone do we sense here? A tone of sympathy and concern for the profession of Archaeology.

Learn to look for and identify the tone as part of processing the information. A good understanding of the TONE of the passage can help you hone in on the correct answer easily. Consider the example of the segment from the passage about 'reform' above. The tone is undoubtedly critical and negative. Let us say that you are asked to deal with a question from the above passage. Take a look at the following:

The author **sets off** the word "Reform" with quotation marks in order to

- (A) emphasize its departure from the concept of settled possessiveness
- (B) show his support for a systematic program of change
- (C) underscore the flexibility and even amorphousness of United States society
- (D) indicate that the term was one of Wilson's favorites
- (E) assert that reform in the United States has not been fundamental

The "Reform" reference suggests that it is not the real reform and the characterization that it is sterile tells us that the author is not positively inclined toward the so-called reform. Notice that the only answer option that contains the critical tone implied in the statement is E. Notice that options such as B, C, and D are easily eliminated in that they carry a positive connotation. Choice A can be eliminated because there is no emphasis provided by the quotation marks. **If anything, the quotation marks imply sarcasm and suggest that the reform is not really reform: it is the so-called reform.**

As you begin to read the passages, learn to look for and identify the TONE implied in the words and phrases used in the statements put together to form the passage. Take a look at a passage in which the first paragraph goes as follows:

"Through the last half century, the techniques used by certain historians of African art for judging the precise tribal origins of African sculptures on the basis of style have been **greatly refined**. **However**, as one recent critic of the historians' classificatory assumptions has put it, the idea that the distribution of a particular style is **necessarily limited** to the area populated by one tribe may be 'a **dreadful oversimplification.. a decided falsification** of the very life of art in Africa.'"

What type of TONE can we identify here? We can identify a CRITICAL tone, chastising the assumptions of 'certain historians' who appear to be using 'greatly refined' techniques. The conjunction HOWEVER implies that the author is about to make a counter-point or a counter-argument or make a statement **in contrast** to the one made in the previous statement.

PAY ATTENTION to the TONE of information as you process the passage and comprehend the idea outlined. **Read with a sense of purpose, and do read to be entertained. If you are actively INVOLVED in looking for these words and phrases of import and in processing the TONAL variations actively, you will not be bored or distracted.** We will discuss more about how to minimize distraction in the following pages.

THE BIG PICTURE OF THE PASSAGE

One of the principal goals when you begin to read a passage is to identify its BIG PICTURE information along with the IMPLIED TONE. The big picture could be anywhere in the passage:

- The big picture or the main idea could be the first sentence of the passage;
- The big picture or the main idea could be anywhere within the first paragraph;
- The big picture or the main idea could be the last sentence of the first paragraph;
- The big picture or the main idea could be the first sentence of the second paragraph;
- The big picture or the main idea could be the first sentence of the last paragraph;
- The big picture or the main idea could be the last sentence of the entire passage.

The passages could be **giant arguments** whose miniature cousins are encountered in Logical and Critical Reasoning Sections of the tests. Just as an argument can start off with its conclusion and go on to lay out the basis for the conclusion, so can the 'giant arguments' advanced by the passages start off with the Conclusion or the Main Idea and go on to explain the basis for that conclusion. Or, an argument could make its conclusion in the middle or in the end. So can the 'giant arguments' that Reading Comprehension passages are.

HOW TO STAVE OFF DISTRACTION?

One of the major frustrations of processing information is DISTRACTION. If the subject of the passage is not 'entertaining' or 'likable', or is outright boring, you tend to wander off and stop processing the specifics of the giant argument. How do you remain focused? Do not indulge in self-fulfilling prophecies: do not say that you do not like scientific passages or technical passages. What else must you do? Read with anticipation. Remember that you are basically looking for information contained in NOUNS, VERBS, QUALIFIERS, COMPLEMENTS, CONJUNCTIONS, and in the **TONE** implied in these elements making up a sentence. Also, be sure to apply the LITERAL meaning of the words and phrases; **do not be creative or illogical.** (If the passage states that the 'algae in coral reef communities produce food by using photosynthesis', do not interpret it to mean that 'if algae did not produce food, the reefs will die' or 'producing food is the main or the only function of algae'.) Look for and process Adjectives, Adverbs, Strong Verbs ('ensure'), Strong Nouns ('genius'), Conjunctions that imply a counter argument or contrast ('however'), transitional phrases such as ('in contrast'), and the punctuation marks such as colon and parentheses. We will see in a later page how we must read the passage while paying attention to the specifics of information provided in the passage. LSAT test-takers will be able to use highlighters to mark off the adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, strong verbs, etc. so that they can process information more readily while answering context-specific questions.

The bottom line is, you must not be distracted. Do not dwell on difficult to comprehend sections. If strong or technical terms are described, they must be explained in the passage if you are going to be tested on them. Do not get intimidated by terminology. Of course, the test will require that you are conversant with words, idioms, and phrases that a reasonably well-read person should be comfortable with but you can do very well by paying attention to the wording of answer options and by eliminating the ones that be categorized into the classes to be discussed later on in this file.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AUXILIARY VERBS AND ADVERBIAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS 'TOO' / 'ALSO'. (ALSO, FIGURES OF SPEECH)

As you begin to read passages and comprehend what is going on, you should be sure to pay attention to the various elements of sentences. We have seen how qualifiers and complements ADD information to a statement and are critical to developing a good comprehension of the idea being discussed. Additionally, you should also process auxiliary verbs such as CAN, WILL, COULD, WOULD, MAY, MIGHT, SHOULD, and MUST.

CAN implies a tone of confidence or a significant ability ('replenishment of gene pool CAN be accomplished by tapping into the resources of wild wheat'); it can also imply a mood of probability or likelihood just as MAY does. ('alcohol CAN impair the ability of brain to process information').

COULD is used to express a conditional situation if accompanied by IF ('I would go if I could') or a weaker 'can' suggesting less force or politeness ('Could you help me with this?').

WOULD is used to express custom or habitual action ('the colonists WOULD meet at the local pub to discuss the bulletins issued by the King's representative'), intention or plan ('he would come to the party') or Choice ('I would go to Columbia').

MAY indicates probability or possibility (just as 'can' does) or purpose ('I laugh so I may not weep'), choice ('He may come today or tomorrow') or concession ('he may be slow but he is accurate') or a mood of wish, prayer, or supplication ('may I come in?' or 'may God help you')

MIGHT is a weaker form of 'MAY'.

SHOULD expresses obligation, a requirement, or a recommendation ('companies that intend to sell large blocks of stocks SHOULD be made to give 24-hour notice of their intent'). If the passage uses 'should', the author is probably making a recommendation or pointing to an obligation. Watch out for the use of 'SHOULD' or MUST in answer options. They tend to reflect OPINIONS that masquerade as statements indicating obligations ('historians must ascertain the motives of those participating in crowd actions').

TOO means ALSO or ADDITIONALLY. Pay attention to the use of 'too' or 'also' in passages. ('He TOO was unconvinced' implies that there is at least one other person referred to in the passage and who was unconvinced). Pay attention to ALL ADVERBS: they signify emphasis ('permanently altered') or sub-groups ('newly married people').

Pay attention to figurative phrases such as 'as it were' (meaning 'as if it were so' or in a manner of speaking) or 'in a sense' (meaning 'sort of like but not exactly').

Transitional phrases and conjunctions such as **HOWEVER, YET, BUT, IN CONTRAST** imply a counter-argument or contrast. '**For example**' is an important phrase in that the idea being illustrated is an important idea. An unimportant idea will not be explained or elaborated on or illustrated.

Remember that words are carefully chosen and crafted into the passages, and need to be processed critically. **Be a *Word Police*, when you work on this section.**

ANCHOR-PHRASE STRATEGY

The **CONTEXT** in which certain information is provided will be communicated to you in the **ANCHOR-PHRASE** or the **CUE-PHRASE** contained in the Question Stem. If the question reads: "According to the passage, which one of the following is true regarding **how homing pigeons "home"?**", you would read this to mean that there is specific information stated about "homing" of homing pigeons, and that you need to look up a specific reference to "HOME". (any word or phrases in quotes is critical to the anchor phrase look-up, and so are adjectives and adverbs contained in the anchor phrase: in this question, you need to identify information about 'homing' pigeons, not about 'pigeons' and then be very specific to the HOMING activity of homing pigeons). Then, you would journey back to the passage on the left-hand side of the screen, identify where the passage makes a reference to how HOMING PIGEONS "HOME", read what the passage mentions in this SPECIFIC CONTEXT, and then pick a choice that is consistent with a **LITERAL INTERPRETATION** of the information stated in this limited context.

WHAT CONSTITUTES '**LITERAL INTERPRETATION**' of information stated in a limited or specific context? A literal interpretation is **paraphrasing** of information stated in a limited context or stating of information that is NECESSARILY TRUE in the light of information stated in the context of 'anchor-phrase'. Let us say that you read in a specific context about homing pigeons the following: "*The **other alternative**, that pigeons have "map sense" (to home) seems more **promising**, yet the nature of this sense remains **mysterious***". If the question asked you, "The author would agree with which of the following about "map sense" of homing pigeons?", your 'literal' interpretation of this information would read: "the "map sense" explanation offers us a '*choice*' in terms of understanding how the homing pigeons home, and holds **potential** (to give us a handle on how homing pigeons home) BUT the explanation, **while exciting our curiosity, defies full comprehension**."

A LITERAL INTERPRETATION of information is that which is NECESSARILY VALID in the context of information stated. Watch out for illogical interpretations: If the passage states that Nightingale used the sums of money that she collected to set up a nurses' training facility in London, do not interpret it to mean that she created the curriculum for nurses' training at a British University. If the passage states that the Immigrants in the United States started celebrating their traditional holidays, do not interpret it to mean that they were promoting a RENAISSANCE or REVIVAL of their culture in the United States. If the passage states that Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience was King's first intellectual contact with the theory of passive resistance to unjust laws, do not interpret it to mean that Thoreau was the first to come up with the theory of passive resistance to unjust laws.

STRATEGY FOR READING THE PASSAGES

Reading comprehension is a test of your **comprehension**, not a test of your ability to **'speed-read'** the information and get a broad understanding of the gist of information provided to you. Therefore, you need to read the passage at a **normal pace**. When you read the passage, be sure to pay attention to **QUALIFIERS** such as adjectives and adverbs, and to **TRANSITIONAL CONJUNCTIONS AND PHRASES** such as 'YET', 'HOWEVER', 'BUT', 'IN CONTRAST', 'FOR EXAMPLE', etc. Also, be sure to pay attention to information that follows a COLON (:) or contained in a parenthesis or "quotes", especially if you identify such information when you do anchor-phrase look-ups.

The **FIRST SENTENCE** of the passage is critical information and so is the **LAST SENTENCE** of the passage. Information contained in the FIRST PARAGRAPH and (sometimes) in the first **TWO SENTENCES** of the second paragraph is important to your comprehension of the MAIN IDEA or the PRIMARY PURPOSE of the passage. When you read passages, read by emphasizing QUALIFIERS and TRANSITIONAL PHRASES. Take a look at the following passage, and pay attention to the highlighted sections that need to be paid attention to when you read:

"Islamic Law is a **particularly instructive** example of "**Sacred Law**". Islamic Law is a phenomenon that is **so different** from all **other forms of law** – **notwithstanding**, of course, a **considerable and inevitable** number of *coincidences* with one or the other forms of Sacred Law **as far as subject matter and positive enactments are concerned** – that **its study is indispensable in order to appreciate adequately the full range of possible legal phenomena. Even the other two representatives** of Sacred Law that are historically and geographically nearest to it, Jewish law and Roman Catholic Canon Law, **are perceptibly different**. Both Jewish law and Canon law are **more uniform** than Islamic Law."

Notice the highlighted sections in bold-face. These highlighted phrases are critical to your comprehension and will need to be paid attention to when you read the passage initially and when you come back to the passage in the context of specific anchor-phrases.

THROW-BACK PHRASES:

When you do anchor-phrase look-ups or when you initially read the passage for an understanding of the main idea, you may come across certain words and phrases that will 'throw you back' to another section of the passage. Words such as 'this' or 'it', and transitional phrases such as 'but', 'yet', 'nevertheless', 'for example', 'in contrast', etc. will ask you to read the previous sentence as well in order to get the full context in which a stated information is valid. Sometimes, the throwback could be to a sentence several sentences away (usually preceding): Consider this statement: "The **'equal but fair'** rule, **even if** it had been faithfully adhered to, could **never** have created land-grant institutions in the **southern and border states** that are **as financially successful as** those created **under the Morrill Act of 1862**." Notice that the 'throw-

back' here is to "Morrill Act of 1862", and our goal is to identify what specific institutions were created under this 1862 law so that we can comprehend the scope of comparison that is sought to be made between 'institutions in southern and border states' and those created under the 1862 law.

If we go back up and read the reference to 1862 law, we read: "The **Morrill Act of 1862** created the basis under which land-grant institutions were set up throughout the United States, perhaps **most successfully in the mid-west**". Now we are able to use the original 'anchor-phrase' statement and the statement to which we were 'thrown back' to get the following picture: Even if 'separate but equal rule were faithfully adhered to, the southern and border States would not have received financial support equal to that received by the mid-western States." Our Answer choice must agree with this 'literal' interpretation of information presented in the passage and in the limited context.

The 'throw-back' to a preceding statement **several sentences away**, though rare, is sometimes used in order to test comprehension of information. If you come across a question that involves this degree of throw-back, you can rest assured that you were just tested on a high-difficulty question.

VERBS AND QUALIFIERS USED IN PASSAGES AND IN ANSWER CHOICES MUST BE CLOSELY EXAMINED

Comprehension is a matter of paying attention not only to qualifiers but also to verbs used in the passage and in the answer choices. Take a look at the following that was part of the passage on Islamic Law: (verbs in **blue bold-face** are likely to be part of the information that will be tested).

"In its relation to secular state, Islamic law **differed** from both Jewish and canon law. Jewish law was **buttressed** by the cohesion of the community, **reinforced** by pressure from outside; its rules are the direct expression of this feeling of cohesion, **tending** toward accommodation of dissent. Canon and Islamic law were **dominated** by the dualism of religion and state, where the state was **not**, in contrast to Judaism, an alien power but a political expression of the same religion. But the conflict between state and religion took different forms: in Christianity, it **appeared** as the struggle for political power on the part of a **tightly organized** ecclesiastical hierarchy, and Canon law was one of its political weapons. Islamic law, on the other hand, was **never supported** by an organized institution; consequently, there **never developed** an overt trial of strength. There **merely existed** discordance between the application of sacred law and many of the regulations **framed** by the Islamic States, this antagonism **varying** according to place and time."

To sum up, when you read the passage initially in order to develop an understanding of the MAIN IDEA or when you do anchor-phrase lookups, be sure to pay attention to qualifiers and to verbs, and to apply a literal interpretation of cue words and phrases. Do not apply broad or liberal interpretation of information. The passages will be drawn

from Business, Science such as geology, mineralogy, biology, or biochemistry, and Political and Social Sciences. Do not be intimidated by the subject matter discussed in the passage. All passages will contain discrete items of information and all questions will be based on such discrete items of information. As long as you follow the 'anchor phrase strategy' outlined in the following pages, you should not have any problem dealing with Reading Comprehension passages.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS TESTED IN READING COMPREHENSION

1. Big Picture Questions:

Questions in this category test your ability to understand the 'main idea' and to distinguish it from the supporting ideas, and to distinguish between the primary purpose and the secondary or tertiary purposes. Questions will also test your ability to understand the 'structure' of the passage and the 'tone' of the passage. Questions in this category cover a wide gamut as indicated below:

- ❑ What is the **Main Idea** of the passage? What is an appropriate TITLE for the passage?
- ❑ What is the **Primary Purpose** of the passage?
- ❑ What is the **structure** of the passage?
- ❑ What is the '**TONE**' of the passage?
- ❑ What is a possible **SOURCE** for the passage?
- ❑ What is the likely **target audience** for the information in the passage? ("Who is the passage addressed to?")
- ❑ What information would logically **EXTEND** the passage?

We have discussed in an earlier section that the Main Idea can be found anywhere in the passage, and typically in the first sentences of the FIRST, SECOND, and LAST paragraphs, or in the last sentences of the FIRST or the LAST PARAGRAPH, or anywhere in the middle of the First paragraph. We also discussed that it is important for you to process the TONE of the passage regardless of whether you get tested on the TONE or not. You should know that the author's tone may shift as he/she moves from one section of the passage to the other. In the first part of the passage, the author may be positively inclined toward the 'Study' being discussed but toward the end, the author may be pointing out some of the deficiencies of the study. Or, the author may have a tone but the 'critics' of the subject being discussed may have a different attitude or tone. Again, regardless of whether you get tested or not, pay attention to the TONE implied in the passage because this understanding will help you eliminate answer options that do not comport with the identified tone. Also, remember that the MAIN IDEA or the PRIMARY PURPOSE will NOT be to COMPARE and CONTRAST ideas or people or things. All passages will be about contrasting ideas or information but the main idea is not about providing a contrast or about comparing things or ideas. When you work on questions under this category, pay critical attention to the wording of answer options. You may have to determine whether the author is DISCUSSING a theory or DESCRIBING a theory or ILLUSTRATING a theory or CRITIQUING a theory, and so on. Again, words have to be critically parsed and remember that Humpty-Dumpty does not do well in this section. Do not be one.

2. ANCHOR PHRASE QUESTIONS

Questions in this category will ask you to deal with information EXPLICITLY stated in the passage and with information IMPLIED in context-specific statements.

Questions in this category will test your ability to answer questions on the basis of context specific 'discrete' items of information contained in the passage. Explicit questions will be about information openly expressed in the passage. The strategy for answering questions under this category is to PARAPHRASE context-specific information relevant to the question. Watch out for CUTE-PHRASING that is about REPETITION OF STRONG ADJECTIVAL PHRASES from anywhere in the passage and without interpretation. This is a test of **COMPREHENSION**, not of **RECOGNITION**. **Also, remember that qualifiers such as ADJECTIVES add INFORMATION to a statement and need to be INTERPRETED, not REPEATED.** Usually, the cute phrases repeated in the answer options may not be stated or provided in the context of information identified in the question stem. Even if they are, they are usually twisted and not logically stated. **But then, you should bear in mind that all qualifiers need to be interpreted, not repeated.**

QUESTIONS BASED ON INFORMATION IMPLIED IN CONTEXT-SPECIFIC STATEMENTS

INFERENCE is information NECESSARILY IMPLIED in OR between context-specific statements. The procedure here is no different from the one we have discussed in Module 4- Logical Reasoning File.

We have seen earlier in this module that QUALIFIERS and COMPLEMENTS add information content to statements, and IMPLY certain things. Even ADJECTIVES imply information: The reference to 'married people' implies that there is another group called 'unmarried people'. The reference to 'cold blooded animals' implies that there is a category called 'warm blooded animals'. **In addition to qualifiers, nouns, verbs, and conjunctions can also imply items of information.**

The verb 'CONVERT' implies 'change of position or persuasion or attitude'.
The noun 'CONSPIRACY' implies 'involvement of more than one person'.
The conjunction 'HOWEVER' implies 'contrast or counterpoint'.

Additionally, inferences can also be obtained by **interpreting COMPLEMENTARY information**. If the question requires that we make an inference about COLD-BLOODED animals, it is most likely done on the basis of interpreting information in the passage about the COMPLEMENTARY group of WARM-BLOODED animals. If the **inference** question is about 'BEFORE', the answer will turn on information about what happened **AFTER** the identified period. If the question requires us to infer the type of jazz music played BEFORE 1945, we will be required to interpret information about the type of jazz music played AFTER 1945. If the passage states that 'Miles Davis and his group that assembled in a Harlem apartment in 1945 SLOWED DOWN the tempo of jazz music and STARTED featuring ensemble playing', our inference about

the type of jazz music played BEFORE 1945 is that the tempo was more rapid and SOLO playing (the complement of ensemble playing) was the norm.

Take a look at the following inference derived from an 'interpretation of an adjective or an adverb: "Economists believe that further interest rate cuts will provide the **needed** acceleration to the **sluggish** economy". Notice the adjectives 'needed' describing 'acceleration', and 'sluggish' describing 'economy'. Our inference on the basis of this statement will be that ***the 'economic progress is not dynamic and 'needs' to be speeded up.***

Take a look at the following question asking you to make an inference on the basis of an information stated in the context of an 'opposite scenario':

Which of the following can be inferred from the passage about the 'admission procedures' prior to 1990?

Our 'anchor phrase' refers us to 'admission procedures', and when we look up the passage, we read:

"Graduate School admission procedures **since 1990** have always included Standardized test scores as a critical factor in the evaluation process".

Our inference on the basis of information stated about admission procedures 'since 1990' is that 'prior to 1990', **Standardized test scores were not a critical factor in the evaluation process for admission to Graduate Schools.**

Consider another inference that is made on the basis of information stated in the context of an opposite scenario:

QUESTION: "Which of the following can be inferred about 'warm blooded animals' as described in the passage?

Our anchor phrase look up must include a reference to the 'opposite scenario' involving 'cold blooded animals' so that we can make a proper inference:

The passage shows the following about 'cold blooded animals':

"Cold blooded animals were chosen for tests on the effects of temperatures on invading organisms because the **temperatures of cold blooded animals can be easily controlled in a laboratory setting**".

Our inference is that the ***'temperatures of warm blooded animals could not be easily controlled in a laboratory setting'***.

Inference questions will typically read:

"The passage **suggests** which of the following about "XYZ"?"

"Which of the following can be **inferred** from the passage about 'XYZ'?"

"Information in the passage **implies** which of the following about "XYZ"?"

CAVEAT: DO NOT SELECT AN ANSWER THAT REPEATS AN EXPLICIT INFORMATION FOR INFERENCE QUESTIONS. AN INFERENCE IS IMPLIED AND NOT EXPLICITLY STATED.

3. **"IN ORDER TO" OR PURPOSE OF A STATEMENT QUESTIONS**

Some questions will test your ability to identify the PURPOSE of a statement within a passage. Do not mistake it for the PURPOSE OF A WHOLE PASSAGE question. Whereas the purpose of a passage question tests your big picture understanding, the purpose of a specific statement made in a specific context is about your understanding of the limited purpose of a specific statement. The purpose of a statement question will ask you to interpret CONJUNCTIONS (such as yet, however, but, in contrast, unlike, like), QUALIFIERS (such as adverbs and adjectives), and certain transitional phrases such as 'in contrast' or 'for example'. Consider the following 'purpose of a statement question'.

The use of the word 'only' in the statement, "the ONLY benefit of massive investment in service improvement is that it could be easily described to the customers" servers which of the following purposes within the statement?

- (A) highlights the specific advantage of the investment in service improvement
- (B) singles out one advantage from the other advantages of service improvement**
- (C) points out the limited benefit derived from the huge investment in service enhancement
- (D) emphasizes that service improvement is the only way to achieve customer satisfaction
- (E) identifies the importance of making the customers understand the scope of service enhancement.

When we read the statement identified in the question stem, we notice that the use of the qualifier ONLY is done for the purpose of minimizing the significance of the huge investment in service enhancement. IF the company is better able to describe the service improvement to its customers as a result of a huge outlay in service enhancement, then it does not seem like a great benefit. Choice C is the best answer that corresponds to this understanding of the purpose of the word or of the statement identified in the question stem.

Consider another 'IN ORDER TO' or 'PURPOSE OF A STATEMENT' question.

"The author mentions the number of ice ages in the third paragraph in order to"

- (A) provide proof that cooler and drier temperatures were primarily responsible for the distribution of species in the Amazon.
- (B) Explain how population of species were protected from extinction in the Amazon basin.
- (C) Explain how most species were able to survive periodic climatic disturbances in the Amazon basin
- (D) Suggest that certain types of climatic disturbances cause more species diversity than other types of climatic disturbances.
- (E) Suggest that geographical isolation may have occurred often enough to cause high species diversity in the Amazon basin.

In order to answer the above question, we need to look up the reference to the 'number of ice ages' in the third paragraph. The passage in the third paragraph refers to the 'number of ice ages' as follows:

"Haffer's hypothesis appears to explain the distribution of species as well as the unusual species diversity. The ice-age refuges would have protected existing species from extinction. But the periodic geographic isolation of related populations (**there have been an estimated 13 ice ages to date**) would have facilitated the development of new species as existing species on the lowlands adapted to changing climates".

We found the reference to the 'number of ice ages' in the information highlighted in red font. *Note that information stated within the parenthesis **explains the statement** outside the parenthesis or provides information that is the **cause or the consequence** of the information outside. Pay attention to the information provided within the parenthesis in any anchor phrase statement. (Also, the use of COLON (:) is used to explain the part of the sentence that precedes the part before the colon).*

We will read the information to signify that the 13 different ice ages to date were the **CAUSE** of periodic geographic isolation of 'related populations' and such 'isolation' led to the development of new species while the existing species on the lowlands adapted to the changing climates. Choice E is the best answer consistent with a literal interpretation of the information provided in the passage and in the context of the 'number of ice ages'. Try to come up with an interpretation that is LITERAL, not creative.

4. **TONE or ATTITUDE IMPLIED IN A STATEMENT:** Earlier in this module, we underscored the need for you to process the TONE of the whole passage. A good understanding of the TONE of the passage itself is a good ally in your ability to pick the correct answer. For example, if the overall tone of the passage is critical or negative, any answer that has a positive tone cannot be a good answer for the MAIN IDEA question. In addition to the TONE OF THE PASSAGE, some questions in Reading Comprehension may ask you to identify the **TONE of a specific statement** or **the attitude expressed or implied in such a statement**. IF the question is about 'author's attitude toward Miles Davis' and our passage look up reads 'Yet Miles Davis' genius never received its due', we would interpret the reference to 'genius' as an extremely positive attitude. Our answer choice will reflect this understanding. (It will read 'appreciative' or 'commending' or any such word). If we are asked to identify the 'tone' or 'attitude' implied in the statement expressing author's views toward an author, and if the statement reads, "in his essay 'unfettered capitalism', Jon Frey offers us clichéd prescriptions that remain as unworkable as ever", we would read this statement to be critical of Jon Frey's suggestions in his essay. It is not uncommon for the PASSAGE to have a positive tone and for a context-specific statement a negative tone. The author's attitude toward Miles Davis (the subject of the passage) could be very positive whereas his or her tone toward the critics as expressed in a set of statements could be very negative or critical. Comprehension of the Tone is as critical as the comprehension of the substance of the passage itself.

5. ASSUMPTION QUESTIONS: The assumption, we learned in Module 4, is an **'inference'** that is 'drawn' from a **'questionable statement' such as the conclusion of the argument.** We also learned that most, if not all, passages will be 'gigantic arguments' and it is not uncommon for the author or the subjects being discussed to come up with statements that may border on the ILLOGICAL. Any information implied in such statements becomes the 'ASSUMPTION'. RC section can also interchangeably use 'inference' and 'assumption' but typically, the assumptions are drawn from questionable assertions or conclusions. If we are asked to identify the assumption in the statement, *"in counseling village school-masters (during 1800's) to encourage children's ability to observe, **she sounded like a modern educator**"*, the assumption implied in this statement is that in the 1800's, it was uncommon for schoolmasters to encourage children to OBSERVE. (Teaching to observe is referred to as a 'modern' procedure and implies that it was not commonly done, if at all, in the 1800's). If the passage describes how a computer simulation of Geminid meteor stream was used to test a new hypothesis about meteor streams and states that during a simulation, *'the time interval between bursts of meteor showers showed that the age of the Geminid meteor stream was 3000 years'*, the statement implies that the Computer model is an accurate way to estimate the age of the meteor stream or that the computer model was a good representation of the formation of the meteor stream. Maybe, the simulation was imperfect and the estimation of the age of the stream could also be inaccurate. The statement ASSUMES the opposite. (Remember that assumption can also be a viewed as a REJECTION or REPUDIATION of the a counter-scenario).

6. EXTENSION OF THE PASSAGE or LOGICAL CONCLUSION to a passage :

Questions under this category test your ability to determine the logical extension of the passage. The logical extension could be about some of the unanswered questions raised in the passage by the author or the appended statement to the last sentence of the passage would logically complete the train of thought implied in the passage. Let us take a look at a passage and deal with a question asking for a logical completion to the passage: *"Surviving sources of information about women doctors in ancient Greece and Rome are fragmentary: some passing mentions by classical authors, scattered references in medical works, and about 40 inscriptions on tombs and monuments. ... The very nature of scant evidence tells us something. There is no list of women doctors in antiquity, no direct comment on the fact that there were such people, **Instead, the scattering of references to them indicates that, although their numbers were probably small, women doctors were an unremarkable part of ancient life.** For example, in *The Republic* (421 B.C.), the earliest known source attesting to the existence of women doctors in Greece, Plato argues that, for the good of the state, jobs should be assigned to people on the basis of natural aptitude, regardless of gender. Here, Plato is not arguing that there ought to be women doctors; rather, he is arguing for an ideal distribution of roles within the state by pointing to something that everyone could already see- that there were female as well as male doctors. ... Also, pointing to a wider medical practice (by women doctors) are the references in the various medical works to a great number of women's writings on medical subjects. Here, **too**, the very nature of the evidence tells us something: Galen, Pliny the elder, and other writers of encyclopedic medical works quote the opinions of male and female doctors, indiscriminately moving from one to the other and back again. As with the male doctors they cite, their works simply give excerpts from the female authority's writing without biographical information or special comment."*

Which of the following could be most logically appended to the concluding sentence of the passage? Notice that Plato is cited in the context of the argument that 'women doctors were an UNREMARKABLE PART of ancient Greece'. The reference in the last paragraph uses the word **'too'** (pay critical attention to words such as 'too' or 'also'), indicating that the new writers referred ALSO (like Plato – that is what is implied) to the writings of women doctors but did not consider them REMARKABLE in any way. The answer that logically completes the passage would read: "That there were women doctors seemed just as remarkable to these writers as it did to Plato". The logical extension sums up the essence of the passage and must be consistent with the implied tone of the passage, which is one of mild criticism of the lack of appreciation of the remarkable nature of existence of

©Educational Training Services, A Division of MLI Consulting, Inc.

Not to be reproduced or distributed without our express written consent

Some of the passages used in this file were taken from the disclosed editions of GMAT, GRE, and LSAT.

women doctors in Greece. Logical Extension questions are analogous to 'LOGICAL COMPLETION' questions tested in Logical/Critical Reasoning, and are infrequently tested.

COMPARATIVE READING --- QUESTIONS BASED ON TWO PASSAGES HAVING A COMMON THEME.

The new SAT Reasoning Test already includes Comparative Reading as part of 'Critical Reasoning' Test. The LSAT will introduce Comparative Reading as one of the four sets in Reading Comprehension section. It is likely that GMAT and GRE will follow suit as well.

Comparative Reading involves reading TWO passages that are about the same theme but different discussions relating to the assigned theme. Questions will be based on one or both passages.

The questions could be about any of the following:

- How is one passage **UNLIKE** the other?
- Which of the following would the two authors agree on?
- A certain word used in one passage has a different connotation from the same word used in the other passage in what way?
- Questions based on either passage. (The same categories of questions as discussed in the preceding pages).

When you read through the passages, try to comprehend the theme that is common to both passages, and the differences between the contents of the two passages. For example, both passages could be about 'FAMILY FARMS' but Passage 1 could be about the unappreciated hardship experienced by families owning farms (low margins, long working hours, no holidays or vacation time, no benefits, unpredictability of weather, etc.) and the Passage 2 about how the perceptions outside the farm communities are such as to glorify farm life. Or, the common Theme could be the World War 1, and Passage 1 is about how there existed a dichotomy between the experiences of soldiers and those of civilians in Britain whereas the Passage 2 is about the differences in the way the men and women of Britain perceived the War. Sample passages from Comparative Reading are discussed later in this module.

PAY ATTENTION AND SHOW COMPREHENSION AT ONCE

Remember that *selection of an answer* is as much about deciding which ones you must not pick as it is about which one you must pick.

The test is about your ability to literally interpret adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, conjunctions, transitional phrases such as 'however', 'in contrast' and information stated in the opposite context. The test is also about your ability to PAY ATTENTION to the wording of answer choices and TO ENSURE that the wording of an answer option is consistent with a literal and necessarily valid interpretation of the context-specific information that is relevant to a question. All it takes is a single word to make an answer option unacceptable. Read EVERY WORD in the answer option CRITICALLY. Pay attention to silly details such as whether a noun used in the answer option is used in singular case or in plural case. ('Reason' versus 'Reasons' --- if the passage provides ONE REASON for a certain phenomenon, and if the answer choice refers to REASONS for a certain phenomenon, you must know that the answer option is not worth wasting time over). Pay attention to the choice of VERB used in MAIN IDEA or the PRIMARY PURPOSE questions. You will have to make decisions by critically parsing verbs such as 'argue' versus 'describe' versus 'discuss' versus 'illustrate' versus 'advocate' versus 'recommend' etc. You need to determine which verb is the appropriate one to describe the type of information presented to you. As a rule, an answer choice cannot be

- **Vague, unsure, unspecific, or in PASSIVE CASE** ('it is long believed' or 'it has been disproved' etc. --- notice that phrases in passive case do not identify the subject and it is unclear who 'believed' or 'disproved' anything).
- **Extreme, superlative, hyperbolic** ('it is the MOST IMPORTANT reason for why Mexican Americans started forming ethnic groups') or SPECULATIVE ('the PRIMARY REASON for the behavior of tribal groups').
- **Jargon-laden statements** — Remember that it is a test of comprehension, not a test of 'how much you love highfalutin jargon'. The answer choice must be comprehensible to a person who is not an expert in the use of language or who does not belong to an esoteric group.
- **CUTE-PHRASES RESTATED WITHOUT PARAPHRASING FROM THE PASSAGE** are problematic. Remember that it is a test of comprehension, not a test of recognition or regurgitation. All cute-phrases such as adjectival phrases ('tangible benefits' or 'metabolic efficiency of mangrove forests'), or strong nouns ('renaissance') or strong verbs ('advocate' or 'conspire' or 'transcend') must NOT be REPEATED in the answer choice; they **MUST BE PARAPHRASED**. Remember that the name of the game is **PARAPHRASING, NOT CUTE-PHRASING**. 'Cute-phrasing' is repetition in the answer choice without paraphrasing of strong phrases that sound 'cute' in the passage (some of them may not even be relevant to a specific context addressed in the question stem). This is a common trap, and do not fall into it.
- **POLITICALLY INCORRECT STATEMENTS** – statements that are offensive to anyone are not correct answers. For example, if the answer option reads, "multinational companies are exploiting the labor in third world countries", you should know that you are 'offending' a set of corporations by choosing to agree with this statement. A good answer will never be politically insensitive or incorrect. Remember that we are living in an age of political correctness, and any answer that is not politically kosher is not a good answer.

- **NOT COMMONSENSICAL** – Statements that are not commonsensical cannot be good answers. For example, if the answer option to ANY question reads as follows: “As a result of slaves being brought to the south, the proportion of whites and the blacks were the same in the Southern United States”. We know that the proportion of blacks is not the same as that of whites even now, leave alone during the days of slavery. We will not pick this answer option because it is not commonsensical. If the answer option is referring to the ‘gravitational pull of comets’, we will stay away from this option because comets do not have gravity. If the answer option reads, “historians should ascertain the motives of the individuals who participated in the burning of the effigies of the King during the American Revolution”, we will take a pass because historians cannot travel back in time and find out the motives of those dead individuals who participated in those rituals. Examine the wording and make sure that the statements do not belie commonsense.
- **COMMONSENSICAL BUT EXPECTATIONAL** -- This is a deadly category to watch out for. The fact that some statement makes ‘sense’ does not mean that it is the correct answer. Most of the time, statements that make sense to you are consistent with your real-world expectations and not supported by the information in the passage. The answer option must be consistent with a literal interpretation of context-specific information that is relevant to the question. Your real-world expectations or knowledge or opinion should not be the basis for your answer selection. We should include in this category **OPINIONS** that you hold. Statements containing words such as **SHOULD** and **MUST** usually agree with your IRRATIONAL opinions or ILLOGICAL opinions. You should watch out for these statements mirroring your opinions but are unsupported by the specifics of context-specific information.
- **CLICHED PHRASES** and WORN-OUT phrases such as ‘approach’, ‘data’, ‘Reasonable’, ‘compare and contrast’, ‘success’, ‘paradox’, etc. must be viewed with a degree of suspicion if they are part of an answer option. The MAIN IDEA of a passage will NEVER be to ‘compare and contrast’ things or theories. People are instinctively drawn to statements that contain words that connote a positive information or tone. For example, test-takers instinctively choose options that contain the words REASONABLE, SUCCESS, MAJORITY, APPROACH, etc. because they think that ‘being reasonable’ or ‘achieving success’ or ‘being in majority’ or ‘how you approach things’ are positives. Do not work on this test at an instinctive. You can learn to recognize instinctively some of these ‘traps’ but do not pick answer options that are meant to ‘trap you’. Make sure the wording of answer options is appropriate. Do not be Humpty-Dumpty.

Our Real-World expectations play a critical role in how we process information. If the passage is about ‘ETHNICITY’ and discusses how certain immigrant groups in the United States – Mexican and Irish immigrants – used culture as a tool to organize constituents around POLITICAL and IMMIGRATION issues, it is not uncommon for test-takers to be drawn to answer options that state ‘Mexican immigrants were primarily concerned about economic issues’ because, in our mind’s eye, Mexican immigrants are primarily seeking better economic opportunities by migrating – legally or illegally – to the United States. We cannot overemphasize the need for you to remain objective and to make decisions that comport with the literal interpretation of information in the passage. If the passage is about political and immigration issues, the any reference to ‘economic issues’ is off

©Educational Training Services, A Division of MLI Consulting, Inc.

Not to be reproduced or distributed without our express written consent

Some of the passages used in this file were taken from the disclosed editions of GMAT, GRE, and LSAT.

limits. Do not get distracted. Stay focused on the specifics provided to you.

ANCHOR PHRASE IS A CRITICAL MARKER IN THE QUESTION STEM

Anchor phrases are easily identified in the question stem, and are qualifier sensitive. Take a look at the following question: "According to the passage, '**earliest research** on coastal mangrove forests' failed to explain which of the following?"

Your anchor phrase is '**earliest research on coastal mangrove forests**' and your job is to look up a reference to 'earliest research' in the passage, and pick a choice that agrees with a literal interpretation of anchor phrase information.

The questions will be about discrete pieces of information pieced together in the passage, and the question stem will contain information that will guide you to a specific part of the passage, where the required information will be found. You should bear in mind that answers to over 2/3rd of the questions can be found in one short sentence containing the 'anchor phrase'.

The 'anchor phrase' is the phrase that is contained in the question stem, and is '**qualifier specific and sensitive**'. For example, the whole passage might be about a 'recent theory about gold deposits' and the question might be about an '**earlier theory** about gold deposits'. The 'earlier theory about gold deposits' is what we call the 'anchor phrase'. Your job is to identify the 'anchor phrase' on the left hand side of the screen containing the passage in its entirety, read the sentence containing the anchor phrase, take it LITERALLY, and pick a choice that is in keeping with the anchor phrase statement found in the passage. We stated earlier on page1 that the answer to about 2/3rd of the questions can be found in one short sentence, but the other 1/3rd of the questions will require that you read the preceding sentence and/or the following sentence containing 'anchor phrase specific' information, and pick a choice that is consistent with this information you just read.

Be sure to include the qualifiers and adjectives specified in the question stem when you do the anchor phrase lookup. If the question is about '**widely accepted** theory of gold exploration', if you looked up a reference to 'theory of gold exploration' and not to the '**widely accepted** theory of gold exploration', you will end up picking a bad answer choice.

One of the skills you need to have is the ability to know when to stop reading. We have noticed in our training programs that some of our participants have a tendency to 'keep going' like an energizer bunny and to pick a choice that is 'out of context'. How do you know when to stop reading? When you notice that the new sentence begins to talk about an entirely new train of thought unrelated to the specifics of the anchor phrase you are grappling with.

Take a look at the following example:

They highlight her ongoing efforts to reform sanitary conditions after the war. For example, when she learned that peacetime living conditions in British barracks were so horrible that the death rate of enlisted men far exceeded that of neighboring civilian populations, she succeeded in persuading the government to establish a Royal Commission on the Health of the Army. <i>She used sums raised through public contributions to found a nurses' training hospital in London.</i>	☐ The passage suggests which of the following about the sanitary conditions in Britain after the war? ☐ They were better than the conditions in most other countries. ☐ They were worse than the conditions in most other countries. ☐ The sanitary conditions in the army camps were worse than the conditions in the civilian areas. ☐ A special training hospital had to be set up in London to deal with the poor sanitary conditions ☐ Royal Commission on the health of the army was reluctant to address the problem without prodding by Nightingale.
---	--

When you work on Reading Comprehension, **read the question first and understand the 'anchor phrase'**. The anchor phrase in the question stem is highlighted in red on the right side of the screen – 'sanitary conditions in Britain after the war'. WE can identify the same phrase on the left side of the screen, and have used the scroll bar to move the passage up or down so that the sentence containing the anchor phrase is as close to the top of the screen as possible. This way, you will not have a tendency to waste time by looking for the anchor phrase all over again.

Notice that the anchor phrase is in the middle of a sentence and we must read the entire sentence starting with the first word "They". The first sentence is a teaser; it does not tell us in detail any information about the sanitary conditions. We notice that the next sentence makes a reference to the sanitary conditions as well, and we must read the next sentence too because it is specific to the anchor phrase. Take a look at the next sentence starting with "she used sums raised through public contributions". Should we continue to read this? No, because there is no reference to 'sanitary conditions' and the sentence is about a new train of thought. If you continued to read on, then the chances are you will end up picking option 4, which does mention a 'nurses' training hospital', and which will be considered out of context.

We stated earlier that this section on the test is about your ability to take whatever you read literally and pick a choice that accords with the literal interpretation of the anchor phrase information.

Once we identify the anchor-phrase-related statement(s) in the passage, we must read it or them, and take the information LITERALLY. The test is going to tempt you with answer options that will not be consistent with the literal interpretations of the anchor phrase information. For example, answer choices 1 and 2 are NOT literal interpretations of the anchor phrase information because these two options make a comparison with 'most other countries', and such a comparison is not supported by the literal interpretation of the anchor phrase statement. When you work on this section of the test, you must be able to make this distinction. Choice 3 is the best answer that agrees with the literal interpretation of the information provided in the passage.

Choice 5 is another example of information that is 'twisted'. The anchor phrase statement that 'she succeeded in persuading the government to set up a Royal commission' cannot be construed to mean that the 'Royal commission was reluctant to act and had to be prodded by the lady'.

In a nutshell, the test is about your ability to deal with small, discrete pieces of information containing specific information that is relevant to the anchor phrase contained in the question stem, to take the information literally without embellishing the stated information and without being creative in your interpretation, and to pick a choice that will agree with the naked, literal interpretation of the anchor phrase information.

Remember: The anchor phrase contained in the question stem is 'qualifier' specific, and you must be sure to look for the anchor phrase including the qualifier. For example, if the question read: "According to the author, the late nineteenth-century philosophers disagreed about which of the following?", do not just look for a reference to 'philosophers'. Be sure to look for 'late nineteenth century philosophers', because, if you did not, the answer choice you will pick will not be good. We will put this anchor phrase strategy to the test later on in this module, but for now remember the following:

- ❑ Understand the Qualified Anchor phrase used in the question stem, and be sure to read the question first before beginning to look for information on the left side of the screen.
- ❑ Identify the qualified anchor phrase in the passage and read the one or two sentences that are specific to the anchor phrase and that contain information relevant to the question posed.
- ❑ Take what you read literally, and do **not** be a *spin-meister*. Remember: You are not applying for a job at Hollywood as a screenplay writer. You are taking a test that wants you to play by some well-defined and simple rules.
- ❑ Pay close attention to the choice of words used in the answer choice, and pick one that accords with the **literal** interpretation of the anchor phrase information. Do NOT APPLY A **LIBERAL** interpretation of the anchor phrase information.

Let us move on.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE AND THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE PASSAGE

The test will also require that you identify the '**main idea**' or the '**main purpose**' of the passage'. Most test-takers are intimidated by the prospect of having to deal with voluminous information in the process of discerning the central idea. But this concern is somewhat misplaced.

The central idea is always a simple piece of information such as

- ❑ The new theory has great practical significance;
- ❑ Investment in service does not always produce beneficial results;
- ❑ The humans are posing a threat to a fragile marine ecosystem called coral reefs;
- ❑ Ethnicity as practiced in the United States is about using culture as a lever with which to get ethnic groups organized around issues;
- ❑ Britain is a model for privatized economy;
- ❑ The admirers of Watteau are oblivious of the grim background of the artist's work;

Of course, there will be a lot of small and discrete details relating to the central idea, and the 'anchor phrase' questions will deal with these small and discrete pieces of information as we have seen in the preceding discussion.

In order to get the hang of the big picture, do the following:

- ❑ Do not be intimidated by the size of the passage. The longer the passage, the more discrete items of information are woven together, and the more questions the test authors can ask. A longer passage is not necessarily a more difficult passage. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Some shorter passages are so dense that comprehension is a **Sisyphean task**.
- ❑ Do not be intimidated by the subject of the passage. Bear in mind that some passages discuss ideas that are more familiar to some than to others, and no passage is designed to be impossible to comprehend. The test, with all its warts and all, is not about giving you a hard time but about making sure that you can get the essence of a set of information provided to you.
- ❑ You should be able to get the hang of the big picture and the main purpose of the passage or the author by reading the first paragraph in its entirety at a NORMAL PACE, the first two sentences of the second paragraph, and the last sentence of the passage. If you notice that the passage is organized in such a way that the second paragraph begins to describe an example, you can stop reading further because the information about an example can never be the main purpose of the passage or the central idea of the passage. An example is used to illustrate the central idea, and is not the primary purpose of the passage.

Do not attempt speed reading when you follow the above strategy. Speed-reading does not give you a good understanding of the issue discussed, and does not help you hone in on the correct answer by parsing words.

If you are tempted to pick an answer choice using any of the following phrases and words, control yourself.

- ❑ Data
- ❑ Approach
- ❑ 'illustrate'
- ❑ primary purpose
- ❑ only purpose
- ❑ any superlative such as 'the best way' or the 'quickest way'
- ❑ Majority.
- ❑ Reasonable
- ❑ Success

Also, *any information stated in the context of an example* cannot be the primary purpose or the central idea of the passage.

Also, watch out for any answer choice using

- ❑ 'cute phrases' restated from the passage;
- ❑ jargon laden statements;
- ❑ extreme

You should also try to understand **the way the passage is organized**. For example, the first paragraph in the passage might deal with a new theory and the second paragraph might describe an example to illustrate the new theory outlined in the opening paragraph. Also, each reading comprehension passage will provide a contrasting piece of information. For example, the passage might be about the perceived influence of transcendentalists over Martin Luther King's philosophy of passive resistance to "unjust" laws. In passing, the passage might mention that most transcendentalists believed in the reform of the individual whereas King believed in the transformation of the society. Words such as "however", "but", "yet", "in contrast", "whereas", and "rather" will tell you that you are about to read a contrasting piece of information in the passage. Be sure to understand this macro level contrast and expect to be tested on this understanding repeatedly. The strategy for getting the hang of the big picture is outlined in the next paragraph.

Big picture strategy: Read the passage at a normal pace and try to develop the big-picture understanding of what the passage is talking about. Do not get bogged down with details. Do NOT try to memorize details. If some sections of the passage read like you are going through a root canal when the effect of the anesthetic is wearing off, do not waste time trying to understand the difficult sections. Do not read and re-read the passage or sections of the passage. You will be wasting a lot of time in doing so. After all, the big picture understanding is good for answering one question asking you about the "main idea" or the "primary concern of the author". If you hone the skill to pay attention to choice of words, you can easily pick the right answer for such questions. Occasionally, you will get a question asking you to identify the "organization of the passage". If you organize your understanding in terms of what the passage initially talks about and what it does later, you should do just fine.

Bear in mind that the passages are for the most part objective evaluations of a study or a theory or a person or a book. When you are about to pick your answer for the main idea question – or for an anchor phrase question – be sure to watch out for extreme descriptions (such as 'to dramatize the beneficial effects of ayurveda'), politically incorrect or insensitive information (such as 'multinational corporations are exploiting the resources in third world countries'), or jargonized statements (such as 'highlight the paradoxical nature of the dastardly diffidence shown by the Mayans'.) ***As a rule, the answer choice you want to pick must be expressed in simple, lay-person language. Comprehension cannot be tested by having you pick answer choices using incomprehensible jargons. Bear this in mind.***

Let us see how you can answer the **Main Idea** question even though your understanding of the big picture is not perfect. Let us take a look at the passage in the following page:

00:54		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		14 of 41	
Questions 12 to 15		Beginning			
At the end of the nineteenth century, a rising interest in Native American customs and an increasing desire to understand Native American culture (5) prompted ethnologists to begin recording the life stories of Native Americans. Ethnologists had a distinct reason for wanting to hear the stories: they were after linguistic or anthropological data (10) that would supplement their own field observations, and they believed that the personal stories, even of a single individual, could increase their understanding of the cultures that they had (15) been observing from without. In addition many ethnologists at the turn of the century believed that Native American manners and customs were rapidly disappearing, and that it was (20) important to preserve for posterity as much information as could be adequately recorded before the cultures disappeared forever. There were, however, arguments				The primary purpose of the passage as a whole is to ☐ question an explanation ☐ correct a misconception ☐ critique a methodology ☐ discredit an idea ☐ clarify an ambiguity	
Test Quit	Section Exit	 Time	 Help		Answer Confirm
			 Next		

Take a look at the above screen reproduced from a practice test. As you can see, you do not have access to the rest of the “story” – as Paul Harvey would say – but let us see whether we can answer the “Main Idea” question by simply using our skill in paying careful attention to choice of words.

Let us quickly read through the passage on the left-hand side of the screen and see where the passage is headed. The passage is about ethnologists wanting to record the life stories of Native Americans as a means to supplementing their studies “from without” and as a means to preserving for posterity ‘information’. We also notice that there is a contrasting information beginning to be expressed in the second paragraph but we do not know what the second paragraph is about and we do not know whether there is a third paragraph. In the actual test, you can scroll down and see the entire passage. But the purpose of this discussion is to understand that we can do very well by simply paying attention to the choice of words in the answer choices even though our broad understanding is at best sketchy or incomplete.

The five answer choices are:

- ◆ Question an explanation
- ◆ Correct a misconception
- ◆ Critique a methodology
- ◆ Discredit an idea
- ◆ Clarify an ambiguity

We are dealing with the “Main Idea” question. On the basis of our cursory reading, we notice that choice 1 is not good. The author is not trying to question an explanation. The tone of the passage at the outset does not indicate that.

Choice 2 is not good either because, as far as we can tell, the author is not correcting a misconception. The general trend of discussion in the opening paragraph does not point to an attempt to “correct a misconception”.

Choice 3 appears good because the author is beginning to describe a “methodology” used by “ethnologists”, and it is more than likely that in the rest of the passage, the author continues with his critique of the methods used by ethnologists. Let us examine the other two remaining options and if there is no better one, we will come back and confirm this choice. For now, let us click on this choice, indicating that it is a good short-list.

Choice 4 appears to be wide off the mark. The author is not discussing any IDEA in the passage, at least not in the opening paragraph. The general trend of discussion points to a further elaboration of the methodology. Let us kill this choice.

Choice 5 is also not good. Look at the wording of the choice: “clarify an ambiguity”. There is no attempt at clarifying any ambiguity as far as we can read, and it is unlikely that in the remaining one or two paragraphs, the author will attempt to do so.

We must confirm choice 3 and move on.

As you can see, we knew very little about the passage and yet, we managed to hone in on the right answer by simply paying attention to the choice of words.

Let us try another screen and see how we can apply this skill even though we may not know the content of the entire passage.

00:49	GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal	20 of 41												
Questions 20 to 23 Beginning														
Neotropical coastal mangrove forests are usually “zonal,” with certain mangrove species found predominantly in the seaward (5) portion of the habitat and other mangrove species on the more landward portions of the coast. The earliest research on mangrove forests produced descriptions of (10) species distribution from shore to land, without exploring the causes of the distributions. The idea that zonation is caused by plant succession was (15) first expressed by J. H. Davis in a study of Florida mangrove forests. According to Davis’ scheme, the shoreline is being extended in a seaward direction because of the (20) “land-building” role of mangroves, which, by trapping sediments over time, extend the shore. As a habitat gradually becomes more inland as the shore extends,	The primary purpose of the passage is to ☐ refute the idea that the zonation exhibited in mangrove forests is caused by adaptation to salinity ☐ describe the pattern of zonation typically found in Florida mangrove forests ☐ argue that Davis’ succession paradigm cannot be successfully applied to Florida mangrove forests ☐ discuss hypotheses that attempt to explain the zonation of coastal mangrove forests ☐ establish that plants that do well in saline forest environments require salt to achieve maximum metabolic efficiency	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Test</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Section</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Time</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Quit</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Exit</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Time</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">?</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Answer</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">→</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Help</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Confirm</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Next</td> </tr> </table>	Test	Section	Time	Quit	Exit	Time	?	Answer	→	Help	Confirm	Next
Test	Section	Time												
Quit	Exit	Time												
?	Answer	→												
Help	Confirm	Next												

We are privy, once again, to “half the story”, and let us see whether we can answer the “main idea” question by trying to get an idea of where the passage is headed and by paying careful attention to choices of words in the answer choices.

We learn from the first half of the story that the passage is about a theory by Mr. Davis, explaining the “zonation” as caused by plant succession. We do not know “Paul Harvey’s* rest of the story” (*Paul Harvey is a radio commentator who runs a syndicated segment called “rest of the story”, in which he tries to take us behind a well-known story and explain the mysterious backgrounds) but we should expect another theory to come up somewhat contradicting Davis’ theory. (It does in the second paragraph, but we are not supposed to know that for now).

Let us take a look at the answer choices and see whether the wording of the answer choices is consistent with our early understanding of the passage.

Choice 1 talks about “refuting an idea that zonation was caused by adaptation to salinity”. In the early part of the passage, the part that **usually**, though not always, sets the tone for the rest of the passage, there is no mention of salinity and there is no denial of anything. We will err on the safe side and not pick this choice.

Choice 2 talks about “describing the pattern of zonation typically found in Florida mangrove forests”. We notice from our initial cursory reading that “Florida Mangrove forests” were used as an example by Davis to explain zonation. We will see a bit later in this discussion that an example used in the passage CANNOT be part of the central idea. We can safely eliminate this choice.

Choice 3 talks about “arguing that Davis’ paradigm does not apply to Florida mangrove forests”. That statement appears to be a contradiction, if anything. Let us kill this choice.

Choice 4 talks about “discussing a **hypothesis** that explains the zonation of coastal mangrove forests”. Our initial reading appears to confirm this statement. Let us click on this choice and keep it as a viable option, and confirm it after we have examined choice 5.

Choice 5 talks about “forests that do well in a saline environment and about metabolic efficiency”. We have not read anything about salinity yet and may be it is coming up later on in the passage. But the best statement appears to be choice 4 and we will confirm it.

Later on in the passage, there is a discussion of salinity as a factor that keeps competition out of the way, but that is not what the entire passage is about.

The upshot of the preceding discussion is that we can do very well, thank you, without the benefit of the entire passage especially for answering the “main idea” questions. **But if you have the benefit of the ability to read the entire passage and the skill to parse words, there is no reason on earth why you cannot pick the correct answer to the “main idea” question.**

We are not advocating that you attempt to answer the Main Idea question, without developing a broad understanding initially, but we are saying that wasting too much time on the initial read of the passage in order to develop a solid understanding may be a waste of time, especially in the context of a timed adaptive test. Think about it.

Let us take a look at an entire passage and see how we can answer the “main idea” question on the basis of our “more complete understanding”. The passage appears on the next page.

PASSAGE:

Two recent publications offer different assessments of the career of the famous British nurse Florence Nightingale. A book by Anne Summers seeks to debunk the idealizations and present a reality at odds with Nightingale's heroic reputation. According to Summers, Nightingale's importance during the Crimean War has been exaggerated: not until near the war's end did she become supervisor of the female nurses. Additionally, Summers writes that the contribution of the nurses to the relief of the wounded was at best marginal. The prevailing problems of military medicine were caused by army organizational practices, and the addition of a few nurses to the medical staff could be no more than a symbolic gesture. Nightingale's place in the national pantheon, Summers asserts, is largely due to the propagandistic efforts of contemporary newspaper reporters.

By **Contrast**, the editors of a new volume of Nightingale's letters view Nightingale as a person who significantly influenced not only her own age but also subsequent generations. They highlight her ongoing efforts to reform sanitary conditions after the war. For example, when she learned that peacetime living conditions in British barracks were so horrible that the death rate of enlisted men far exceeded that of neighboring civilian populations, she succeeded in persuading the government to establish a Royal Commission on the Health of the Army. She used sums raised through public contributions to found a nurses' training hospital in London. Even in administrative matters, the editors assert, her practical intelligence was formidable: as recently as 1947 the British Army's medical services were still using the cost-accounting system she had devised in the 1860's.

I believe that the evidence of her letters supports continued respect for Nightingale's brilliance and creativity. When counseling a village schoolmaster to encourage children to use their faculties of observation, she sounds like a modern educator. Her insistence on classifying the problems of the needy in order to devise appropriate treatments is similar to the approach of modern social workers. **In sum**, although Nightingale may not have achieved all of her goals during the Crimean War, her breadth of vision and ability to realize ambitious projects have earned her an eminent place among the ranks of social pioneers.

1. The passage is primarily concerned with evaluating

- (A) the importance of Florence Nightingale's innovations in the field of nursing
- (B) contrasting approaches to the writing of historical biography
- (C) contradictory accounts of Florence Nightingale's historical significance
- (D) the quality of health care in nineteenth-century England
- (E) the effect of the Crimean War on developments in the field of health care

A () B () C () D () E ()

Our initial reading of the passage at NORMAL pace gives us the following picture:

- ◆ There are two opposing views on Nightingale's contributions and her place in history. One account by Summers is less than flattering and tells us that Nightingale is over-rated. The other account by the Editors is favorable to the lady. The author agrees in summary with the Editors' account of Nightingale's worth.

Let us examine the choices and see which one of the five choices best restates this understanding.

(A) the importance of Florence Nightingale's innovations in the field of nursing.

This choice misses the point by a wide margin, and does not talk about the opposing views on Nightingale's contributions and her place in history. Let us not pick this choice.

(B) contrasting approaches to the writing of historical biography.

We are not dealing different "approaches" to the "writing of biography" in the passage. None of the two accounts deals with the "life story" of Nightingale. Let us kill this choice. The wording is convoluted.

(C) contradictory accounts of Florence Nightingale's historical significance

This one seems to be right on the money, and agrees with our understanding of the essence of the passage. Let us short-list this choice and come back and confirm it.

(D) the quality of health care in nineteenth-century England.

The passage is NOT a discussion the "health care" in England. Sanitary conditions are mentioned in passing in the context of discussing Nightingale's contributions but the entire passage is not about sanitary or health conditions.

(E) the effect of the Crimean War on developments in the field of health care.

Once again, the wording of this choice puts a lot of weight on "health care" and there is no mention of Nightingale. Let us not waste time checking out this option further.

As you can see, our broad initial understanding combined with our ability to "pay close attention to choice of words" helped us pick the correct answers no matter whether we had the benefit of the understanding of the entire passage information or only the initial part of it.

Let us try a couple of more passages and make sure that we can indeed pick the correct answer by developing an initial big-picture understanding and by paying close attention to the wording of answer choices.

PASSAGE:

The fact that superior service can generate a competitive advantage for a company does not mean that every attempt at improving service will create such an advantage. Investments in service, like those in production and distribution, must be balanced against other types of investments on the basis of direct, tangible benefits such as cost reduction and increased revenues. If a company is already effectively on a par with its competitors because it provides service that avoids a damaging reputation and keeps customers from leaving at an unacceptable rate, then investment in higher service levels may be wasted, since service is a deciding factor for customers only in extreme situations.

This truth was not apparent to managers of one regional bank, which failed to improve its competitive position despite its investment in reducing the time a customer had to wait for a teller. The bank managers did not recognize the level of customer inertia in the consumer banking industry that arises from the inconvenience of switching banks. Nor did they analyze their service improvement to determine whether it would attract new customers by producing a new standard of service that would excite customers or by proving difficult for competitors to copy. The only merit of the improvement was that it could be easily described to the customers.

You will notice that the sentences in this passage are long-winded and seem to go on forever. When you read such long-winded, near-run-on sentences, learn to break them up and make sense of the shorter component versions. How do we do that? Take this long-drawn-out sentence from the passage:

If a company is already effectively on a par with its competitors because it provides service that avoids a damaging reputation and keeps customers from leaving at an unacceptable rate, then investment in higher service levels may be wasted, since service is a deciding factor for customers only in extreme situations.

We will read this sentence in the following manner:

- If a company is on a par with its competitors, it is wasting its resources by investing in service enhancement.
- What is the test of parity? The company provides reputable service and has customer retention at an acceptable rate.

Notice how we managed to rewrite the passage information in lay person's terms, and how that act solidified our understanding of what the passage states.

What is the passage talking about?

- The passage is talking about investment in service enhancement, and how and when such investment will not produce a competitive advantage for a company. The tone is one of caution initially and one of criticism when discussing some specific actions of bank managers used as example.

Let us take a look at the “main idea” question for this passage and see whether we can pick the correct answer based on this broad understanding.

The primary purpose of the passage is to

- (A) contrast possible outcomes of a type of business investment.
- (B) suggest more careful evaluation of a type of business investment.
- (C) illustrate various ways in which a type of business investment could fail to enhance revenues.
- (D) trace the general problems of a company to a certain type of business investment.
- (E) criticize the way in which managers tend to analyze the costs and benefits of business investments.

A () B () C () D () E ()

Let us take a close look at choice A, and examine the wording of answer choices carefully.

- (A) **contrast** possible **outcomes** of a type of business investment.

The author does not appear to be ‘contrasting’ possible ‘outcomes’ of investment in service improvement. There is just one outcome: wasted resources. The wording of this choice is not appropriate for the way things are described in the passage. Let us kill this choice and move on.

- (B) suggest more careful evaluation of a type of business investment.

This one seems to be right on the money. The author appears to suggest caution when making investment decisions in the area of service enhancement. There is nothing “screwed-up” about the rest of the wording in the answer choice, and this option is a strong contender for selection. We must come back to confirm it if we do not find a better description of the essence of the passage.

- (C) **illustrate** various ways in which a type of business investment could fail to **enhance revenues**.

When you examine the wording of answer choices, be sure to apply the LITERAL meaning to words. “Illustrate” means “to show example”. The primary purpose of the passage does not appear to be to show examples. An example has a limited purpose in a passage: to illustrate the central idea, not act as the central idea itself. Also, the phrase “various ways” appears to be out of line. The author is talking about “getting a competitive advantage”, and not merely about “increased revenues”. Overall, this choice is messed up, and not worth further examination.

(D) trace the general problems of a company to a certain type of business investment.

Once again, the author is not “tracing” the problems of a company and attributing the problems to one kind of investment. The example of a bank is used to show that if a company is on a par with its competitors, then investment in service improvement will not provide a further competitive advantage. This choice has “problem” written all over it, and let us take a walk from this option.

(E) criticize the way in which managers tend to analyze the costs and benefits of business investments.

The author does criticize the bank managers, but we must keep in mind that the bank managers are used in the context of an example, and an Example can NEVER EVER be the central idea. This choice is tempting but we must keep the golden rule in mind at all times: DO NOT PICK A CHOICE THAT STATES AN EXAMPLE USED IN THE PASSAGE AS THE CENTRAL IDEA.

We must pick choice B.

How did we hone in on the correct answer for the central idea question for this passage? By developing a broad understanding that keeps out all nitty-gritty details and by paying close attention to choice of words in the answer options. Let us see whether we can apply this skill and come up with the correct answer for the next passage.

One Scientific discipline, during its early stages of development, is often related to another as an antithesis is to its thesis. The thesis discipline tends to concern itself with discovery and classification of phenomena, to offer holistic explanations emphasizing pattern and form, and to use existing phenomena. The paired or anti-discipline, on the other hand, can be characterized by a more focused approach, concentrating on the units of construction, and by a belief that the discipline can be reformulated in terms of the issues and explanations of the anti-discipline.

The relationship of cytology (cell biology) to biochemistry in the late nineteenth century, when both disciplines were growing at a rapid pace, exemplifies such a pattern. Researchers in cell biology found mounting evidence of an intricate cell architecture. They also deduced the mysterious choreography of the chromosomes during cell division. Many biochemists, on the other hand, remained skeptical of the idea that so much structure existed, arguing that the chemical reactions that occur in cytological preparations might create the appearance of such structures. Also, they stood apart from the debate then raging over whether protoplasm, the complex of living material within a cell, is homogeneous, network-like, granular, or foam-like. Their interest lay in the most “fundamental” issues of the chemical nature of protoplasm, especially the newly formulated enzyme theory of life.

In general, biochemists judged cytologists to be too ignorant of chemistry to grasp the basic processes, whereas cytologists considered the methods of biochemists inadequate to characterize the structures of the living cell. The renewal of Mendelian genetics and, later, progress in chromosome mapping did little at first to effect a synthesis.

Both sides were essentially correct. Biochemistry has more than justified its extravagant early claims by explaining so much of the cellular machinery. But in achieving this feat (mostly since 1950) it has been partially transformed into the new discipline of molecular biology – biochemistry that deals with spatial arrangements and movements of large molecules. At the same time, cytology has metamorphosed into modern cellular biology. Aided by electron microscopy, it has become more similar in language and outlook to molecular biology. The interaction of a discipline and its anti-discipline has moved both sciences towards a synthesis, namely molecular genetics.

This interaction between paired disciplines can have important results. In the case of late nineteenth century cell research, progress was fueled by competition among the various attitudes and issues derived from cell biology and biochemistry. Joseph Fruton, a biochemist, has suggested that such competition and the resulting tensions among researchers are a principal source of vitality and “are likely to lead to unexpected and exciting novelties in the future, as they have in the past.”

What is the passage talking about?

- The passage is talking about how opposing and adversarial disciplines can interact with one another leading to a synthesis and other beneficial effects. An example of two adversarial disciplines – cytology and biochemistry – is given to exemplify the above statement.

A major element of contrast addressed in the passage appears to be that the cytologists were preoccupied with the “cell structure” whereas the biochemists were driven by the “chemical nature of protoplasm”.

Try to include an understanding of a major contrast in your big-picture comprehension. You will find this understanding useful when you deal with some answer choices that might state the opposite.

Let us examine the “main idea” question, and see how we can use this “big-picture” understanding and our skill at parsing words to come up with the correct answer.

1. Which of the following best states the central idea of the passage?

- ☐ Antithetical scientific disciplines can both stimulate and **hinder** one another’s research in complex ways.
The author does describe an adversarial relationship between two specific disciplines mentioned as example to illustrate the central idea, but does not suggest that the relationship hinders research in any way, leave alone in complex ways. It appears that the example disciplines were pursued by the respective votaries without let or hindrance. There is an element of disdain evident in the discussion for each other’s approach but “hinder in complex ways” not an acceptable description.
- ☒ **Antithetical scientific disciplines often interact with one another in ways that can be highly useful.**
This choice appears to have correct and clear wording that describes the essence of the passage. The example disciplines did “interact” and eventually led to fusion and a betterment. Let us short-list choice and come back to confirm it if we do not find a better description.
- ☐ As disciplines such as cytology and biochemistry advance, their interaction **necessarily** leads to a synthesis of their approaches.
This is a tempting choice and well written for the most part but the description “necessarily leads to a synthesis” is not in line with the scope of the passage. “They often lead to a synthesis” is a better description. We should take a walk from this choice for this reason alone.
- ☐ Cell research in the late nineteenth century was plagued by disagreements between cytologists and biochemists.
The wording of this choice is too specific and uses the discussion of example disciplines as the central idea. Let us remember that an example used cannot be the central idea.
- ☐ In the late nineteenth century, cytologists and biochemists made many valuable discoveries that advanced scientific understanding of the cell.

Once again, we are dealing with a choice that states an example provided in the passage as the central idea. We must not be tempted to select this option.

We must confirm choice 2.

⇒ Antithetical scientific disciplines often interact with one another in ways that can be highly useful.

Notice how our ability to pay attention to choice of words plays a critical role in our ability to pick the correct answer. Remember: Parsing words is the name of the game.

Type of question	What is it about?	How do you answer the question?	What do you watch out for?
TITLE / THEME QUESTION	It is about the core theme around which the whole passage is built. It is a test of your big-picture understanding. Try to include any major contrast mentioned in the passage in this “macro” level understanding. You will find such an understanding a great benefit when you examine answer choices for <i>all kinds of questions</i>, let alone the central idea question. ⇒ Do not get bogged down with details. ⇒ Do not read and re-read sections of the passage difficult to make sense of. Such difficult sections <u>may not</u> be critical to an understanding of the central idea.	Read the passage at a normal pace ONCE and develop a big-picture understanding. Then, pay close attention to choice of words and pick a choice that best restates the essence of the passage. ⇒ <i>Do not pick choices that state that the passage is about any information provided as an example.</i> The question is about what constitutes the core theme of the entire passage.	• Choices that are too narrow. (supporting idea stated as the central idea, or examples stated as central idea) • Choices that contradict the central idea. (Example: If the passage says that the coral reefs thrive under nutrient-deficient environment, the choice will say that the reefs will perish under nutrient-deficiency..)

Now that we have developed an understanding of how to deal with the “central idea” question, let us move on to other categories of questions you will come across in Reading Comprehension.

EXPLICIT INFORMATION QUESTIONS:

How do you recognize Explicit information questions? If you come across questions along the following lines, you know that you are going to have to identify the “anchor phrase” used in the question stem and do an anchor-phrase look-up of the passage to identify the expression that will be restated in an answer choice.

- ⇒ “According to the author/passage,”
- ⇒ “The author mentions XYZ in order to do.....”
- ⇒ “The passage supports which of the following about”
- ⇒ “All of the following are mentioned in the passage EXCEPT....”

☒ What is an anchor phrase?

The question stem will have a phrase that is usually restated from the passage. Consider the following example:

“According to the passage, which one of the following is true of **Emerson and Fuller**?”

“**Emerson and Fuller**” will be our anchor phrase, and we need to go back to the passage, identify the reference to “Emerson and Fuller”, read what the passage says in the context of the anchor phrase, and return to the answer choices for identification of the one that best restates the anchor phrase information. Be sure to recognize “paraphrasing” of the passage information. Paraphrasing will involve replacement of at least one word in the anchor phrase look up statement by a synonym.

For example, let us say that our anchor phrase look up reads:

“**Typical symptoms** of reef **decline** are destabilized herbivore population and an increasing abundance of algae and filter-feeding animals”.

The answer choice corresponding to this statement might read:

“**characteristic signs** of reef **deterioration**”

Notice how “typical” has been replaced by its synonym “characteristic”, “symptoms” by “signs”, and “decline” by “deterioration”. In fact, this is an extreme case of paraphrasing and it is not unusual or uncommon to find such excess in answer choices. Usually, the answer choice will replace just one word with a synonym. Consider the following “anchor phrase statement”:

“The bank managers did not analyze their service improvements to determine whether it was something that the competitors could have easily **imitated**”.

The answer choice corresponding to this anchor phrase statement will read:

“The bank managers did not analyze their service improvements to determine whether the innovation could be easily **copied** by others.”

If the anchor phrase statement reads: “Investment in service needs to be **weighed** on the same basis as those in other areas such as marketing and production”, the corresponding answer choice will read: “Investment in service needs to be **balanced** on the same basis as those in marketing and production.”

Be sure to recognize paraphrasing when you review your answer choices after you have looked up the anchor phrase statement in the passage. In fact, if you can clearly identify a paraphrased word, you can save time by picking that choice and moving on. It might be a waste of time to check out the other options.

⇒ When you do anchor-phrase look-ups, be sure to be on guard against a tendency to recognize “cute phrases” and pick a choice that restates verbatim the cute phrases.

As you read through the passage, some phrases will stick in your mind, and you will be tempted to pick choices that use those phrases verbatim. An example of such cute phrases is “tangible benefits.” We are sure to recognize this cute phrase in answer choices because there is a nice ring to it. Be on guard against a tendency to pick choices that use the cute phrases verbatim in answer choices.

⇒ Also, do not pick choices that are not context specific. If an answer choice you find restates the passage information, which is not mentioned in the context of the anchor phrase, you should not pick that choice.

⇒ Do not pick choices that go beyond the scope of anchor phrase statement.

Let us see how we can use this powerful tool called “anchor phrase lookup” to identify choices that will be correct every time.

You will see that dealing with an explicit question is all about your ability to recognize the anchor phrase in the question stem, and to identify the choice that best restates the anchor phrase look up information.

⇒ DO NOT PICK AN ANSWER CHOICE WITHOUT DOING ANCHOR PHRASE LOOK UP.

⇒ DO NOT TRY TO PICK ANSWER CHOICES BASED ON YOUR “MEMORY”.

01:07 GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal 6 of 41

Questions 5 to 7 Beginning

Seeking a competitive advantage, some professional service firms (for example, firms providing advertising, accounting, or health care services) have considered offering unconditional guarantees of satisfaction. Such guarantees specify what clients can expect and what the firm will do if it fails to fulfill these expectations. Particularly with first-time clients, an unconditional guarantee can be an effective marketing tool if the client is very cautious, the firm's fees are high, the negative consequences of bad service are grave, or business is difficult to obtain through referrals and word-of-mouth. However, an unconditional guarantee can sometimes hinder marketing efforts. With its implication that failure is possible, the guarantee may, paradoxically,

Which of the following is cited in the passage as a goal of some professional service firms in offering unconditional guarantees of satisfaction?

☐ A limit on the firm's liability
☐ Successful competition against other firms
☐ Ability to justify fee increases
☐ Attainment of an outstanding reputation in a field
☐ Improvement in the quality of the firm's service

Test Section Time

Quit Exit

?

Answer

→

Help Confirm Next

SAT.

⇒ Include the *adjectives* in “anchor phrases” when you do the ‘look up’. For example, if the question stem uses “*some* psychologists”, then look for reference to “*some* psychologists” in the passage, not just ‘psychologists’.

The good news about these questions is that we can deal with just about one or two short sentences in the passage and answer most questions, one question at a time.

Small sections of the passage are easy to deal with, and that makes our job a lot easier and more enjoyable. Consider the above screen from a practice test. We do not know the big-picture but we can still answer an explicit question based on our ability to identify the anchor phrase in the question stem and on our understanding of the anchor phrase statement.

Our “**anchor phrase**” in the question stem is “**some professional service firms offering unconditional guarantee of satisfaction**”. If you take a look at the first sentence of the passage, we have the *anchor phrase* staring us in the face. The question is about the “**goal**” of these firms in offering such a guarantee.

Let us read the sentence in the passage corresponding to this anchor phrase.

“**Seeking a competitive advantage**, some professional service firms (for example, firms providing advertising, accounting, or health care services) have considered offering unconditional guarantee of satisfaction.”

“**Seeking a competitive advantage**” is a phrase that tells us that these service firms are pursuing a competitive advantage or have “*competitive advantage*” as their goal. Let us see which of the five choices restates this fact we understood from reading the anchor phrase statement.

Choice 1: “a limit on firm’s liability.”

There is no mention of “liability” in the anchor phrase statement we have just examined..

☒ Choice 2: “Successful competition against other firms”.

That looks like the one we ought to pick. “competitive advantage” is paraphrased to “successful competition against others”. Let us examine the other remaining options and come back to confirm this choice.

Choice 3: “Ability to justify fee increase”.

The anchor phrase statement we have seen does not talk about ‘fee increase’ at all.

Choice 4: “Attainment of outstanding reputation in the field”.

This is not mentioned as what the companies are seeking.

Choice 5: “Improvement in the quality of service.”

Once again, this is not mentioned as what the companies are “seeking” as a goal.

We must confirm choice 2. As you can see, our ability to identify the anchor phrase and stay focused on the one sentence that uses the “anchor phrase” has helped us pick the correct answer with reasonable efficiency and in reasonable time.

Let us recap the “anchor phrase strategy” for explicit questions:

- ☒ Identify the anchor phrase in the question stem.
- ☒ Identify the sentence or sentences using the anchor phrase and relevant to the anchor phrase.
- ☒ Stay strictly within the scope of the anchor phrase statement in the passage.
- ☒ Pick a choice that restates the essence of the anchor phrase statement in a paraphrased manner.

Let us consider another “anchor phrase” question and see how we can apply the elements of the above strategy.

01:08 GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal 5 of 41

Questions 5 to 7	End
ging for business. In legal and health care services, it may mislead clients by suggesting that lawsuits or medical procedures will have guaranteed outcomes. Indeed, professional service firms with outstanding reputations and performance to match have little to gain from offering unconditional guarantees. And any firm that implements an unconditional guarantee without undertaking a commensurate commitment to quality of service is merely employing a potentially costly marketing gimmick.	The passage's description of the issue raised by unconditional guarantees for health care or legal services most clearly implies that which of the following is true? ☐ The legal and medical professions have standards of practice that would be violated by attempts to fulfill such unconditional guarantees. ☐ The result of a lawsuit or medical procedure cannot necessarily be determined in advance by the professionals handling a client's case. ☐ The dignity of the legal and medical professions is undermined by any attempts at marketing of professional services, including unconditional guarantees. ☐ Clients whose lawsuits or medical procedures have unsatisfactory outcomes cannot be adequately compensated by financial settlements alone. ☐ Predicting the monetary cost of legal or health care services is more difficult than predicting the monetary cost of other types of professional services.

Test Section Time ? Answer Help Confirm Next

This is an implied meaning question asking us to answer the question based on the **anchor phrase** “unconditional guarantee for health care or legal services”. Let us scroll down to line 31, which starts off with the anchor phrase identified in the stem.

- ☒ Be sure to scroll down and keep the statement using the anchor phrase near the top of the left hand side of the screen so that you will stay focused on this statement and you can pick the correct answer.

Let us read what the passage says in the context of anchor phrase statement:

“In legal and health care services, it may **mislead clients** by suggesting that law suits or medical procedures will have guaranteed outcomes”.

What is implied in this statement? **Outcomes CANNOT be guaranteed in legal suits and in medical procedures.**

Let us see what choice restates this implied meaning contained in the anchor phrase statement. Choice 2 does. None of the other choices has the same essence captured in it. Choice 4 does talk about “unsatisfactory outcomes” instead of about “unpredictable

outcomes”. Also, “monetary compensation” is a wrinkle not contained in the original anchor phrase statement identified in the passage.

Choice 5 talks about “predicting the monetary cost of predicting legal and health services is more difficult than predicting the cost of other services”. Our anchor phrase statement does not make any such comparison of “monetary costs”.

Choice 3 talks about the “dignity” of health care and legal professions. The anchor phrase statement does not talk about “dignity” of anything.

Choice 1 talks about “violating standards of practice”. The anchor phrase statement we read did not talk about any such violation.

We must confirm choice 2.

☒ Pick a choice that essentially recaptures the essence of the anchor phrase statement. Do not be tempted to deviate. Apply literal meanings to words used in the statements and in the answer choices. Do not apply charitable interpretations.

Let us see how we can use our “anchor phrase strategy” to deal with yet another question.

01:06		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		7 of 41	
Questions 5 to 7		More Available			
(20)	However, an unconditional guarantee can sometimes hinder marketing efforts. With its implication that failure is possible, the guarantee may, paradoxically,	Which of the following hypothetical situations best exemplifies the potential problem noted in the second sentence of the second paragraph (lines 22-27) ? ☐ A physician's unconditional guarantee of satisfaction encourages patients to sue for malpractice if they are unhappy with the treatment they receive. ☐ A lawyer's unconditional guarantee of satisfaction makes clients suspect that the lawyer needs to find new clients quickly to increase the firm's income. ☐ A business consultant's unconditional guarantee of satisfaction is undermined when the consultant fails to provide all of the services that are promised. ☐ An architect's unconditional guarantee of satisfaction makes clients wonder how often the architect's buildings fail to please clients. ☐ An accountant's unconditional guarantee of satisfaction leads clients to believe that tax returns prepared by the accountant are certain to be accurate.			
(25)	cause clients to doubt the service firm's ability to deliver the promised level of service. It may conflict with a firm's desire to appear sophisticated, or may				
(30)	even suggest that a firm is begging for business. In legal and health care services, it may mislead clients by suggesting that lawsuits or medical pro-				
(35)	cedures will have guaranteed outcomes. Indeed, professional service firms with outstanding reputations and performance to match have little to gain from				
(40)	offering unconditional guarantees. And any firm that implements an unconditional guarantee without undertaking				
Test	Section				
Quit	Exit				
		?	Answer	→	
		Help	Confirm	Next	

The anchor phrase is the “second sentence of the second paragraph (lines 22-27)”. Let us scroll down and keep the beginning of the line 22 near the top of the page. We are required to identify an example that best illustrates the information contained in these lines.

Let us read the sentence identified:

“With its implication that failure is possible, the guarantee may, paradoxically, cause the clients to **doubt the service firm’s ability to deliver the promised level of service”.**

The sentence is about “**doubt**” that the clients may entertain about the firm’s ability to deliver the promised level of service. Let us examine the choices and see in which example such doubt is ingrained.

Choice 1: “A physician’s unconditional guarantee encourages patients to sue for malpractice if they are unhappy with the treatment they receive.”

Did we see any mention of “doubt” in this choice? We did not. Let us move on.

Choice 2: “A lawyer’s unconditional guarantee of success makes clients suspect that the lawyer needs to find clients quickly in order to increase the firm’s income”.

Did we find any attribute of “doubt” in this statement? No, we did not. Let us keep going.

Choice 3: “A business consultant’s unconditional guarantee of satisfaction is undermined if the consultant fails to provide all of the services that are promised”.

Once again, is there any hint of “doubt” in the above statement? No. Let us go to the next option we have.

☒ Choice 4: “An architect’s unconditional guarantee of satisfaction makes clients wonder how often the architect’s buildings fail to please the clients”.

There we have it. This sentence has “doubt” written all over it. “Clients wonder” is the paraphrase for “clients doubt”. Let us short-list this option and come back to confirm it after we have examined choice 5.

Choice 5: “An accountant’s unconditional guarantee of satisfaction makes clients believe that the tax returns prepared by the accountant are bound to be accurate”.

There is no “doubt” implied in the above statement. On the contrary, there is an implication of a “lack of doubt”. Quite the opposite of what we are looking for.

We must confirm choice 4 and move on. Let us put the anchor phrase strategy to work with the next question.

00:43		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		33 of 41	
Questions 33 to 35		More Available			
have relied on the useful theory of human capital. According to this theory, investment in human capital—the acquisition of difficult job-related (10) skills—generally benefits individuals by making them eligible to engage in well-paid occupations. Women’s role as child bearers, however, results in interruptions in their participation in the (75) job market (as compared with men’s) and thus reduces their opportunities to acquire training for highly skilled work. In addition, the human capital theory explains why there was a high concen- (20) tration of women workers in certain low-skill jobs, such as weaving, but not in others, such as combing or carding, by positing that because of their pri- (25) mary responsibility in child rearing women took occupations that could be carried out in the home. There were, however, differences in pay scales that cannot be explained by the human capital theory. For				The author of the passage would be most likely to describe the explanation provided by the human capital theory for the high concentration of women in certain occupations in the seventeenth-century Florentine textile industry as ☐ well founded though incomplete ☐ difficult to articulate ☐ plausible but poorly substantiated ☐ seriously flawed ☐ contrary to recent research	
Test Quit	Section Exit	Time		Help	Answer Confirm
					Next

The anchor phrase is “*explanation provided by the human capital theory*”, and we notice that this anchor phrase is contained in the first sentence starting at line 27 at the bottom of the screen. If we take a peek at the explanation provided in the preceding paragraph, we notice that the author characterizes the “human capital theory” as “useful”. Yet, at the beginning of the next paragraph, the author uses the word “however” to suggest a contrast to the “usefulness” and states that “*the capital theory cannot explain the differences in pay scales*”. We begin to get the sense that that the author selectively approves of the “human capital theory”. Let us see what answer-choice captures the essence of this “**guarded approval**”.

☑ Choice 1: “well founded though incomplete”.

That sounds like a “guarded approval”. Let us short-list this choice and come back to it if we do not find a better one.

Choice 2: “difficult to articulate”.

That does NOT sound like “guarded approval”. Sounds more like a criticism. Let us move on.

Choice 3: “plausible but poorly substantiated”

What do we think of this tempting choice? The phrase “poorly substantiated” does not sit well with the “guarded approval” tone we identified. We have to let go of this choice in favor of choice 1.

Choice 4: “Seriously flawed”.

Sounds like a criticism, not like “guarded approval”

Choice 5: “Contrary to recent research”.

There is no mention of “recent research” in the anchor phrase statements, and there is no mention of any contrast with any other research.

We have to confirm choice 1.

☑ *You might have noticed that we did not have a full understanding of the “big picture”, but we could answer questions*

(1) by understanding the anchor phrase in the question stem, and

(2) by looking at the small section of the passage that uses the anchor phrase.

Let us see how we can hone our “anchor phrase strategic skills” by taking a look at the next test screen from a disclosed practice test:

00:37		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		35 of 41
Questions 33 to 35		End		
In addition, the human capital theory explains why there was a high concentration of women workers in certain low-skill jobs, such as weaving, but not in others, such as combing or carding, by positing that because of their primary responsibility in child rearing women took occupations that could be carried out in the home. There were, however, differences in pay scales that cannot be explained by the human capital theory. For example, male construction workers were paid significantly higher wages than female taffeta weavers. The wage difference between these two low-skill occupations stems from the segregation of labor by gender: because a limited number of occupations were open to women, there was a large supply of workers in their fields, and this “overcrowding” resulted in women receiving lower wages and men receiving higher wages.	Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the explanation provided by the human capital theory for women’s concentration in certain occupations in seventeenth-century Florence? ☐ Women were unlikely to work outside the home even in occupations whose hours were flexible enough to allow women to accommodate domestic tasks as well as paid labor. ☐ Parents were less likely to teach occupational skills to their daughters than they were to their sons. ☐ Women’s participation in the Florentine paid labor force grew steadily throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. ☐ The vast majority of female weavers in the Florentine wool industry had children. ☐ Few women worked as weavers in the Florentine silk industry, which was devoted to making cloths that required a high degree of skill to produce.			
Test Section Time	Quit Exit	? Help Answer Confirm Next		

Our anchor phrase is “*explanation provided by the Human capital theory for women’s concentration in certain occupations* in the 17th century Florence”, and we are required to identify a “weakening” piece of information that will provide a counter to the explanation offered by the theory. We are re-visiting critical reasoning in this question.

Let us understand what the explanation offered by the human capital theory is by reading the anchor phrase statement, and then see what choice will provide the best counter.

The anchor phrase statement starts at line 18, and let us read it:

“In addition, the human capital theory explains why there was a high concentration of women in some low-skill jobs, such as weaving, but not in others, such as combing and carding, by positing that because of their primary responsibility in child-rearing, women took occupations that could be carried out in the home”.

The essence of the above statement is that women were driven by “child rearing” instinct and wanted to carry out jobs that could help them deal with this obligation effectively. Working from home provided one such opportunity, and weaving could be done at home.

We need to look for a **counter** that **weakens** the above explanation by suggesting that women were **not** inclined to accept other kinds of jobs that allowed them the same flexibility they desired as home-based weaving did.

Let us examine the choices and see which one provides a counter along the other lines.

☒ Choice 1: “Women were less likely to work outside the home even in occupations whose hours were flexible enough to allow them to accommodate domestic tasks as well as paid labor”.

There you have it. The human capital theory posited that women took up low-skill jobs such as weaving because they gave the opportunity to carry out both domestic chores and paid tasks. Choice 1 weakens this explanation by stating that women were not inclined to accept other kinds of non-home jobs that gave them the flexibility they desired. This is a strong contender for selection. Let us short-list this choice and come back to confirm it if we do not find a better option.

Choice 2: “Parents were less likely to teach occupational skills to their daughters than they were to their sons”.

Parental inclination to teach skills is not part of the explanation provided by the human capital theory, and we must dismiss this choice as having extraneous and irrelevant information. We must also dismiss it because it does not weaken the explanation offered by the theory in any manner.

Choice 3: “Women’s participation in the Florentine paid labor force grew steadily throughout the 16th and 17th centuries”.

This is a tempting choice but we must know that may be, the number of home-based paid workers grew as explained by the capital theory. If that is true, then the theory is not weakened but solidified. We must conclude that this is not a good option.

Choice 4: “The vast majority of female weavers in the Florentine wool industry had children”.

This picture is in consonance with the human capital theory, if anything. The human capital theory posits that women were unwilling to accept jobs that could not be done from home and denied them the opportunity to do domestic tasks. This choice strengthens the theory, not weaken it. Let us move on.

Choice 5: “Few women worked as weavers in the Florentine silk industry, which was devoted to making cloths that required a high degree of skill to produce”.

The theory posits that women’s employment was concentrated in “low-skill” jobs and the fact that women did not occupy jobs requiring high degree of skills is in conformity with the human capital theory. This choice also strengthens the theory, not weaken it.

We must confirm choice 1. Let us continue to apply our anchor phrase strategy.

00:46		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		21 of 41	
Questions 20 to 23		End			
in competitive success among mangrove species. Research (60) suggests that mangroves will normally dominate highly saline regions, although not because they require salt. Rather, they are metabolically efficient (and (65) hence grow well) in portions of an environment whose high salinity excludes plants adapted to lower salinities. Tides create different degrees of salinity along (70) a coastline. The characteristic mangrove species of each zone should exhibit a higher metabolic efficiency at that salinity than will any potential invader, including other species of mangrove.				Information in the passage indicates that the author would most probably regard which of the following statements as INCORRECT? ☐ Coastal mangrove forests are usually zonal. ☐ Hurricanes interrupt the process of accretion and succession that extends existing shorelines. ☐ Species of plants that thrive in a saline habitat require salt to flourish. ☐ Plants with the highest metabolic efficiency in a given habitat tend to exclude other plants from that habitat. ☐ Shorelines in areas with weak currents and tides are more likely to be extended through the process of accumulation of sediment than are shorelines with strong currents and tides.	
Test	Section		?	Answer	
Quit	Exit	Time	Help	Confirm	Next

When you take a look at the question, you notice that there is no “anchor phrase” you can work with. In fact, this question asks you to deal with “five different” anchor phrases contained in the five different choices. A bummer, if you ask us. It is a sure recipe for wasting time.

The question asks us to pick a choice that is not true. The choice usually will contradict information contained in the passage. The best strategy for dealing with such questions is to scan the choices and see whether you can identify one that is more than likely to be a contradiction. In this discussion of the passage, we did not have the luxury of the “big picture” understanding, but in the actual test, you will know the big picture. If you do, you will see that the stuff about “salinity” mentioned in choice 3 does not appear to be on the up and up. Let us use “saline habitat” as the anchor phrase and check out the statement that uses this anchor phrase in the passage. The sentence that starts in line 59 tells us that “mangroves flourish in high saline areas **NOT because they require salt** but because they are metabolically efficient”. There we have it. It appears that choice 3 is not true because it states that “species that thrive in a saline habitat require salt to flourish”. Notice the clear contradiction. Let us pick this choice and move on.

00:45		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		22 of 41	
Questions 20 to 23		Beginning			
Neotropical coastal mangrove forests are usually “zonal,” with certain mangrove species found (5) predominantly in the seaward portion of the habitat and other mangrove species on the more landward portions of the coast. The earliest research on mangrove forests produced descriptions of (10) species distribution from shore to land, without exploring the causes of the distributions. The idea that zonation is caused by plant succession was (15) first expressed by J. H. Davis in a study of Florida mangrove forests. According to Davis’ scheme, the shoreline is being extended in a seaward direction because of the (20) “land-building” role of mangroves, which, by trapping sediments over time, extend the shore. As a habitat gradually becomes more inland as the shore extends,				According to the passage, the earliest research on mangrove forests produced which of the following? ☐ Data that implied random patterns of mangrove species distribution ☐ Descriptions of species distributions suggesting zonation ☐ Descriptions of the development of mangrove forests over time ☐ Reclassification of species formerly thought to be identical ☐ Data that confirmed the “land-building” role of mangroves	
Test Quit	Section Exit	Time	? Help	Answer Confirm	Next

Our “anchor phrase” is “*earliest research on mangrove forests*”, and let us identify the section of the passage that uses this phrase. “According to the author” tells us that the choice we must select must essentially restate the anchor phrase information.

We have identified the anchor phrase statement in the sentence starting in **line 8**. Let us read what it says:

“The **earliest research on mangrove forests** **produced** descriptions of species distribution from shore to land, without exploring the causes of such distribution.”

The question is: **What did the earliest research on mangrove forests PRODUCE?** The answer is: **descriptions of species distribution**. Let us see what answer choice will restate this, preferably in a *paraphrased manner*.

Choice 1: “Data that implied random patterns of species distribution”

Not a good one. We are looking for a simple “descriptions of species distribution”. “Random pattern” is a wrinkle that we did not read in the anchor phrase statement. We must not pick this choice because this choice uses a wrinkle.

☒ Choice 2: “**Descriptions of species distribution** suggesting zonation”.

It is right on the money. This choice best restates the anchor phrase statement. Let us short-list this option and come back to confirm it after we examine the three remaining options.

Choice 3: “Description of the development of mangrove forests over time.”

The anchor phrase statement does not talk about “description of development of mangrove forests”. Let us kill this choice.

Choice 4: “Reclassification of species formerly thought to be identical”.

The anchor phrase statement is about “description of species distribution”, not about “reclassification”. This option is no good.

Choice 5: “Data that confirmed the “land-building” role of mangroves.”

“Land-building” is a wrinkle that was not identified in the anchor phrase statement. We cannot select this choice.

Let us go back and confirm choice 2.

As you can see, our “anchor phrase strategy” works every time. You must identify the anchor phrase in the question stem and read the part of the passage that contains the anchor phrase and pick a choice that essentially captures the literal meaning or the essence of the anchor phrase statement.

Let us put this strategy to work in the next example.

01:05		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		6 of 41	
Questions 4 to 6		Beginning			
(The following is based on material written in 1996.) The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, signed in 1987 by more than 150 nations, has attained its short-term goals: it has (5) decreased the rate of increase in amounts of most ozone-depleting chemicals reaching the atmosphere and has even reduced the atmospheric levels of some of them. The projection that the ozone layer will substantially recover from ozone depletion by 2050 is based on the assumption that the protocol's regulations will be strictly followed. Yet there is considerable evidence of violations, particularly in the form of the (10) release of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's), which are commonly used in the refrigeration, heating, and air-conditioning industries. These violations reflect industry attitudes; for example, in (15) the United States, 48% of respondents in a recent survey of subscribers to <i>Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration</i>				According to the passage, which of the following best describes most ozone-depleting chemicals in 1996 as compared to those in 1987 ? ☐ The levels of such chemicals in the atmosphere had decreased. ☐ The number of such chemicals that reached the atmosphere had declined. ☐ The amounts of such chemicals released had increased but the amounts that reached the atmosphere had decreased. ☐ The rate of increase in amounts of such chemicals reaching the atmosphere had decreased. ☐ The rate at which such chemicals were being reduced in the atmosphere had slowed.	
Test Quit	Section Exit	 Time	 Help  Answer  Next		

Our anchor phrase for this explicit question is: “most ozone depleting chemicals”. Let us identify the sentence in the passage using this anchor phrase. The sentence that starts in line 4 has this very anchor phrase, and let us read what it says:

“It (the Montreal protocol) has decreased the rate of increase in the amounts of most ozone-depleting chemicals reaching the atmosphere.”

The question is: What do we know from what is explicitly stated in the passage about “most ozone depleting chemicals?”

The answer is: “The rate of increase in the levels of these chemicals reaching the atmosphere has decreased.”

Let us see what choice best restates this information, without any wrinkles.

Choice 1: “The levels of such chemicals in the atmosphere have decreased”.

A tempting choice because the anchor phrase statement does state that the “atmospheric levels of **SOME** of them have decreased”. We must bear in mind that the question is about “**MOST ozone-depleting chemicals**”, not about “**SOME** of those chemicals”. Therefore, the information in choice 1 refers to **SOME** of those chemicals, not to **MOST** of those chemicals. We must reluctantly conclude that this is not a good choice but a great trap.

Remember: The test is about your ability to stay focused on the crux of the question posed. If you lost sight of the phrase “most chemicals”, you will be among the test takers who might pick this choice. Expect trap answers that use the wrinkle “some” when the question uses the superlative “most”.

Choice 2: “The number of such chemicals that reached the atmosphere had declined.”

The anchor phrase statement does not talk about “number” but about “rate of increase” in the amounts of most chemicals reaching the atmosphere declining. Your ability to pay attention to the choice of words is critical in eliminating this choice.

Choice 3: “The amounts of such chemicals released has increased but the amounts reaching the atmosphere has decreased”.

The anchor phrase statement does not say anything about the amounts released increasing. We should consider this description extraneous and not mentioned in the anchor phrase statement. Let us move on.

☒ Choice 4: “The rate of increase in the amounts of such chemicals reaching the atmosphere has decreased.”

Bingo. The perfect restatement of the anchor phrase statement. We must confirm this choice after we have examined choice 5.

Choice 5: “The rate at which such chemicals were being reduced in the atmosphere had slowed.”

The anchor phrase statement tells us that the “rate of increase” in the amounts has decreased, not the “rate of reduction”. Can you see the contradiction in this choice?

We must confirm choice 4 and move on.

Anchor phrase strategy is an essential part of your ability to do very well in Reading Comprehension. As we have seen in the discussion so far, our ability to identify the anchor phrase in the question stem, and to identify the statement in the passage using the anchor phrase is a critical part of this strategy. Also, we must stay focused on the question at all times, expecting wrinkles such as “some” for “most”, and examine the wording of choices carefully in order to decide which of the five choices best restates the anchor phrase statement literally, or the essence of it.

We will use the anchor phrase strategy when we deal with some “suggestion” questions too. Let us see how we can do that after we sum up the essence of our discussion so far.

Type of question	What is it about?	How do you answer the question?	What do you watch out for?
MAIN IDEA			
EXPLICIT QUESTIONS	Information that is explicitly, and unambiguously stated in the passage, with nothing added and nothing taken away from it. ⇒ You will recognize an explicit question by the phrases: “According to the author/passage” or “Which of the following is supported by information in the passage?”. Also, the question will provide an “anchor phrase” from the passage allowing you to go back, do a quick look-up, and answer the question on the basis of what is clearly stated in the context of the “anchor-phrase”. Do not pick choices that are not mentioned in the context of the “anchor phrase”.	On the basis of information that is very clearly stated in the passage. Be sure to do an “anchor phrase” look up and be sure to include any adjectives used to describe the anchor phrase. Example: “<i>Some</i> scientists”. Look for: □ Paraphrased passage information. □ Example: When you do an anchor phrase look-up, you will notice that: “typical symptoms of reef decline” in the passage will be paraphrased to “characteristic signs of reef deterioration” in the choice. “Choreography of chromosomes” in the passage will be paraphrased to read: “sequence of movement of chromosomes” in the answer choice.	• Contradictory choices. (Choices that state the opposite of what is stated in the central idea or the supporting ideas) • Partially correct answers. (Information in the choice is stated in the passage partially, but the choice contains a wrinkle that is not found in the passage). • Too broad/ outside the scope of the passage. • Out of context. (Information in the choice is stated in the passage but the information does not appear in an anchor-phrase look-up.) • Verbatim reproduction of ‘cute phrases’ that stick in your head. You should look for at least one word that is paraphrased in the answer choice. <i>But be aware that technical terms will not be paraphrased because there may not be any readily replaceable synonyms.</i> • Expect wrinkles such as “some” for “all” or “most”.

INFERENCE OR SUGGESTION QUESTIONS

An “inference” or “suggestion” question asks you to:

- ☑ Identify the anchor phrase in the question stem;
- ☑ Identify the part of the passage using the anchor phrase; and
- ☑ Pick a choice that is consistent with a literal interpretation of ‘QUALIFIERS’ used in the anchor phrase statement, or on the basis of a literal interpretation of information stated in the ‘opposite scenario’.
- ☑ Pay attention to adjectival and adverbial phrases used in the anchor phrase statement.

An “inference” or “suggestion” is what is implied but not openly expressed. By contrast, an explicit question will ask you to identify a choice that best restates literally what you read, with some paraphrasing.

You can make inference on the basis of interpretation of adjectives or adverbs. Consider the following statement:

“Earth will receive a meteor shower during its **yearly travel** through the Geminid meteor stream”. ◀ We can infer that the earth travels through the Geminid meteor stream ‘once a year’.

Consider another example of making an inference on the basis of an interpretation of an adjective or of adverbs:

“Unconditional guarantees **deceptively suggest** that the results can be guaranteed” ◀ Our inference is that “Results” cannot be guaranteed.

We have seen earlier that inferences can also be made on the basis of information stated in the ‘opposite scenario’. Consider the following examples.

If the anchor phrase statement read:

“60% of all students admitted to a graduate study program are males”,

We will read the inference as “40% of all students admitted to a graduate study program are females”,

If the anchor phrase statement read:

“The textile mill-owners **chose women** for jobs that required detailed attention and repetitive actions because they thought that **women were more patient with such jobs**”, our inference will be:

“Men were not patient with jobs requiring detailed attention and repetitive actions.”

In some cases, the inference is what is blatantly obvious. In other cases, you may need to pick an inference on the basis of an adjectival or adverbial phrase.

Take a look at the following anchor phrase statement using the anchor phrase “**privatization process**”:

“Some economists believe that all companies should give away free shares to their employees in order to provide the *needed acceleration* of the **privatization process**.”

The adjectival phrase modifying the “privatization process” is “needed acceleration”, and we will read the anchor phrase statement as: “Privatization process NEEDS ACCELERATION or needs to be speeded up”.

The inference we will make based on that above read is:

“According to some economists, the privatization process is proceeding slowly and needs to be speeded up.”

If the anchor phrase statement containing the anchor phrase “passage of earth through the meteor stream” read:

“We have observed the predicted twin-peaked activity during the YEARLY passage of earth through the meteor stream”, we will read the inference as:

“The earth passes through the meteor stream ONCE EVERY YEAR”.

“Yearly passage” tells us precisely that. That is what an inference in the context of Reading comprehension is about.

Let us re-cap the anchor phrase strategy for “suggestion” questions or “inference” questions.

- ☑ Identify the anchor phrase in the question stem;
- ☑ Identify the part of the passage using the anchor phrase; and
- ☑ Pick a choice that essentially restates an implied meaning. Make sure that the answer choice corresponds to that which is **NECESSARILY IMPLIED**, not **POSSIBLY IMPLIED**. Do not over-interpret.
- ☑ Pay attention to adjectival and adverbial phrases, strong nouns, and strong verbs used in the anchor phrase statement contained in the passage. You will have to paraphrase or literally interpret that which is necessarily implied in such statements.

Let us summarize the rules for making **INFERENCES** or identifying that which is **NECESSARILY IMPLIED** or **SUGGESTED** in a specific context.

- **Literally interpret the statement** that is provided in a relevant context (context relevant to the question). If the statement reads, ‘the colonists suspected that the Massachusetts governor was involved in a CONSPIRACY to deprive them of their civil liberties’, our LITERAL interpretation of CONSPIRACY would be that the ‘colonists believed that more than one person was involved in the scheme to deprive them of their civil rights.’ Conspiracy necessarily implies that more than one person was involved in the act. This process is also similar to ‘literally interpreting NOUNS found in context-specific statements’ relevant to a question. (see the next procedure)
- Interpret **adjectives, adverbs, strong nouns, and strong verbs** found in the statement in the passage that is relevant to the anchor phrase. Also interpret **AUXILIARY VERBS** such as ‘can’ or ‘may’. If the statement in the passage reads, “the administration’s tax cut proposals will provide the NEEDED stimulus to the American economy”, we would interpret the adjective ‘needed’ to mean that the ‘American economy requires some incentive in the form of tax breaks to tax payers’. If the statement in the passage reads, “The Morrill Act of 1862 SUCCESSFULLY created land-grant institutions in the mid-western United States”, our interpretation of the adverb ‘successfully’ would lead us to the inference that ‘the Morrill Act of 1862 had the goal of creating land-grant institutions’. (‘success’ implies achievement of a **favorable or desired goal or outcome**, and the use of the adverbial ‘successfully’ suggests that the goal of the Act was to create the land-grant institutions). If the context-specific statement in the passage reads, “The earth association claims that, through its mailers to 2000 individuals, it CONVERTED 2000 individuals to its cause”, our logical interpretation of the verb ‘convert’ tells us that the ‘earth association makes an unverified statement that none of the 2000 individuals who received its mailers already believed in the cause that the association represents’. Notice that the verb ‘claim’ is interpreted to mean ‘an unverified statement’ and the verb ‘convert’ is interpreted to mean ‘change a non-believer into a believer’. Interpretation of auxiliary verbs will be tested in the context of ‘tone’ or ‘attitude’ questions. The auxiliary ‘can’ implies a degree of confidence or a reasonable probability. The auxiliary ‘may’ suggests a degree of caution or ‘holding back’.
- Interpret information stated in a mutually exclusive context. If the context-specific statement in the passage reads, “as a result of the breeding practices that led to increased productivity, **the overall genetic variability of cultivated wheat has drastically declined in the last two centuries**”, our logical interpretation of this information would lead us to the inference that the “*overall genetic variability of cultivated wheat was far greater 200 years ago*”. This is a necessarily valid interpretation of the statement that the ‘genetic variability has drastically declined in the last two centuries’. If the context-specific statement in the passage reads, “the work of Miles Davis and his group that assembled in a New York city apartment in 1945 slowed down the tempo of Jazz music and featured ensemble

playing as much as or even more than solo playing”, we would logically interpret this to mean that the ‘tempo of Jazz music was more rapid prior to 1945 and that Jazz music did not feature ‘ensemble playing’ before 1945 to the same extent as it did after 1945’. The Reading Comprehension section on all three tests – GMAT, LSAT, and GRE – will extensively use this procedure for testing ‘logical conclusions’. Therefore, if the question reads, “Which of the following can be INFERRED about the type of Jazz music played PRIOR TO 1945”, expect the passage to provide information about the type of Jazz music that was played AFTER 1945 so that you can interpret this information in order to make logical conclusion using the described procedure.

- DO NOT engage in **creative interpretation** of the information provided. If the statement reads, “law-makers argue that if telecommunication equipment were allowed to be exported to Cuba, **repression** by Castro regime cannot indefinitely continue”, do not creatively interpret ‘repression’ to mean ‘a struggle for freedom’ or the idea of ‘exporting telecommunication equipment to Cuba’ to mean that ‘telecommunication equipment is the best way to prevent repression’. Your interpretation of information has to be clinical and matter-of-fact, not creative. If the context-specific statement reads, “Watteau’s admirers BELIEVED that the images were genuine”, do not interpret it to mean that “Watteau’s admirers were UNWILLING to consider the possibility that the images were not genuine”. The fact that some BELIEVED something to be true does not necessarily mean that they were ‘unwilling’ to accept other explanations. Remember that the name of the game is ‘literal interpretation of context-specific information relevant to the question’, not ‘creative interpretation of informaton’.

Let us see how we can put this strategy to good use by taking a look at some test screens asking you to identify the suggestion. Once again, a big-picture understanding is not always crucial to our ability to apply the “anchor phrase” strategy.

Let us get to work on applying the “anchor phrase” strategy for “suggestion or inference” questions.

00:42		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		23 of 41	
Questions 20 to 23		More Available			
of accretion and succession would be interrupted only by hurricanes or storm flushings. (30) Recently the universal application of Davis' succession paradigm has been challenged. It appears that in areas where weak currents and weak tidal (35) energies allow the accumulation of sediments, mangroves will follow land formation and accelerate the rate of soil accretion; succession will proceed according to Davis' (40) scheme. But on stable coastlines, the distribution of mangrove species results in other patterns of zonation; "land building" does not occur. (45) To find a principle that explains the various distribution patterns, several researchers have looked to salinity and its effects on mangroves. While mangroves can (50) develop in fresh water, they can		It can be inferred from the passage that Davis' paradigm does NOT apply to which of the following? ☐ The shoreline of Florida mangrove forests first studied by Davis ☐ A shoreline in an area with weak currents ☐ A shoreline in an area with weak tidal energy ☐ A shoreline extended by "land-building" species of mangroves ☐ A shoreline in which few sediments can accumulate			
Test Quit	Section Exit	 Time	 Help	Answer Confirm	 Next

Our anchor phrase is “**application of Davis paradigm**”, or, more importantly, “its lack of application”. As we scroll down the passage, we notice that in line 30, the sentence talks about the very anchor phrase we are seeking. Let us read the sentence, its implications contained in the paragraph, and make sense of them before we can attempt to make an inference:

Our anchor phrase statement reads:

‘Recently, the application of Davis’ succession paradigm has been challenged. (what is the challenge about?) It appears that in areas where weak currents and weak tidal energies **allow accumulation of sediments**,.... “succession” will follow according to Davis’ scheme. But (notice the contrast word signifying lack of application), on stable coastlines, the distribution of species results in other patterns (and Davis’ model will not apply).”

Our inference is that Davis’ paradigm or model does not apply to **STABLE COASTLINES** that, by inference, do not have weak currents and weak tidal energies required to form sediments.”

Let us see what choice will best state this inference.

Bear in mind that we are looking for the following inference:

- ☒ “Davis’ model does not apply to stable coastlines that do not have weak currents or tides required to form sediments.”

Let us examine the choices one by one, and see which one measures up.

Choice 1: “The shoreline of Florida mangrove forests first studied by Davis”.

This does not state our inference at all. We need to look for a statement indicating that the paradigm does not apply to stable coastlines that do not accumulate sediments.

Choice 2: “A shoreline in an area with weak currents.”

This is a contradiction because Davis’ paradigm does apply to coastlines with weak currents required to form sediments. Let us move on.

Choice 3: “A shoreline in an area with weak tidal energy”.

Another contradiction. Davis’ paradigm does apply to areas with weak tidal energies that form sediments. Notice that information in choices 2 and 3 are factors required to form sediments and to follow the succession according to Davis’ theory.

Choice 4: “A shoreline extended by “land building” species of mangroves.”

We do not know what “land building” species are all about. The anchor phrase statement does not contain any reference to “land building” species. We will classify this choice as extraneous or out of context, and move on.

We have eliminated four choices. The next one better be good.

- ☒ Choice 5: “A shoreline in which few sediments can accumulate”.

This one is right on the button. Our inference is that the model does not apply to stable coastlines that do not have weak currents or tidal energies required to accumulate sediments.

We will pick this choice and move on to apply the “anchor phrase” strategy for the next “suggestion/inference” question.

00:52		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		15 of 41	
Questions 12 to 15		More Available			
Even more importantly, as these life stories moved from the traditional oral mode to recorded written form, (40) much was inevitably lost. Editors often decided what elements were significant to the field research on a given tribe. Native Americans recognized that the essence of their lives could not be (45) communicated in English and that events that they thought significant were often deemed unimportant by their interviewers. Indeed, the very act of telling their stories could force (50) Native American narrators to distort their cultures, as taboos had to be broken to speak the names of dead relatives crucial to their family stories. Despite all of this, autobiography (55) remains a useful tool for ethnological research: such personal reminiscences and impressions, incomplete as they may be, are likely to throw more light on the working of the mind (60) and emotions than any amount of				Information in the passage suggests that which of the following may be a possible way to eliminate bias in the editing of life stories? ☐ Basing all inferences made about the culture on an ethnological theory ☐ Eliminating all of the emotion-laden information reported by the informant ☐ Translating the informant's words into the researcher's language ☐ Reducing the number of questions and carefully specifying the content of the questions that the investigator can ask the informant ☐ Reporting all of the information that the informant provides regardless of the investigator's personal opinion about its intrinsic value	
Test	Section	Time			
Quit	Exit		?	Answer	→
			Help	Confirm	Next

Our anchor phrase is “*editing of life stories*” and about the “*elimination of bias*”.

As we scroll down the passage, we notice that the first reference to “editing of life stories” appears on line 40, and we notice that the sentence does talk about a possible bias in the editing. Let us read the anchor phrase statement and make sense of it first.

“As these life stories moved from the traditional oral mode to the recorded form, much was inevitably lost. (WHY???) Editors often decided what elements were critical to a particular field of research on a given tribe.”

Therefore, the inference is that the bias could be minimized if the editors accepted the life stories as told instead of bringing in personal judgment on which elements are essential and which are not. Let us see what choice will restate this inference.

Choice 5 does. Choices 1 and 2 talk about “ethnological theory” and “emotion laden information”. The anchor phrase statement does not mention any of those things. Choice 3 is a sure recipe for bias. In fact, the information contained in choice 3 is the reason for the existing bias. Choice 4 talks about “reducing the number of questions” as if the editors were doing a survey by using a set of questions. We must confirm choice 5 and move on.

Let us examine another test screen asking us to identify the inference.

00:41		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		34 of 41	
Questions 33 to 35		End			
In addition, the human capital theory explains why there was a high concentration of women workers in certain low-skill jobs, such as weaving, but not in others, such as combing or carding, by positing that because of their primary responsibility in child rearing women took occupations that could be carried out in the home. There were, however, differences in pay scales that cannot be explained by the human capital theory. For example, male construction workers were paid significantly higher wages than female taffeta weavers. The wage difference between these two low-skill occupations stems from the segregation of labor by gender: because a limited number of occupations were open to women, there was a large supply of workers in their fields, and this "overcrowding" resulted in women receiving lower wages and men receiving higher wages.				The passage suggests that combing and carding differ from weaving in that combing and carding are ☐ low-skill jobs performed primarily by women employees ☐ low-skill jobs that were not performed in the home ☐ low-skill jobs performed by both male and female employees ☐ high-skill jobs performed outside the home ☐ high-skill jobs performed by both male and female employees	
Test	Section		?	Answer	
Quit	Exit	Time	Help	Confirm	Next

Our anchor phrase is "combing and carding versus weaving", and let us identify the sentence using this very anchor phrase.

Starting in line 18, we have some reference to the anchor phrase. Let us read on:

".... There is a high concentration of women workers in certain low-skill jobs such as weaving but not in others such as combing and carding because..... women took occupations that could be carried out in the home."

What is our read? Weaving is a low-skill job along with combing and carding but weaving could be done at home and the other two cannot be. (Therefore, women chose weaving over combing and carding).

Let us see what choice will state this clear inference.

Bear in mind that we are required to identify an inference pertaining to “combing and carding”. Our inference is that “Combing and carding are low skill jobs, like weaving, but cannot be done at home”.

Choice 1: “Low skill jobs performed primarily by women employees”

This is a contradiction. Women did not do combing and carding, leave alone primarily.

☒ Choice 2: “Low skill jobs that were not performed in the home.”

That sounds good. Our inference reads exactly the same. We are positive at this stage that this is the choice we should pick, but let us quickly eliminate the other options remaining.

Choice 3: “Low skill jobs performed by both male and female employees.”

Sounds like another contradiction, similar to the one in choice 1. Choice 3 may be good if it said, “low skill jobs performed primarily by males” because women shunned them.

Choice 4: “High skill jobs performed outside the home”.

Combing and carding are NOT high skill jobs. Let us not waste time checking this option out further.

Choice 5: “High skill jobs performed by both male and female employees.”

Sounds like the test author is struggling with his or her options here. They expect the test taker to be “sleeping at the switch” and not pay attention to the fact that combing and carding are not high skill jobs. But then, many test takers do not disappoint the test authors. You should.

Let us confirm choice 2.

We have seen yet again that our anchor phrase strategy works very well for inference questions as well. Let us examine a couple of more inference questions before we move on to other types of questions.

01:09		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		5 of 41	
Questions 4 to 6		End			
<i>Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration News</i>, an industry trade journal, said that they did not believe that CFC's damage (25) the ozone layer. Moreover, some in the industry apparently do not want to pay for CFC substitutes, which can run five times the cost of CFC's. Consequently, a black market in imported illicit CFC's has grown. (30) Estimates of the contraband CFC trade range from 10,000 to 22,000 tons a year, with most of the CFC's originating in India and China, whose agreements under the Protocol still allow them to produce CFC's. (35) In fact, the United States Customs Service reports that CFC-12 is a contraband problem second only to illicit drugs.				The passage suggests which of the following about the illicit trade in CFC's ? ☐ It would cease if manufacturers in India and China stopped producing CFC's. ☐ Most people who participate in such trade do not believe that CFC's deplete the ozone layer. ☐ It will probably surpass illicit drugs as the largest contraband problem faced by the United States Customs Service. ☐ It is fostered by people who do not want to pay the price of CFC substitutes. ☐ It has grown primarily because of the expansion of the refrigeration, heating, and air-conditioning industries in foreign countries.	
Test Quit	Section Exit	 Time	 Help	Answer Confirm	 Next

We have an inference question about “illicit trade in CFC”, which is our anchor phrase. Starting in line 28, we notice a reference to our anchor phrase in the passage. Let us read on:

“Consequently, a black market in imported illicit CFC's has grown”.

“Consequently” forces us to examine the previous sentence that explains the reason why for the illicit trade.

“Some in the industry apparently do not want to pay for CFC substitutes, which can run five times the cost of the CFC's. (Consequently, a black market in imported illicit CFC's has grown.)”

We infer that the black market in illicit CFC's is sustained by those in the industry unwilling to pay the price for CFC substitutes. Let us see what choice will best express this inference.

Choice 1: “It would **cease** if manufacturers in china and India stopped producing CFC.”

This is a tricky choice because if we read further, we do notice that most of the demand for illicit CFC is met by manufacturers in India and China. But we must bear in mind that the statement is not about “all of the demand” being fulfilled by the manufacturers in India and China. Therefore, the suggestion that the illicit trade will cease if the manufacturers in India and China stopped producing CFC is not good. If the choice had read: “it would decrease if the manufacturers in India and China stopped producing CFC”, we could have short-listed it for further examination. Because of the wrinkle “cease”, we must eliminate this choice from further analysis and move on. That is what the “*power of parsing*” does to you: improve your ability to get a high score in the graduate test.

Choice 2: “Most people who participate do not believe that CFC’s **deplete** the ozone layer.”

We can see that the test author is working overtime to trap you with some “wrinkled” choices. This is another tempting choice, to be sure. Why is that? Because if we had too much time on our hands and bothered to read the lines 22-24, we notice that some people (surveyed by the publication) do not believe that CFC’s cause **DAMAGE** to the ozone layer”. **In this answer choice, we have “deplete”, not “damage”. We should know that they are not the same.**

If the choice had stated that “many do not believe that CFC’s cause damage to the ozone layer”, this will be a strong contender for selection. Because of our parsing skills and because we paid attention to the choice of words, we could easily decide that this choice is not worth a further examination.

Can you see how parsing works and how you can steer clear of potential traps by paying attention to the choice of words used in the answer options?

Choice 3: “It will probably surpass illicit drugs as the greatest contraband problem faced by the U.S. Customs service.”

The last line of the passage does mention that trade in illicit CFC’s is a problem nearly as serious as that posed by illegal drugs. But there is nothing in this statement that warrants an inference that trade in illicit CFC will surpass that in illegal drugs.

☒ Choice 4: “It is fostered by the people who do not want to pay the price of CFC substitutes.”

Right on the money. Our inference was precisely that. “Illicit trade in CFC is a consequence of people unwilling to pay five times the price of CFC substitutes” is what we learned. We must confirm this option after we have eliminated the remaining answer choice.

Choice 5: “It has grown primarily because of the growth of air-conditioning... and (other) industries in foreign countries.”

There is a trade journal reference bearing the three industry names but there is nothing else in the sentences we examined that would permit us to make this inference.

We must confirm choice 4.

This one was a little tricky, and put our “parsing skills” to the unforgiving test.

The good news is that we came out with flying colors.

Can you see what you have to go through in order to ensure that you score consistently high on this graduate test?

On the basis of our discussions so far, what did we learn?

- ☒ We can answer “explicit” and “inference/suggestion” questions even though we may not know what the big-picture is. But getting the hang of the big-picture will certainly be an added advantage. And even if we have the big-picture, we still need to answer “explicit” and “inference” questions strictly on the basis of “anchor phrase identification” and “anchor phrase look ups.”

Let us sum up our discussion of the “suggestion/inference” questions in the following table.

Type of question	What is it about?	How do you answer the question?	What do you watch out for?
MAIN IDEA Q’S			
EXPLICIT Q’S			
INFERENCE QUESTIONS (also called “suggestion questions”)	Logical one-step extension of the information in the passage. Must be answered on the basis of an explicit piece of information identified by “anchor phrase”. Look for words such as “suggest”, “implies”, “inferable”, etc. in the question stem and know that you are dealing with an inference question.	Inference must be consistent with the information in the passage. When you do an “anchor phrase look up”, pay attention to adjectives, adverbs, and adjectival phrases used in the passage and make appropriate inferences..	- Information not consistent with an anchor phrase statement. - An explicit statement that is not an inference. - Contradictions that state the opposite of what the anchor phrase statement does. Example: “Carding and combing are high skill jobs” is a contradiction.

TONE QUESTIONS

These questions usually ask you to identify the subjective feelings expressed in a specific anchor phrase statement, but occasionally test your understanding of the overall tone. The latter is relatively uncommon because a passage usually does not have the same tone throughout. Such a passage will be monotonous and boring.

A passage can advocate caution overall but may be critical in some sections of some actions by the players identified. The author may be supportive of one idea and dismissive of another.

Anchor phrase strategy for Tone questions:

- ☑ Identify the anchor phrase in the question stem. Usually, the test authors will make your job easier by giving you a line number reference in the question stem.
- ☑ Do anchor phrase look up, and read the statement that contains the anchor phrase.
- ☑ Understand the tone.
- ☑ Pick a choice that best restates the tone.

TONE QUESTION	Tone and attitude communicated in the anchor phrase statement of the passage. Adverbs will usually give away the tone. “unfortunately” implies concern. “ironically” implies disappointment.	Pay attention to qualities such as concern, anger, sarcasm, indifference, etc. as you read through the passage initially, and the anchor phrase statement for the tone question.	• Watch out for words that do not adequately describe the tone identified in the anchor phrase statement.
----------------------	--	--	---

Let us examine how we can apply the anchor phrase strategy to a tone question.

01:12		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		4 of 41	
Questions 4 to 6		End			
(75) release of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's), which are commonly used in the refrigeration, heating, and air-conditioning industries. These violations reflect industry attitudes; for example, in (20) the United States, 48% of respondents in a recent survey of subscribers to <i>Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration News</i>, an industry trade journal, said that they did not believe that CFC's damage (25) the ozone layer. Moreover, some in the industry apparently do not want to pay for CFC substitutes, which can run five times the cost of CFC's. Consequently, a black market in imported illicit CFC's has grown. (30) Estimates of the contraband CFC trade range from 10,000 to 22,000 tons a year, with most of the CFC's originating in India and China, whose agreements under the Protocol still allow them to produce CFC's. (35) In fact, the United States Customs Service reports that CFC-12 is a contraband problem second only to illicit drugs.				The author of the passage compares the smuggling of CFC's to the illicit drug trade most likely for which of the following reasons? ☐ To qualify a previous claim ☐ To emphasize the extent of a problem ☐ To provide an explanation for an earlier assertion ☐ To suggest that the illicit CFC trade, like the illicit drug trade, will continue to increase ☐ To suggest that the consequences of a relatively little-known problem are as serious as those of a well-known one	
Test Quit	Section Exit	Time 	? Help	Answer Confirm	Next

Our anchor phrase refers to “**smuggling of CFC’s**” and to “**illicit drug trade**”. We notice that the last sentence of the passage contains both references. Let us read the anchor phrase sentence and see what tone we can identify.

Anchor phrase statement:

“In fact, the United States Customs Service reports that CFC-12 is a contraband problem second only to illicit drugs”.

The tone we see is one of “gravity of the problem” and of “seriousness of the problem”. Let us see what choice will express this tone. Choice 2 does. None of the others comes close to the tone information contained in this anchor phrase statement. Choice 1 talks about “qualifying a claim”. Choice 3 talks about “providing explanation”. Choice 4 talks about “the problem continuing to increase”. There is no suggestion implied in the anchor phrase statement. Choice 5 is also wide off the mark because it talks about the “consequences” of a “little known” problem. Given the seriousness of the problem, CFC-12 smuggling is hardly a “little known problem”.

Tone questions test your ability to understand the nuances expressed by words and to pay very close attention to them in selecting an appropriate response.

ASSUMPTION QUESTIONS

An **assumption** is a denial of a counter scenario weakening the conclusion in the argument. In Reading Comprehension, the assumptions will be tested on the basis of “one-line arguments” that use “implied evidence”.

“One-line argument”:

“Based on the time interval between the two bursts of meteor activities, our estimation is that the meteor stream must be 5000 years of age.”

Implied evidence:

“Computer model was used to analyze the time interval between bursts of activities”

Our counter scenario weakening the conclusion is:

“May be, the computer model **is not able** to interpret the time interval data accurately and make a prediction.”

Corresponding assumption will be:

“The computer model **is able** to interpret the time interval data accurately and make a prediction about the age of the meteor stream.”

As you can see, the same process we employed in critical reasoning must be used here but the evidence may be implied and not openly stated.

We will still do the anchor phrase look up and read the anchor phrase statement in the process of determining the assumption.

Anchor Phrase strategy for Assumption Questions:

- ☒ Identify the anchor phrase in the question stem.
- ☒ Do anchor phrase look up.
- ☒ Understand the **implied evidence** used in the anchor phrase statement, and the conclusion that is evident in the anchor phrase statement.
- ☒ Think of a counter scenario weakening the conclusion, and then deny the counter.

Let us consider an assumption question providing an anchor phrase for us to look up.

I believe that the evidence of her letters supports continued respect for **Nightingale's brilliance and creativity**. When counseling a village schoolmaster to encourage children to use their faculties of observation, she sounds like a modern educator. Her insistence on classifying the problems of the needy in order to devise appropriate treatments is similar to the approach of modern social workers. In sum, although Nightingale may not have achieved all of her goals during the Crimean War, her breadth of vision and ability to realize ambitious projects have earned her an eminent place among the ranks of social pioneers.

Which of the following is an assumption underlying the author's assessment of **Nightingale's creativity**?

- (A) Educational philosophy in Nightingale's day did not normally emphasize developing children's ability to observe.
- (B) Nightingale was the first to notice the poor living conditions in British military barracks in peacetime
- (C) No education before Nightingale had thought to enlist the help of village schoolmasters in introducing new teaching techniques
- (D) Until Nightingale began her work, there was no concept of organized help for the needy in nineteenth-century Britain.
- (E) The British army's medical services had no cost-accounting system until Nightingale devised one in the 1860's.

Our "anchor phrase" is "Nightingale's creativity", and our anchor phrase look up leads us to the highlighted section of the passage on the left-hand side. Let us see what the author says in the context of the anchor phrase:

- ☒ "When counseling a school masters to encourage children to use their faculties of observation, she sounds like a modern educator."

The corresponding argument is:

"She counseled village school masters to encourage children to use their sense of observation. Therefore, she sounds like a modern educator".

Our counter scenario weakening the conclusion is:

"May be, the school system already encouraged the pupils to use their sense of observation."

Assumption: "the system did not encourage the students to use their sense of observation."

The second example provided in the context of creativity is:

"Her insistence on classifying the problems of the needy is similar to the approach of modern social workers."

Our argument reads: "She insisted on classifying the problems of the needy. Therefore, her approach was similar to that of modern social workers."

May be, they already classified the problems in those days even without Nightingale advising them to do so.

The assumption will deny the above counter scenario.

Assumption is:

“The system did not classify the problems of the needy before devising treatments”.

We need to look for one of the following two assumptions we identified from our anchor phrase statements:

- ☒ “The system did not encourage the students to use their sense of observation.”
- ☒ “The system did not classify the problems of the needy before devising treatments”.

If we scan through the answer choices, we notice that choice A states the first of the two assumptions we identified. This is the one we must select. Let us see why the other options do not measure up.

(B) Nightingale was the first to notice the poor living conditions in British military barracks in peacetime.

There is no mention of “poor living conditions” mentioned in the context of creativity. The passage does talk about “poor sanitary conditions” elsewhere but not in the context of the anchor phrase statement.

(C) No education before Nightingale had thought to enlist the help of village schoolmasters in introducing new teaching techniques

This is a tempting choice but we must be on guard. The fact that she counseled schoolmasters does not mean that she “enlisted the help of school masters in introducing new techniques”.

(D) Until Nightingale began her work, there was no concept of organized help for the needy in nineteenth-century Britain.

The anchor phrase statements tell us that she insisted on classifying the problems of the needy in order to devise treatment plans. There is nothing mentioned about “organized help for the needy” in the anchor phrase statements, and we must treat this choice as “wrinkled” and “unacceptable”.

(E) The British army’s medical services had no cost-accounting system until Nightingale devised one in the 1860’s.

There is no mention of “cost accounting” system in the context of anchor phrase statements. In fact, “cost accounting system” is mentioned previously in the context of her contributions, but we must bear in mind the caveat that the answer we select must be context specific and supported by anchor phrase statements.

Our choice of A is the logical one.

Assumption questions are not frequently tested but you should be prepared.

PASSAGE STRUCTURE QUESTIONS:

In addition, you should also expect questions that ask you to identify the manner in which the passage is put together and to find a choice that logically extends the thought process expressed in the passage. It will help you to understand the way the passage flows. For example, you may want to note that “in paragraph one, the author describes a new hypothesis, and the next two paragraphs provides two examples to illustrate the new theory” and so on.

Passage structure questions can also be tested in the form of “extension” questions.

Strategy appropriate for “passage structure” questions:

- ☑ Understand the way the passage is structured or organized. Be sure to pay attention to the elements constituting the structure. For example, the passage may introduce a new theory and discuss the limitations of the theory. The passage may talk about a success story and discuss the various reasons that led to the success in the first place.
- ☑ For “continuation” or “extension” questions, be sure to pick a choice that will logically extend the organization of the passage. Do not pick a choice that is incongruous with the rest of the passage. Usually, the tone of the second paragraph will tell you in what manner the extension of the passage information needs to be structured. Let us say that the initial part of the passage discusses a new paradigm, and the last paragraph talks about some specific limitations of the paradigm, then you should know that a likely logical extension will be proposals for dealing with the inadequacies in the paradigm.

Let us see how we can deal with a passage structure question by taking a look at a test screen on the next page.

EXTENSION OR CONTINUATION QUESTIONS:

00:52		GMAT Test - Section 4: Verbal		25 of 41	
Questions 23 to 26		End			
situation until they began entering the labor force, because domestic work tended to isolate them from one another. Unfortunately, Eisenstein's unfinished (40) study does not develop these ideas in sufficient depth or detail, offering tantalizing hints rather than an exhaustive analysis. Whatever Eisenstein's overall plan may have been, in its current form her study (45) suffers from the limited nature of the sources she depended on. She uses the speeches and writings of reformers and labor organizers, who she acknowledges were far from representative, as the voice (50) of the typical woman worker. And there is less than adequate attention given to the differing values of immigrant groups that made up a significant proportion of the population under investigation. While (55) raising important questions, Eisenstein's essays do not provide definitive answers, and it remains for others to take up the challenges they offer.				Which of the following would the author of the passage be most likely to approve as a continuation of Eisenstein's study? ☐ An oral history of prominent women labor organizers ☐ An analysis of letters and diaries written by typical female wage earners at the turn of the century ☐ An assessment of what different social and political groups defined as the dominant ideology in the early twentieth century ☐ A theoretical study of how socialism and feminism influenced one another at the turn of the century ☐ A documentary account of labor's role in the introduction of women into the labor force	
Test Quit	Section Exit	 Time	 Help	Answer Confirm	 Next

The question is about the “logical continuation of Eisenstein’s work”. If you take a look at the last paragraph, you will read the following:

- ☒ “Her study offers tantalizing hints rather than an exhaustive analysis.”
- ☒ In the current form, her study suffers from the limited nature of the sources she depended on. She used sources that are **not typical** of the voice of a woman worker.
- ☒ Her study did not factor in the differing values of immigrant groups.

A logical continuation of Eisenstein’s work must include *use of sources that represent the typical woman worker, and must factor in the differing values of immigrant groups.*

Choice 1 is not good because the “labor organizers” do not represent the voices of the typical woman worker, according to the author. In fact, Ms.E’s study in its current form uses those sources, considered inadequate for that reason alone. **Choice 2 talks about using the letters and diaries of actual typical woman worker. In fact, the author seems to imply just that. Choice 2 appears to hit the nail on the head.**

Choices 3, 4, and 5 talk about items not addressed in the author’s concern as to why Ms. Eisenstein’s study is not exhaustive. We must confirm choice 2. Our ability to understand the way the passage information flows is crucial to answering passage structure and extension questions correctly.

Reading Comprehension passage

Historians of women's labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of female service workers -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians instead focused on factory work, primarily because it seemed so different from traditional, unpaid "women's work" in the home, and because the underlying economic forces of industrialism were presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect. *Unfortunately*, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped continued sex segregation in the workplace.

To explain this unfinished revolution in the status of women, historians have recently begun to emphasize the way a prevailing definition of femininity often determines the kinds of work allocated to women, even when such allocation is inappropriate to new conditions. For instance, early textile mill entrepreneurs, in **justifying** women's employment in wage labor, made much of the assumption that women were by nature skillful at detailed tasks and thus imported into the new industrial order hoary stereotypes associated with the homemaking activities they presumed to have been the purview of women. Because women accepted the more unattractive new industrial tasks more readily than did men, such jobs came to be regarded as female jobs. And employers, who assumed that women's "real" aspirations were for marriage and family life, declined to pay women wages commensurate with those of men. Thus many lower skilled, lower-paid less secure jobs came to be perceived as "female".

More *remarkable* than the origin has been the persistence of such segregation in twentieth-century industry. Once an occupation came to be perceived as "female", employers showed surprisingly little interest in changing that perception, even when higher profits beckoned. And despite the urgent need of the United States during the Second World War to mobilize its human resources fully, job segregation by sex characterized even the most important war industries. Moreover, once the war ended, employers quickly returned to men most of the "male" jobs that women had been permitted to master.

Let us now pose those standard questions and find answers to them in order to solidify our understanding of the nuances of different pieces of information put together in the passage.

What is the passage talking about?

The passage is talking about how historians' expectation of lack of sex discrimination in the industrial wage labor situation was belied. The passage describes the origin and persistence of sex determined job allocation in the industrial order.

Where is the action described taking place?

In the United States.

When is the action taking place?

In the Nineteenth(origin of sex segregation) and in the Twentieth century (persistence of sex segregation).

What are the similarities mentioned?

- Service work has a lot in common with unpaid domestic work. Millowners thought that the industrial jobs requiring detailed attention had a lot in common with homemaking activities and women were skilled at those. Thus came into being stereotypes and "women jobs".

What are the contrasts mentioned?

- Women had aspirations for marriage and homemaking and men were career minded (implied), Women jobs were lower paying than men jobs. Women jobs were less secure than men jobs.

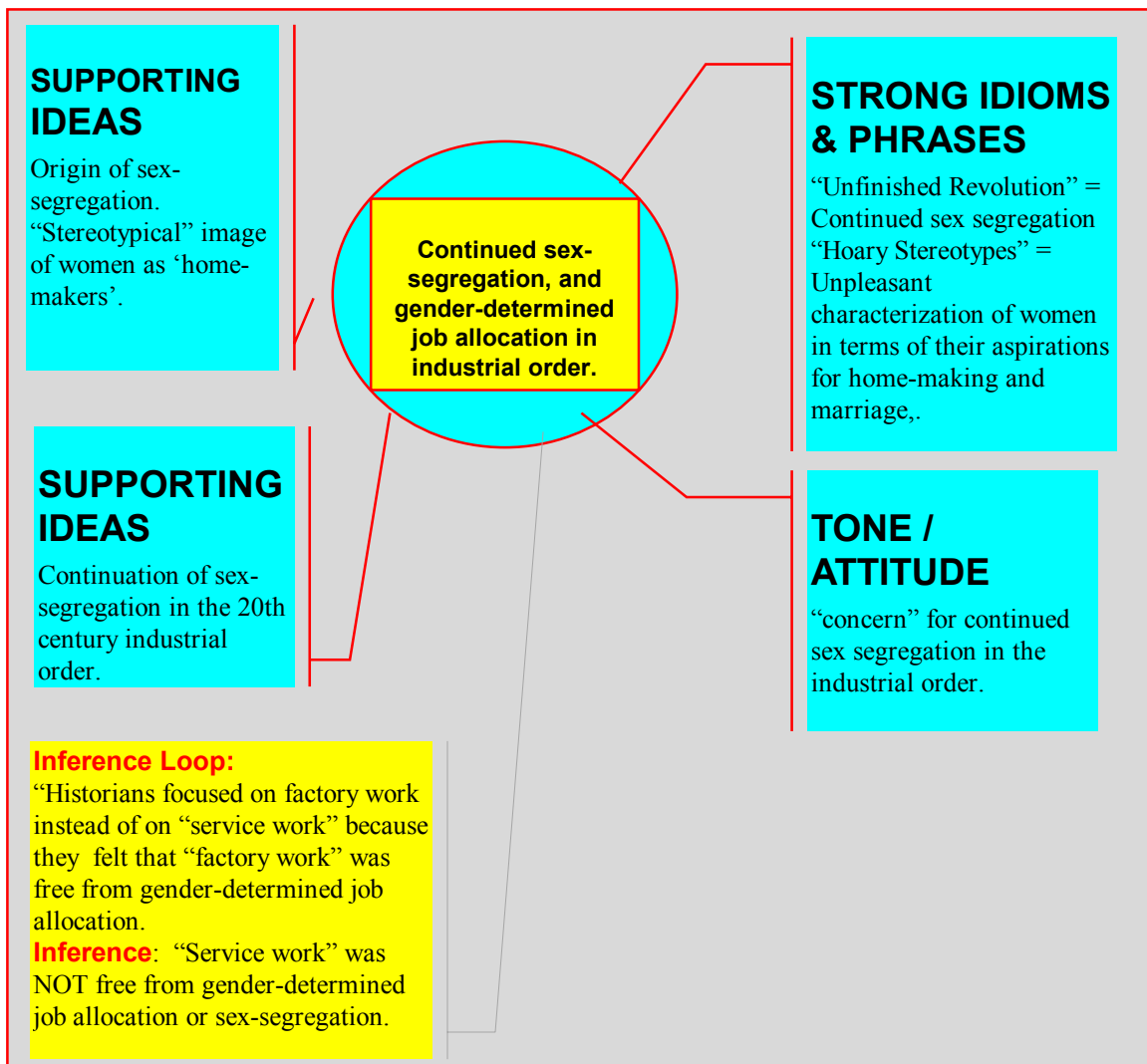
What else is mentioned? Why?

- Sex segregation characterized even the war industries during the world war II. Men returned to their traditional jobs after war ended. The author calls the continuation of sex segregation in the wage labor situation an "unfinished revolution".

There. We have a good understanding of the bits and pieces of information sewn together in the passage. Let us see how we can answer the test questions on the basis of this understanding. It is important that we be able to characterize choices as "contradictory", "too narrow/broad/out of scope", "partially correct with wrinkle added", and so on and eliminate them before we hone in on a short list of one or two candidates we want to consider seriously. And we will pick the choice that has the correct words in the correct order by understanding the literal meanings of words.

If we were to put together the different pieces of information in a pattern of inter-relationship, the diagram will look like this:

ORIGIN AND PERSISTENCE OF SEX SEGREGATION IN INDUSTRIAL ORDER



Let us see how we can deal with the questions on the basis of our broad understanding of the passage as outlined in the paradigm.

Historians of women's labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of female service workers -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians instead focused on factory work, primarily because it seemed so different from traditional, unpaid "women's work" in the home, and because the underlying economic forces of industrialism were presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect. Unfortunately, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped continued sex segregation in the workplace.

To explain this unfinished revolution in the status of women, historians have recently begun to emphasize the way a prevailing definition of femininity often determines the kinds of work allocated to women, even when such allocation is inappropriate to new conditions. For instance, early textile mill entrepreneurs, in **justifying** women's employment in wage labor, made much of the assumption that women were by nature skillful at detailed tasks and thus imported into the new industrial order hoary stereotypes associated with the homemaking activities they presumed to have been the purview of women. Because women accepted the more unattractive new industrial tasks more readily than did men, such jobs came to be regarded as female jobs. And employers, who assumed that women's "real" aspirations were for marriage and family life, declined to pay women wages commensurate with those of men. Thus many lower skilled, lower-paid less secure jobs came to be perceived as "female".

More remarkable than the origin has been the persistence of such segregation in twentieth-century industry. Once an occupation came to be perceived as "female", employers showed surprisingly little interest in changing that perception, even when higher profits beckoned. And despite the urgent need of the United States during the Second World War to mobilize its human resources fully, job segregation by sex characterized even the most important war industries. Moreover, once the war ended, employers quickly returned to men most of the "male" jobs that women had been permitted to master.

Now, let us look at the questions dealing with this passage one by one.

1. According to the passage, job segregation by sex in the United States was
(A) greatly diminished by labor mobilization during the Second World War
(B) perpetuated by those textile-millowners who argued in favor of women's employment in wage labor.
(C) one means by which women achieved greater job security
(D) reluctantly challenged by employers except when the economic advantages were obvious

(E) a constant source of labor unrest in the young textile industry

The anchor phrase for this explicit question is "job segregation". "Job segregation" is mentioned in the last paragraph and we learn that it **persisted into the 20th century, that employers showed NO interest in changing the perception, and that segregation was practiced in the war industries too.** The **second paragraph** also addresses the issue of origin of sex determined job allocation. We learn that the early textile mill-owners "justified" creation of so-called female jobs because they thought that women are

inherently suited to those types of jobs. Now, let us take a look at the choices and see how we can classify them and deal with them.

As you can see, majority of answer choices directly **contradict** the information presented in the passage. Look at choice A. It suggests that “**job segregation was greatly diminished by labor mobilization during the War.**” In the last paragraph the author states that the segregation persisted even in the War industries. This is a contradiction. Let us get rid of this choice.

How about Choice B (*perpetuated by those textile-millowners who argued in favor of women’s employment in wage labor*)? Look at the arrow pointing to the part of the passage “Justified” has been paraphrased to “argue in favor of” and that seems to be the choice we should select. Let us eliminate the other choices quickly.

Historians of women’s labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of female service workers -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians instead focused on factory work, primarily because it seemed so different from traditional, unpaid “women’s work” in the home, and because the underlying economic forces of industrialism were presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect. Unfortunately, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped continued sex segregation in the workplace.

To explain this unfinished revolution in the status of women, historians have recently begun to emphasize the way a prevailing definition of femininity often determines the kinds of work allocated to women, even when such allocation is inappropriate to new conditions. **For instance, early textile mill entrepreneurs, in justifying women’s employment in wage labor,** made much of

the assumption that women were by nature skillful at detailed tasks and thus imported into the new industrial order hoary stereotypes associated with the homemaking activities they presumed to have been the purview of women. Because women accepted the more unattractive new industrial tasks more readily than did men, such jobs came to be regarded as female jobs. And employers, who assumed that women’s “real” aspirations were for marriage and family life, declined to pay women wages commensurate with those of men. Thus many lower skilled, lower-paid **less-secure** jobs came to be perceived as “female”.

More remarkable than the origin has been the persistence of such segregation in twentieth-century industry. Once an occupation came to be perceived as “female”, employers showed surprisingly **little interest** in changing that perception, *even when higher profits* beckoned. And despite the urgent need of the United States during the Second World War to mobilize its human resources fully, job segregation by sex characterized even the most important war industries. Moreover, once the war ended, employers quickly returned to men most of the “male” jobs that women had been permitted to master.

Let us quickly eliminate the other choices.

What do you think of Choice C? It once again contradicts the information stated in the passage. (If anything, “female” jobs were less secure)

How about choice D? Once again, this choice is a direct contradiction of what is stated in the passage. (The passage states that the employers had little interest in changing the perception of “female jobs” even when higher profits beckoned.)

How about Choice E? There is nothing in the passage to suggest that the practice of job or sex segregation was the source of any **labor unrest in the textile industry**. This is a choice that goes beyond the scope of the passage and we must get rid of it.

Can you see that a majority of answer choices for this question were contradictions or “beyond the scope” answers?

Let us move on to Question 2.

2. According to the passage, historians of women’s labor focused on **factory work** as a more promising area of research than service sector work because factory work

- (A) involved the payment of higher wages
- (B) required skill in detailed tasks
- (C) was assumed to be less characterized by sex segregation.
- (D) was more readily accepted by women than by men
- (E) fitted the economic dynamics of industrialism better.

Historians of women’s labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of female service workers -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians instead focused on **factory work** primarily **because** it seemed so different from traditional, unpaid “women’s work” in the home, and **because** the underlying economic forces of industrialism were **presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect**. Unfortunately, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped continued sex segregation in the workplace.

The anchor phrase for this explicit question is “factory work” in the context of historian’s focus. Let us do an anchor phrase look up in

the first paragraph. The word **“because”** provides reasons for why historians chose to deal with factory work because they thought that it was different from home-making work and for the reason that it was less prone to sex determined job allocation.

The choice we select must deal with either one of these “reasons”.

Let us take a look at choice A. There is nothing in the passage in the context of historian’s perception to suggest that factory work involved the payment of **higher wages**. This statement is outside the scope of the passage and we should take a walk from it.

Let us take a look at choice B. This is an example of “out of context” answer. There is a mention in the second paragraph as to the manner in which the textile entrepreneurs used this stereotype to justify women’s employment in wage labor but that was not the reason why the historians decided to use the factory work model. **This choice qualifies as “stated in the passage, but not relevant to the question” answer.** The historians decided to use the factory work model because they thought that it was gender-blind and not prone to sex segregation.

What does Choice C tell us? Choice C is right on the button. It states that the historians focused on factory work as a more promising area of research because it was **“assumed to be less characterized by sex segregation”**. Our anchor-phrase look up gave us the same sense. Choice C is also a paraphrased information of an explicit statement made in the passage: “gender blind” is paraphrased to “less characterized by sex segregation”. Let us quickly eliminate the other choices before we move on.

Choice D suggests that the factory work was more readily accepted by women than by men. The passage does mention that women

came to accept the unattractive industrial jobs leading to their classification as female jobs, but that was not the reason for why historians chose to study factory work. This choice is another example of an “out of context” response. We must eliminate D for that reason.

How about Choice E? It is what we call the **“trip”** choice. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that the factory work fitted the dynamics of industrialism better; **all that we are told is that the underlying forces of industrialism were believed to be less prone to sex segregation.** We sense an almost “verbatim” restatement in this answer, and must take a walk from it. Choice C is the best answer because the paraphrasing of the adjective “gender blind” gives it away and forces us to select choice C. “Presumed to be gender blind” is paraphrased to “assumed to be less characterized by sex segregation”.

Are you ready to move on to Question 3?

3. It can be **inferred** from the passage that early historians of women’s labor in the United States paid little attention to women’s employment in the service sector of the economy because

- (A) the extreme variety of these occupations made it very difficult to assemble meaningful statistics about them.
- (B) fewer women found employment in the service sector than in factory work.
- (C) the wages paid to workers in the service sector were much lower than those paid in the industrial sector.
- (D) women’s employment in the service sector tended to be much more short-term than in factory work.
- (E) employment in the service sector seemed to have much in common with the unpaid work associated with homemaking.

The anchor phrase for this inference question is: “women’s employment in service jobs”. Let us do an anchor phrase look up and see what we learn about the anchor phrase in paragraph 1.

Historians of women’s labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of **female service workers** -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians **instead** focused on **factory work**, primarily because it **seemed so different from traditional, unpaid “women’s work” in the home**, and because the underlying economic forces of industrialism were presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect. Unfortunately, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped continued sex segregation in the workplace.

The author states that the historians chose to focus on “factory work” on “service work” because the “factory work” was believed to be less characterized by sex segregation. What is the inference permissible here? That “service work” was characterized by sex segregation.

The author also states that the historians chose to focus on “factory work” instead of on “service work” because “factory work” seemed **“different from unpaid, and traditional home-making activities”**. What is the other inference we are allowed to make here? That **“service work” was not different from “traditional home-making activities”**.

We are going to look for either of these inferences in the answer choices given. You must remember that no other inferences are permissible in the context of what is explicitly mentioned in the passage.

Historians of women's labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of **female service workers** -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians **instead** focused on **factory work**, primarily because it **seemed so different from traditional, unpaid "women's work" in the home**, and because the underlying economic forces of industrialism were presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect. Unfortunately, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped continued sex segregation in the workplace.

How do we make this inference? Simple. We are told that the historians, instead of focusing on service employment, focused on factory work which "seemed so **different** from traditional, unpaid women's work in the home". By inference, the service employment was seen to have much in common with the traditional, unpaid women's work in the home.

Also remember that the inference you will be making does not have to involve a leap of imagination. It is about reading between the lines, and understanding what is implied.

Let us illustrate this process with an example:

"Rita had a choice of going out with David or Paul. Rita decided to go out with Paul whom she considered a good conversationalist."

What is the inference that you are allowed to make in this situation?

That **Rita considered David NOT a good conversationalist**. That is all. You **cannot** make an inference call along any of the following lines:

- ❖ That David was ugly.

- ❖ That David had a pimple on his face that Rita did not like.
- ❖ That David dug reggae music while Rita liked alternative music.
- ❖ That David was snooty and reeked of garlic..

And so on.

Let us consider one more example of how this inference process works.

"Angela, an Anglo-Saxon white woman, and Wendy, an oriental woman applied for a factory job. The factory owner selected Wendy for the job because the owner considered Wendy's small-sized fingers more ideal for the requirements of the job."

What inference can you make here?

That Angela's fingers were not small-sized and that they were less suited to the requirements of the job. That is all. You cannot make any other inference about Angela from the above description.

Armed with this understanding of how an inference works, let us take a look at the choices and see which one states that service employment has much in common with home-making activities.

(A) the extreme variety of these occupations made it very difficult to assemble meaningful statistics about them.

← This choice contains “out of scope” information. Collecting statistics is not addressed in the context of why historians chose to study factory work instead of service work. Let us get rid of it.

(B) fewer women found employment in the service sector than in factory work.

← This choice is also “out of scope” answer. “Finding employment” is not addressed in the context of why historians chose to study factory work instead of service work. Let us eliminate it.

(C) the wages paid to workers in the service sector were much lower than those paid in the industrial sector.

← Again, there is no comparison made in the passage about wages in the context of why historians chose to address factory work instead of service work. Another “out of scope” answer. Three in a row.

(D) women’s employment in the service sector tended to be much more short-term than in factory work.

← “Duration of employment” is not mentioned in any context, let alone in the context of why historians chose to address factory work rather than service work. The test authors are working over-time to ensure that you will allow your imagination to run wild and pick one of these wild choices. You should not.

We have eliminated four choices in a row as “out of scope”. As Sherlock Holmes would say, “whatever remains, however improbable it may seem, must be the truth”. Let us hope that choice E IS the answer.

(E) employment in the service sector seemed to have much in common with the unpaid work associated with homemaking.

Choice E is what we are looking for. The passage says that the historians chose to focus on factory work rather than on service work because factory work seemed so different from traditional home-making. The inference is that service work was not different from home-making activities.

When you deal with “inference questions”, always go with the implied statement based on what is openly expressed. Your ability to hone in on the implied meaning depends to a large extent on your discipline to do anchor phrase look-ups.

In some other passages, when you do an anchor phrase look up, you will spot some **adjectival or adverbial phrases** and the test will ask you to make some inferences on the basis of those adjectival or adverbial phrases.

For example, the passage will say:

“the customers were not leaving at an unacceptable rate for whatever reason”, and we will spot the adjectival phrase “unacceptable rate” and read that to mean that the “company was able to retain customers at an acceptable rate.”

Let us move on to the next question and see how we can deal with that.

4. The passage supports which of the following statements about the early mill owners mentioned in the second paragraph?

- (A) They hoped that by creating relatively unattractive “female” jobs they would discourage women from losing interest in marriage and family life.
- (B) They sought to increase the size of the available labor force as a means to keep men’s wages low.
- (C) They argued that women were inherently suited to do well in particular kinds of factory work.
- (D) They thought that factory work bettered the condition of women by emancipating them from dependence on income earned by men.
- (E) they felt guilty about disturbing the traditional division of labor in the family.

The anchor phrase is: “**early** mill-owners” mentioned in the second paragraph. Let us do a look up and see what we learn.

To explain this unfinished revolution in the status of women, historians have recently begun to emphasize the way a prevailing definition of femininity often determines the kinds of work allocated to women, even when such allocation is inappropriate to new conditions. **For instance, early textile mill entrepreneurs, in justifying women’s employment in wage labor, made much of the assumption that women were by nature skillful at detailed tasks and thus imported into the new industrial order hoary stereotypes associated with the homemaking activities they presumed to have been the purview of women.** Because women accepted the more unattractive new industrial tasks more readily than did men,

such jobs came to be regarded as female jobs. And employers, who assumed that women’s “real” aspirations were for marriage and family life, declined to pay women wages commensurate with those of men. Thus many lower skilled, lower-paid less secure jobs came to be perceived as “female”.

The “anchor phrase lookup” tells us that the **early mill-owners** were at pains to explain that women were skilled at “detailed tasks” We must look for a choice that mentions this, because we are dealing with an explicit question.

What do we think of Choice A ?

A) They hoped that by creating relatively unattractive “female” jobs they would discourage women from losing interest in marriage and family life.

There is a mention in the passage that “women’s real aspirations were for getting married and raising a family” and that is stated in the context of “**unequal wages for equal jobs done by men and women**”. There is nothing that suggests that the factory owners had hoped that the so-called “female” jobs would keep the interest alive in marriage and family life for women. The mill owners did not support the liberal doctrine of stay-at-home moms. We must eliminate it as wrinkled and out of context.

(B) They sought to increase the size of the available labor force as a means to keep men’s wages low.

Choice B is a bit of a contradiction. Men’s wages were always higher than women’s in the industrial order, and the passage does not support the information in choice B.

(C) They argued that women were inherently suited to do well in particular kinds of factory work.

Choice C is right on the button. Remember: We are dealing with an explicit question and the answer must appear precisely in the passage. Our anchor-phrase lookup confirms this information as specifically stated in the passage. We must select this but only after eliminating the other two remaining choices.

(D) They thought that factory work bettered the condition of women by emancipating them from dependence on income earned by men.

Choice D wants you to think that the factory owners were driven by a social agenda aimed at emancipating women from the evil clutches of heartless men who made women financially dependent upon them.. Our anchor-phrase lookup does not find any information supporting the above statement, and we must eliminate this choice as “beyond the scope” of passage information.

(E) they felt guilty about disturbing the traditional division of labor in the family.

Choice E lays a guilt trip on the mill owners. Another “beyond the scope” of passage information choice. Our anchor phrase lookup does not find any information that comes remotely close to this expression. Let us kill this choice and go with Choice C.

Let us move on to Question 5, which is an Inference Question.

5. It can be inferred from the passage that the “unfinished revolution” refers to the

(A) entry of women into the industrial labor market.

(B) recognition that work done by women as homemakers should be compensated at rates comparable to those prevailing in the service sector of the economy.

(C) development of a new definition of femininity unrelated to the economic forces of industrialism.

(D) introduction of equal pay for equal work in all profession.

(E) emancipation of women wage earners from gender-determined job allocation.

The **anchor phrase for this inference question is “unfinished revolution”**, and let us do a lookup and see what we learn from an explicit statement in the passage.

Historians of women’s labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of female service workers -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians instead focused on factory work, primarily because it seemed so different from traditional, unpaid “women’s work” in the home, and because the underlying economic forces of industrialism were presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect. Unfortunately, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped **continued sex segregation in the workplace**.

To explain **this unfinished revolution** in the status of women, historians have recently begun to emphasize the way a prevailing definition of femininity often determines the kinds of work allocated to women, even when such allocation is inappropriate to new

Let us look at the description of conditions immediately preceding the “**this** unfinished

revolution” reference at the beginning of the paragraph:

It is clear that the “**Unfinished revolution**” refers to the reality of “*continued sex segregation (gender-determined job allocation) in the workplace*”.

Let us take a serious look at the answer choices and see which ones we can eliminate.

(A) entry of women into the industrial labor market.

What do we think of Choice A?

Not much. The unfinished revolution does not refer to the entry of women into the industrial labor market. This is a bit of contradiction because women employment was a reality in the industrial order.

(B) recognition that work done by women as homemakers should be compensated at rates comparable to those prevailing in the service sector of the economy.

Choice B is straight out of the pages of a treatise on social engineering and union activism. Is “unfinished revolution” mentioned in the context of compensating homemakers at the same rates as other workers? Not by a long shot. Our anchor phrase lookup does not confirm that notion. Another “beyond the scope” answer that expects you to read too much into “unfinished revolution”.

(C) development of a new definition of femininity unrelated to the economic forces of industrialism.

Choice C deals with femininity. The term “unfinished revolution” does not allude to any notion of femininity but to persistence of gender-determined job allocation.

(D) introduction of equal pay for equal work in all profession.

Choice D is a take-off on a reality discussed in the passage but **not** in the context of the unfinished revolution. (“And employers, who assumed that women’s “real” aspirations were for marriage and family life, declined to pay women wages commensurate with those of men”). Another twist introduced into the answer choice is the phrase “**all professions**”. The passage is not about employment equity and “equal pay for equal work” in all professions. Be aware of this wrinkle when you eliminate this choice. This choice will be characterized as “out of context and wrinkled”.

How about Choice E ? “Emancipation of women wage earners from gender-determined job allocation.” Sounds like the “unfinished revolution” to us at the Educational Training Services. Doesn’t it to you? We should go with choice E.

Let us move on to another Explicit Question.

6. The passage supports which of the following statements about hiring policies in the United States?

- (A) After a crisis many formerly “male” jobs are reclassified as “female” jobs.
- (B) Industrial employers generally prefer to hire women with previous experience as homemakers.
- (C) Post Second World War hiring policies caused women to lose many of their wartime gains in employment opportunity.
- (D) Even war industries during the Second World War were reluctant to hire women for factory work.
- (E) The service sector of the economy has proved more nearly gender-blind in its hiring policies than has the manufacturing sector.

The anchor phrase is “hiring policies” in the United States. Let us do a lookup and see what we learn. The “hiring policies” are addressed in paragraph 3:

More remarkable than the origin has been the persistence of such segregation in twentieth-century industry. Once an occupation came to be perceived as ‘female’, employers showed surprisingly **little interest** in changing that perception, *even when higher profits* beckoned. And despite the urgent need of the United States during the Second World War to mobilize its human resources fully, job segregation by sex characterized even the most important war industries. Moreover, once the war ended, *employers quickly returned to men most of the “male” jobs that women had been permitted to master.*

Our understanding of the information in the passage in the context of “hiring policies” is that employers did not want to reconsider classification of jobs on the basis of gender even when profit considerations played out and that employers were eager to annul after

the war any job gains that women might have made during the war. Let us see which one of these two pieces of information is mentioned in the choices.

(A) After a crisis many formerly “male” jobs are reclassified as “female” jobs.

Choice A directly **contradicts** what is stated in the passage. In the final paragraph, we are told that “once the war ended, employers quickly returned to men most of the “male” jobs that women had been permitted to master”, the exact opposite of what is stated in Choice A.

(B) Industrial employers generally prefer to hire women with previous experience as homemakers.

Choice B is a typical “nonsense” choice. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that “industrial employers generally prefer to hire women with **previous experience as homemakers.**” **Wrinkled and beyond the scope.**

(C) Post Second World War hiring policies caused women to lose many of their wartime gains in employment opportunity.

Choice C is exactly what we learn from the passage. (*Once the war ended, employers quickly returned to men most of the “male” jobs that woman had been permitted to master.*) This is a restatement of an explicit piece of information, and we must go with this answer. Let us quickly eliminate the other remaining choices.

(D) Even war industries during the Second World War were reluctant to hire women for factory work.

Choice D is not supported by any information in the passage. In fact, it may be a contradiction because the passage says that women lost their **gains during the war** after the war ended.

(E) The service sector of the economy has proved more nearly gender-blind in its hiring policies than has the manufacturing sector.

Likewise, choice E is not borne out by the information contained in the passage, and could be a contradiction because of the expectations of historians stated in the passage in the context of factory jobs vis-à-vis service jobs.

Let us grapple with tone information in Question 7.

7. Which of the following words best expresses the *opinion of the author of the passage* concerning the notion that women are more skillful than men in carrying out detailed tasks?

- (A) “patient”
- (B) “repetitive”
- (C) “**hoary**”
- (D) “homemaking”
- (E) “purview”

The anchor phrase is “skilled at detailed tasks”, and the question is asking about the “**author’s characterization**” of the notion. Let us do a lookup to see what we learn.

For instance, early textile mill entrepreneurs, in justifying women’s employment in wage labor, made much of the assumption that women were by

nature skillful at detailed tasks and thus imported into the new industrial order hoary stereotypes associated with the homemaking activities they presumed to have been the purview of women

The questions asks you to identify which of the above epithets best describes the author’s opinion about the “stereotype” that women are more skillful than men at detailed tasks.

The best answer is “hoary” which is what the author considers the stereotyping to be.

All the other adjectives mentioned express the thinking or the opinion of the factory owners.

The only adjective that you can attribute to the author of the passage is “hoary”.

A word of caution is in order in the context of this question. We stated at the outset that “verbatim” reproductions are to taken with a pinch of salt. The question here asks us to identify which of the five adjectives “reproduced” from the passage describes the author’s view of the mill owners’ view about what women are good at. If it is an inference question, then we would have been required to make sense of the implications of the term “hoary”, which means “gray-haired” or “ancient”.

Be careful to read what the question states. If it wants the author’s opinion as to the stated quality, give it to them. On the other hand, if it wanted you to pick the word that best describes the mill-owners’ opinion, it could be any of the other adjectives in the question.

Come to think of it, when you understand what is asked of you, you will have no difficulty answering the question correctly.

Let us move on to Question 8.

8. Which of the following best describes the relationship of the final paragraph to the passage as a whole?

(A) **The central idea is reinforced by the citation of evidence drawn from twentieth-century history.**

(B) the central ideal is restated in such a way as to form a transition to a new topic for discussion.

(C) The central idea is restated and juxtaposed with evidence that might appear to contradict it.

(D) A partial exception to the generalizations of the central idea is dismissed as unimportant.

(E) Recent history is cited to suggest that the central idea's validity is gradually diminishing.

What do we understand the final paragraph to accomplish? Does it extend the thought put forth in the previous two? Does it branch off in a totally new direction to introduce a new thought or idea? Is there new evidence introduced to contradict the idea presented previously? Is there anything mentioned to suggest that the validity of sex-segregation is diminishing in the twentieth-century history?

What we know is that the central idea is reinforced with evidence from the 20th century and we pick A as the answer Choice. None of the other choices is correct in describing the relationship of the final paragraph to the rest of the passage.

A good understanding of the passage in terms of answers to those standard questions, and your ability to pay attention to the choice of words in an answer choice are a crucial requirement for a great score in this section. IF you do the stuff we have asked you to do in this file, you should go smiling all the way

to the graduate school of business. Guaranteed.

Historians of women's labor in the United States at first largely disregarded the story of female service workers -- women earning wages in occupations such as salesclerk, domestic servant, and office secretary. These historians instead focused on factory work, primarily because it seemed so different from traditional, unpaid "women's work" in the home, and because the underlying economic forces of industrialism were presumed to be gender-blind and hence emancipatory in effect. Unfortunately, emancipation has been less profound than expected, for not even industrial wage labor has escaped continued sex segregation in the workplace.

To explain this unfinished revolution in the status of women, historians have recently begun to emphasize the way a prevailing definition of femininity often determines the kinds of work allocated to women, even when such allocation is inappropriate to new conditions. For instance, early textile mill entrepreneurs, in **justifying** women's employment in wage labor, made much of the assumption that women were by nature skillful at detailed tasks and thus imported into the new industrial order hoary stereotypes associated with the homemaking activities they presumed to have been the purview of women. Because women accepted the more unattractive new industrial tasks more readily than did men, such jobs came to be regarded as female jobs. And employers, who assumed that women's "real" aspirations were for marriage and family life, declined to pay women wages commensurate with those of men. Thus many lower skilled, lower-paid less secure jobs came to be perceived as "female".

More remarkable than the origin has been the persistence of such segregation in twentieth-century industry. Once an occupation came to be perceived as "female", employers showed surprisingly little interest in changing that perception, even when higher profits beckoned. And despite the urgent need of the United States during the Second World War to mobilize its human resources fully, job segregation by sex characterized even the most important war industries. Moreover, once the war ended, employers quickly returned to men most of the "male" jobs that women had been permitted to master.

Let us analyze another passage and see how we can develop a solid understanding of the passage and go on to deal with the questions on the basis of that understanding.

Nearly every writer on the philosophy of civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. makes a connection between King and Henry David Thoreau, usually via Thoreau's famous essay "Civil Disobedience" (1849). In his book *Stride toward Freedom* (1958), King himself stated that Thoreau's essay was his first intellectual contact with the theory of passive resistance to governmental laws that are perceived as morally unjust. However, this emphasis on Thoreau's influence on King is unfortunate: first, King would not have agreed with many other aspects of Thoreau's philosophy, including Thoreau's ultimate acceptance of violence as a form of protest; second, an overemphasis on the influence of one essay has kept historians from noting other correspondences between King's philosophy and transcendentalism. "Civil Disobedience" was the only example of transcendentalist writing with which King was familiar, and in many other transcendentalist writings, including works by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller, King would have found ideas more nearly akin to his own.

The kind of civil disobedience King had in mind was, in fact, quite different from Thoreau's view of civil disobedience. Thoreau, like most other transcendentalists, was primarily interested in reform of the individual, whereas King was primarily interested in reform of society. As a protest against the Mexican War, Thoreau refused to pay taxes, but he did not hope by his action to force a change in national policy. While he encouraged others to adopt similar protests, he did not attempt to mount any mass protest action against unjust laws. In contrast to Thoreau, King began to advocate the use of mass civil disobedience to effect revolutionary changes within the social system.

However, King's writings suggest that, without realizing it, he was an incipient transcendentalist. Most transcendentalists subscribed to the concept of "higher law"

and included civil disobedience to unjust laws as part of their strategy. They often invoked the concept of higher law to justify their opposition to slavery and to advocate disobedience to the strengthened Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. In his second major book, King's discussion of just and unjust laws and the responsibility of the individual is very similar to the transcendentalists' discussion of higher law. In reference to how one can advocate breaking some laws and obeying others, King notes that there are two types of laws, just and unjust; he describes a just law as a "code that squares with the moral law" and an unjust law as a "code that is out of harmony with the moral law". Thus, King's opposition to the injustice of legalized segregation in the twentieth century is philosophically akin to the transcendentalists' opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law in the nineteenth century.

1. Which one of the following best states the main idea of the passage?

- ◆ King's philosophy was more influenced by Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience than by any other writing of the transcendentalists.

The first choice is partially correct. King admits that Thoreau's essay was his "first intellectual contact with the concept of Passive Resistance" but the passage does not say that he was aware of any other transcendentalist writing. Let us eliminate this choice as "partially correct with wrinkle added" answer.

- ◆ While historians may have overestimated Thoreau's influence on King, King was greatly influenced by a number of the transcendentalist philosophy.

This is a contradictory choice because the passage tells us that he was not aware of any other transcendentalist writing. Let us get rid of it. According to the passage, Thoreau's writing was the "only example of transcendentalist writing with which King was familiar".

- ♦ Thoreau's and King's views on civil disobedience differed in that King was more concerned with the social reform than with the economic reform of the society.

Another wrinkle-added choice. There is no mention of "economic reform" advocated by anyone including Thoreau. Thoreau believed in reform of the individual whereas King believed in reform of the society. Let us discard this choice as garbage.

- ♦ Although historians have overemphasized Thoreau's influence on King, there are parallels between King's philosophy and transcendentalism that have not been fully appreciated.

This one seems to hit the nail on the head. The author states that "an overemphasis on the influence of Thoreau's essay has kept historians from noting other correspondences between King's philosophy and transcendentalism." Let us shortlist this choice for a re-visit and confirmation.

- ♦ King's ideas about law and civil disobedience were influenced by transcendentalism in general and Thoreau's essays in particular.

This is another wrinkle-added answer. King was not aware of any other transcendentalist writing or of transcendentalism. **Let us eliminate it and select the fourth choice.**

2. Which one of the following statements about "Civil Disobedience" would the author consider most accurate?

The anchor phrase is "Civil Disobedience" and let us do a look up to see what is stated in this context:

Nearly every writer on the philosophy of civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. makes a connection between King and Henry David Thoreau, usually via Thoreau's famous essay "Civil Disobedience" (1849). In his book *Stride toward Freedom* (1958), King himself stated that Thoreau's essay was his first intellectual contact with the theory of passive resistance to governmental laws that are perceived as morally unjust.

The information is that King acknowledged that Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience was his first intellectual exposure to the concept of passive resistance. We must look for a choice that restates this information in a paraphrased manner. Let us examine the choices:

- ♦ It was **not** King's first contact with the concept of passive resistance to unjust laws.

This is a contradiction because King himself admits that Thoreau's writing was his "first intellectual contact" with the theory of passive resistance. Let us eliminate this choice and move on.

- ♦ It was **one of many examples** transcendentalist writing with which King was familiar.

This is a contradiction. King was **NOT** familiar with any other transcendentalist writing. Also, other writings are not mentioned in the context of "civil disobedience".

- ❖ It provided King with a model for using passive resistance to effect social change.

There is a bit of a wrinkle here. Thoreau did not believe in "social change" and his essay could not have provided a model for King to follow in effecting social transformation. Also, there is nothing mentioned in the context of "civil disobedience" about social change or individual transformation. Let us eliminate it.

- ♦ It contains a number of ideas with which other transcendentalists strongly disagreed.

We are dealing with an explicit question and must answer the question on the basis of an explicitly stated information. There is no mention in the passage that other transcendentalists strongly disagreed with Thoreau's essay. Let us characterize this choice as "not mentioned and beyond the scope" and move on to examine the last remaining candidate. We have eliminated four options and the next one better be good.

- ♦ It influenced King's philosophy on passive resistance to unjust laws.

What do we think of this? Exactly consistent with what the passage states: “Thoreau’s essay “Civil Disobedience” was King’s first intellectual contact with the theory of passive resistance to governmental laws that are perceived as morally unjust.” Let us select this choice and move on to examine the next question.

3. In the first paragraph, the author is primarily concerned with

- ♦ Chronicling the development of King’s philosophy on passive resistance to unjust law.

While this information is mentioned in passing, the first paragraph is devoted to bemoaning an overemphasis on Thoreau’s influence on King to the exclusion of a consideration of the influence of other transcendentalists. Let us eliminate this choice as “too narrow in scope” answer.

- ♦ Suggesting that a common emphasis on one influence on King’s philosophy has been misleading.

This one seems to hit a nerve. The author appears to be lamenting the overemphasis on one essay, and how historians have ignored evidence of the possible influence of other transcendentalist writings such as those of Emerson and Fuller. Let us shortlist this choice and come back to confirm it.

- ♦ Providing new information about the influence of twentieth-century philosophers on King’s work.

This is a contradiction of sorts. King was not aware of any other transcendentalist work, and the transcendentalists are from the 19th century. Let us eliminate this choice.

- ♦ Summarizing the work of historians on the most important influences on King’s philosophy.

This is another contradiction. Historians did not focus on any influence other than Thoreau’s essay, and the author calls this unfortunate. This one cannot be the choice we want to pick.

- ♦ Providing background information about twentieth-century transcendentalist philosophy.

The transcendentalists referred to in the passage existed in the 19th century and the

author does not provide any background information about the 20th century philosophy in the opening paragraph. The author merely states that the historians overemphasized Thoreau’s influence on King, and ignored similarities between King’s philosophy and that of other transcendentalists. This choice deserves to be discarded as well. We must pick choice B.

4. According to the passage, which one of the following is true of Emerson and Fuller?

This is an explicit question and the anchor phrase is “Emerson and Fuller”. Let us do a quick look up and see what is said in the context of “Emerson and Fuller” in the passage.

Nearly every writer on the philosophy of civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. makes a connection between King and Henry David Thoreau, usually via Thoreau’s famous essay “Civil Disobedience” (1849). In his book *Stride toward Freedom* (1958), King himself stated that Thoreau’s essay was his first intellectual contact with the theory of passive resistance to governmental laws that are perceived as morally unjust. However, this emphasis on Thoreau’s influence on King is unfortunate: first, King would not have agreed with many other aspects of Thoreau’s philosophy, including Thoreau’s ultimate acceptance of violence as a form of protest; second, an overemphasis on the influence of one essay has kept historians from noting other correspondences between King’s philosophy and transcendentalism. “**Civil Disobedience**” was the only example of transcendentalist writing with which King was familiar, and in many other transcendentalist writings, including works by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller, King would have found ideas more nearly akin to his own.

We learn that King would have found many more similarities between his views and those of other

transcendentalists such as Emerson and Fuller than between King's and Thoreau's. Let us see what choice will restate this information in a paraphrased manner.

- ◆ Some of their ideas were less typical of transcendentalism than were some of Thoreau's ideas.

This is not mentioned in the passage. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that Emerson and Fuller were less typical of transcendentalists than was Thoreau. This is not the one we will pick.

- ◆ They were more concerned with the reform of society than with the reform of the individual.

This is a contradiction. All transcendentalists mentioned in the passage believed in reform of the individual and not of the society. We learned earlier in this file that we must stay clear of contradictions. Also, this information is not context specific because there is no mention of this information in the first and only reference to Emerson and Fuller.

- ◆ They would have been more likely than Thoreau to agree with King on the necessity of mass protest in civil disobedience.

This is another contradiction. The passage states that Thoreau, like most other transcendentalists, was primarily interested in reform of individual".

- ◆ Their ideas about civil disobedience and unjust laws are as well known as Thoreau's are.

This is not supported by any information provided in the passage. The author does not suggest to what extent Emerson's and Fuller's ideas were popular in comparison to Thoreau's. We will discard this choice.

- ◆ Some of their ideas were more similar to King's than were some of Thoreau's.

This is directly supported by an explicit statement in the passage: "in many other transcendentalist writings, including works by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller, King would have found ideas more nearly akin to his own." Notice the paraphrasing of akin to "similar". We must select this choice.

Let us move on to Question 5.

5. **According to the passage**, King differed from most transcendentalists in that he

Our anchor phrase is "most transcendentalists" and in what manner King differed from them.

Our "anchor phrase look up" gives us the following anchor phrase statement: (paragraph 2)

"Thoreau, like most other transcendentalists, was primarily interested in reform of the individual, whereas King was primarily interested in reform of society."

WE understand from this anchor phrase statement that King was interested in the reform of the society whereas "most transcendentalists" were interested in the reform of the individual. Let us see which one of the answer choices states this distinction stated in the anchor phrase statement.

- ◆ Opposed violence as a form of civil protest.

The passage states that King would not have agreed with Thoreau's ultimate acceptance of violence as a form of protest, but that information does not appear in our anchor phrase statement.

- ◆ Opposed war as an instrument of foreign policy under any circumstances.

There is no mention of foreign policy in the context of King's advocacy of the use of mass civil disobedience to effect social change. We must not select this choice.

- ◆ Believed that just laws had an inherent moral value.

This information is not mentioned in the context of the anchor phrase. Let us move on.

- ◆ Was more interested in reforming society than in reforming the individual.

This one seems to be right on the money. This is the choice we must pick, but let us quickly eliminate the last choice.

- ◆ Protested social and legal injustices in United States rather than United States foreign policy.

"social and legal injustices" are not mentioned anywhere let alone in the anchor phrase statement.

We must go with choice D.

PASSAGE:

Nearly every writer on the philosophy of civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr. makes a connection between King and Henry David Thoreau, usually via Thoreau's famous essay "Civil Disobedience" (1849). In his book **Stride toward Freedom** (1958), King himself stated that Thoreau's essay was his first intellectual contact with the theory of passive resistance to governmental laws that are perceived as morally unjust. However, this emphasis on Thoreau's influence on King is unfortunate: first, King would not have agreed with many other aspects of Thoreau's philosophy, including Thoreau's ultimate acceptance of violence as a form of protest; second, an overemphasis on the influence of one essay has kept historians from noting other correspondences between King's philosophy and transcendentalism. "Civil Disobedience" was the only example of transcendentalist writing with which King was familiar, and in many other transcendentalist writings, including works by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller, King would have found ideas more nearly akin to his own.

The kind of civil disobedience King had in mind was, in fact, quite different from Thoreau's view of civil disobedience. Thoreau, like most other transcendentalists, was primarily interested in reform of the individual, whereas King was primarily interested in reform of society. As a protest against the Mexican War, Thoreau refused to pay taxes, but he did not hope by his action to force a change in national policy. While he encouraged others to adopt similar protests, he did not attempt to mount any mass protest action against unjust laws. In contrast to Thoreau, King began to advocate the use of mass civil disobedience to effect revolutionary changes within the social system.

However, King's writings suggest that, without realizing it, he was an incipient transcendentalist. Most transcendentalists subscribed to the concept of "higher law" and included civil disobedience to unjust laws as part of their strategy. They often invoked the concept of higher law to justify their opposition to slavery and to advocate disobedience to the strengthened Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. In his second major book, King's discussion of just and unjust laws and the responsibility of the individual is very similar to the transcendentalists' discussion of higher law. In reference to how one can advocate breaking some laws and obeying others, King notes that there are two types of laws, just and unjust; he describes a just law as a "code that squares with the moral law" and an unjust law as a "code that is out of harmony with the moral law". Thus, King's opposition to the injustice of legalized segregation in the twentieth century is philosophically akin to the transcendentalists' opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law in the nineteenth century.

6. The passage **suggests** which one of the following about Thoreau?

This is an **inference** question, and must be answered on the basis of an explicit information that allows a "read between the lines". Also, the anchor phrase is "Thoreau"

and Thoreau is mentioned in several places throughout the passage. Let us see which one of the mentioned information is addressed in the choices.

- ◆ He was the first to develop fully the theory of civil disobedience.

There is nothing in the passage to suggest that Thoreau was the first to advocate civil disobedience. The fact that Thoreau's famous essay was the first intellectual contact for King does not imply that Thoreau was the first to develop the theory of civil disobedience fully. We cannot pick this choice.

- ◆ His work has had a greater influence on contemporary thinkers than has the work of Emerson and Fuller.

There is nothing in the passage to permit this inference. In fact, there is no mention of Thoreau's or other transcendentalists' influence **on contemporary thinkers**. This is a wrinkle we must take a walk from.

- ◆ His philosophy does not contain all of the same elements as the philosophies of the other transcendentalists.

The author mentions in the first paragraph that **King would not have agreed with many other ideas of Thoreau's and that there were "other correspondences between King's philosophy and Transcendentalism"**. The inference is that Thoreau's philosophy is not on the same wavelength as that of other transcendentalists. This is a strong contender for selection. Let us quickly eliminate the remaining choices before we come back to confirm this choice.

- ◆ He advocated using civil disobedience to force the federal government to change its policies on war.

This is a bit of a contradiction because the passage mentions that "Thoreau refused to pay taxes, but he did not hope by his action to force a change in national policy". Let us not waste time with this choice by giving it a second look

- ◆ He is better known for his idea on social and legal reform than for his ideas on individual reform.

Another contradiction. Thoreau did not believe in social reform. And legal reform is not mentioned in the passage. Major wrinkle here and a major contradiction. We cannot pick this choice.
We must select choice C.

Let us examine the last question.

7. The passage **provides support** for which one of the following statements about quotations in the last paragraph about just and unjust laws?

The quotations are mentioned in the last paragraph and we need to understand the context in which the quotations are provided.

Let us do a look up and see what we can learn:

However, King's writings suggest that, without realizing it, he was an incipient transcendentalist. Most transcendentalists subscribed to the concept of "higher law" and included civil disobedience to unjust laws as part of their strategy. They often invoked the concept of higher law to justify their opposition to slavery and to advocate disobedience to the strengthened Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. In his second major book, **King's discussion of just and unjust laws and the responsibility of the individual is very similar to the transcendentalists' discussion of higher law.** In reference to how one can advocate breaking some laws and obeying others, King notes that there are two types of laws, just and unjust; he describes a just law as a "code that squares with the moral law" and an unjust law as a "code that is out of harmony with the moral law".

Our read is that King and other transcendentalists had similar views on respecting or "dissing" laws based on whether they square with the moral law or not. Let us see which of the choices addresses this information.

- ♦ They are an example of a way in which King's ideas differed from Thoreau's but were similar to those of other transcendentalists.

The quotes are not mentioned in the context of suggesting a similarity between King's views and those of others. They are provided to elaborate on what was meant by just and unjust laws. We cannot select this choice that is out of context.

- ♦ They provide evidence that proves that King's philosophy was affected by transcendentalist thought.

Transcendentalist thoughts had no effect on King because, according to the passage, he was not aware of them. We cannot select this choice.

- ♦ **They suggest that King, like the transcendentalists, judged human laws by ethical standards.**

This one seems to be bull's-eye. The author states that "in his second book, King's discussion of just and unjust laws and the responsibility of the individual is similar to the transcendentalists' discussion of higher law." King described just law as one that squares with the moral law (ethical standards), and this choice seems to sum up the essence of the information in the passage. We must shortlist this choice for a second look and selection.

- ◆ They suggest a theoretical basis for King's philosophy on government.

The quotations are made in the context of clarifying what just and unjust laws meant, and do not provide any basis for King's philosophy on government. We must run from this choice as quickly as we can.

- ◆ They provide a paraphrase of Thoreau's position on just and unjust laws.

The passage mentions that most transcendentalists subscribed to the concept of higher law but there is no specific mention that Thoreau did. Also, the definitions do not paraphrase Thoreau's position on just and unjust laws. We must go with choice C.

develop a solid understanding by asking questions and to do an "anchor phrase lookup" in order to comprehend the context in which any specific piece of information is provided. Let us solidify this understanding by dealing with one more passage appearing on the next page.



As you might have noticed, Reading comprehension exercises in particular and all verbal sections in general, test your ability to tell why a choice is not selectable in the process of honing in on the correct choice. Eliminating stupid choices is a matter of deciding whether a specific choice of words is appropriate for the way things are described in the passage. You should also be able to characterize choices in terms of contradictions, out of context/scope, wrinkled, and such like in order to be able to eliminate them and to be sure that you are selecting the correct choice. Your ability to pose those standard questions and find answers will solidify your understanding of the passage, and help you deal with the questions more efficiently and effectively.

Last, but not least, we cannot overemphasize the need for you to make notes of salient details such as contrasts and similarities. Making notes will help you internalize the information a lot better, and deal with the choices more effectively. The way you will deal with explicit questions is by paying attention to the anchor phrase and by doing an "anchor phrase lookup".

If the information you find during the lookup is not addressed in the choice, you know what to do with that choice: Take a walk from it. Reading Comprehension is an open book test and if you have the discipline to

PASSAGE:

Faced with the problems of insufficient evidence, of conflicting evidence, and of evidence relayed through the flawed perceptual, retentive, and narrative abilities of witnesses, a jury is forced to draw inferences in its attempt to ascertain the truth. By applying the same cognitive tools they have developed and used over a lifetime, jurors engage in the inferential exercise that lawyers call fact-finding. In certain decision-making contexts that are relevant to the trial of lawsuits, however, these normally reliable cognitive tools may cause jurors to commit inferential errors that distort rather than reveal the truth.

Although juries can make a variety of inferential errors, most of these mistakes in judgment involve the drawing of an unwarranted conclusion from the evidence, that is, in reality, it does not prove. For example, evidence that the defendant in a criminal prosecution has a prior conviction may encourage jurors to presume the defendant's guilt, because of their preconception that a person previously convicted of a crime must be inclined toward repeated criminal behavior. That commonly held belief is at least a partial distortion of reality; not all former convicts engage in repeated criminal behavior. Also, a jury may give more probative weight than objective analysis would allow to vivid photographic evidence depicting a shooting victim's wounds, or may underestimate the weight of defense testimony that is not delivered in a sufficiently forceful or persuasive manner. Finally, complex or voluminous evidence might be so confusing to a jury that its members would draw totally unwarranted conclusions or even ignore the evidence entirely.

Recent empirical research in cognitive psychology suggests that people tend to commit inferential errors like these under certain predictable circumstances. By examining the available information, the situation, and the type of decision being made, cognitive psychologists can describe the kinds of inferential errors a person or a

group is likely to make. These patterns of human decision-making may provide the courts with a guide to evaluating the effect of evidence on the reliability of the jury's inferential processes in certain situations.

The fact that juries can commit inferential errors that jeopardize the accuracy of the fact-finding process is not unknown to the courts. In fact, one of a presiding judge's duties is to minimize jury inferential error through explanation and clarification. Nonetheless, most judges now employ only a limited and primitive concept of jury inferential error: limited because it fails to recognize the potential for errors outside certain traditional situations, primitive because it ignores the research and conclusions of psychologists in favor of notions about human cognition held by lawyers.

Let us pose those standard questions and find answers in an effort to developing a good understanding of the passage.

- What is the passage talking about?
About how juries are forced to make inferences on the basis of conflicting and confusing evidence and how these inferences are fraught with errors that distort rather than demonstrate the truth.
- Where and When?
No specific references as to where and when are made in the passage.
- What are the similarities mentioned?
The same cognitive tools developed and used over time are applied by the Jury in making inferences under the guise of fact-finding.
- What are the contrasts mentioned?
 - prior conviction for a crime does not suggest that the defendant is prone to recidivism.
 - Research and conclusions of psychologists are at variance with the notions about human cognition held by lawyers. Judges rely on the latter rather than on the former.

Let us take a look at the questions and see how we can deal with them.

QUESTION 1:

Which of the following best explains the main idea of the passage?

- (A) When making decisions in certain predictable situations, juries may commit inferential errors that obscure rather than reveal the truth.
- (B) The views of human cognition held by psychologists on the one hand and by the legal profession are demonstrably dissimilar.
- (C) When confronting powerful preconceptions, particularly shocking evidence, or complex situations, jurors make errors in judgment.
- (D) The problem of inferential error by juries is typical of the difficulties with cognitive processes that people face in their everyday lives.
- (E) Juries would probably make more reliable decisions if cognitive psychologists, rather than judges, instructed them about the problems inherent in drawing unwarranted conclusions.

Our understanding of what the passage is all about is that it is about how juries tend to apply the same cognitive tools that they have used over time and make inferential errors that distort rather than throw light on the truth of the matter.

We notice that choice A is the one that states the essence of this understanding. Let us quickly eliminate the other choices.

(B) The views of human cognition held by psychologists on the one hand and by the legal profession are demonstrably dissimilar.

This is mentioned in the last sentence of the last paragraph but the whole argument is not about this contrast. This is too narrow in scope.

Let us take a look at choice C.

C. When confronting powerful preconceptions, particularly shocking evidence, or complex situations, jurors make errors in judgment.

An example of the above circumstances is provided in the passage, but we must not pick an example as the central idea. This choice qualifies as too narrow in scope. Remember: An example can never ever be the central idea.

Let us eliminate choice D by examining it.

(D) The problem of inferential error by juries is typical of the difficulties with cognitive processes that people face in their everyday lives.

We do not see a comparison between the difficulties that people experience in daily lives and those encountered while making inferences. In fact, the passage does not mention that the jurors have any difficulties making inferences by using their cognitive tools. This choice is beyond the scope and somewhat of a contradiction.

Let us examine choice E.

(E) Juries would probably make more reliable decisions if cognitive psychologists, rather than judges, instructed them about the problems inherent in drawing unwarranted conclusions.

The passage does not mention that psychologists should get involved in jury instructions. The passage mentions that judges should be rather use the research and the conclusions of psychologists. Choice E is beyond the scope and we will ignore it.

We will pick choice A.

Let us move on to examine question 2.

QUESTION 2:

Of the following hypothetical reforms in trial procedures, which one would the author be most likely to support as the best way to address the problem of jury inferential error?

- (A) a move away from jury trials.
- (B) The institution of minimum formal educational requirement for jurors.
- (C) The development of strict guidelines for defense testimony.
- (D) Specific training for judges in the area of jury instruction.
- (E) Restriction on lawyers' use of psychological research.

The anchor phrase is "jury inferential error" and how it can be dealt with. The passage mentions in the last paragraph that the duty of a judge is to minimize jury inferential error but the judges ignore the research and the conclusions of cognitive psychologists in favor of primitive notions of human cognition held by lawyers. The inference is that jury errors can be minimized better if the judges paid attention to the research of psychologists and received training in jury instructions.

Choice D addresses this aspect of the suggestion in the passage. Choices A, B, C, and E are not addressed in the passage at all and we must eliminate them as beyond the scope of the passage information.

Let us examine the next question.

QUESTION 3:

In the second paragraph, the primary purpose of the author is to

- (A) refute the idea that the fact-finding process is a complicated exercise.
- (B) Emphasize how carefully evidence must be presented in order to avoid jury inferential error.
- (C) Explain how commonly held beliefs affect the jury's ability to ascertain the truth.
- (D) Provide examples of situations that may precipitate jury errors.
- (E) Recommend a method for minimizing mistakes by juries.

In the second paragraph, we notice that the author is providing examples of how jurors can make inferential errors and how they can attach probative value to information that is not weighty enough. The phrase "For example" tells us that the author is providing examples of situations that may cause jury inferential errors.

Choice D is the only one that mentions examples, and that is the one we must go with.

Choice A information is not the intent of the second paragraph.

Choice B information is not addressed in the second paragraph. The author does not explain what needs to be done in order to avoid (not minimize) jury errors.

Choice C information is partially correct but is one of several examples of how inferential errors creep into decision making by the jurors. We will classify this as partially correct but not fully correct.

Choice E is not good because the author is not recommending any action in the second paragraph.

We must pick choice D.

Let us examine the next question.

QUESTION 4:

"Which one of the following best describes the author's attitude toward the majority of judges today?"

- (A) apprehensive about whether they are consistent in their instruction of juries.
- (B) Doubtful of their ability to draw consistently correct conclusions based on the evidence.
- (C) Critical of their failure to take into account potentially helpful research.
- (D) Pessimistic about their willingness to make significant changes in trial procedure.
- (E) Concerned about their allowing the presentation of complex and voluminous evidence in the courtroom.

This is a tone question and the anchor phrase is "majority of judges". Judges are mentioned in the last paragraph, and let us do a lookup to see what the passage says about judges in the last paragraph:

The fact that juries can commit inferential errors that jeopardize the accuracy of the fact-finding process is not unknown to the courts. In fact, one of a presiding judge's duties is to minimize jury inferential error through explanation and clarification. Nonetheless, most judges now employ only a limited and primitive concept of jury inferential error: limited because it fails to recognize the potential for errors outside certain traditional situations, primitive because it ignores the research and conclusions of psychologists in favor of notions about human cognition held by lawyers.

The author describes the behavior of judges as limited in scope and conceptually primitive because they do not take into account potential for errors outside some traditional situations and because they do

not factor in research and conclusions of cognitive psychologists. The tone is unmistakably one of critical in nature.

Let us see what choice mentions "critical".

Choice C does.

Let us eliminate the other choices by examining them.

Choice A is not good because the author does not say anything about the judges second-guessing their instructions to jurors.

Choice B is not good because there is nothing in the passage to suggest that the judges are doubtful of their ability to draw conclusions. In fact, the passage talks about jurors making conclusions and not judges.

Choice D is not good because the passage does not mention anything about "making changes to trial procedures". This choice is clearly outside the scope of the passage and so are Choices A and B.

Choice E is also outside the scope because there is no mention of judges expressing concern about complex and voluminous testimony.

We must go with choice C.

Let us deal with question 5.

QUESTION 5

"Which one of the following statements, if true, would most seriously undermine the author's suggestion about the use of current psychological research in the courtroom?"

- (A) All guidelines about human behavior must take into account variations in the patterns of human decision-making.
- (B) Current models of how humans make decisions apply reliably to individuals but do not hold for decisions made by groups acting under instructions from the judge.
- (C) The current conception of jury inferential errors employed by the judges has been in use for nearly a century.
- (D) Inferential errors can be more easily predicted in controlled situations such as the trial of lawsuits than in other kinds of decision-making processes.
- (E) In certain predictable circumstances, juries are less susceptible to inferential errors than they are in other circumstances.

This sounds like a critical reasoning question rather than like a reading comprehension question. The author advocates using the research and the conclusions of cognitive psychologists. How do we weaken the conclusion? By suggesting that there is an alternative explanation that will weaken this conclusion. What alternative scenarios or explanations can we think of?

- ♦ May be, the psychological research alluded to applies to individual behavior rather than to group behavior because juries are composed of many people.

Let us examine the choices and see which one does have the potential to suggest that the research alluded to in the passage has little if any relevance to court procedures.

Choice A has the potential to support the author's suggestion because the research model appears to shed more light on the "variations in the patterns of human decision making." This choice is no good because it does not weaken author's suggestion.

Choice B appears to be a solid one because it provides a strong reason why the research mentioned in the passage cannot be relied upon by the judges. We will come back to confirm this choice if we do not find a better choice that weakens the author's suggestion.

Choice C does nothing to author's suggestion. The fact that the judges have been using antiquated system is a strong reason why they must start using the research suggested in the passage. This choice, if anything, strengthens the author's suggestion, and is not good for selection.

Choice D introduces a wrinkle about "other kinds of decision-making processes". Choice D does not specify how errors can be predicted in trial situations. Is it by using the research suggested by the author? We are not sure. This is one of those "a couple of fries short of a happy meal" choice and we must take a walk from it.

Choice E also introduces a wrinkle called "other circumstances". The fact that juries are less susceptible to errors does not mean that they will not make errors. Choice E is no good.

We must pick choice B.

Let us examine the next question.

QUESTION 6

"It can be inferred from the passage that the author would be most likely to agree with which of the following generalizations about lawyers?"

- (A) They have a less sophisticated understanding of human cognition than do psychologists.
- (B) They often present complex or voluminous information merely in order to confuse a jury.
- (C) They are no better at making logical inferences from the testimony at a trial than are most judges.
- (D) They have worked to help judges minimize jury inferential error.
- (E) They are unrealistic about the ability of jurors to ascertain the truth.

The anchor word is "lawyers" and let us do a lookup to see what we learn about lawyers as mentioned in the passage.

In the last paragraph, the author says:
"most judges now employ only a limited and primitive concepts of jury inferential error: limited because it fails to recognize the potential for error outside certain traditional situations, **primitive because it ignores the research and conclusions of psychologists in favor of notions about human cognition held by lawyers.**"

The author characterizes judges' behavior as primitive because they set great store by lawyers' notion of human cognition and ignore research by psychologists. The inference we can make is that notions of human cognition held by lawyers are primitive compared to those held by psychologists.

Let us see what choice will state this inference.

Choice A appears to be right on the money, making the same inference as we did. Let us eliminate the other choices before we come back to confirm it.

Choice B imputes motive to why lawyers present voluminous testimony. The confusion that the jurors experience may be unintended and not intentional as stated in choice B. The passage does not support this statement.

Choice C provides information that is beyond the scope of the passage. The passage does not mention anything about lawyers making logical inferences or, for that matter, the judges making inferences. It is the jury that makes inferences. Choice C is beyond the scope.

Choice D is somewhat of a contradiction. In fact, the passage states that judges should rely on research of psychologists and not on the wisdom of lawyers. Obviously, lawyers could not have helped minimize potential for inferential error by jurors.

Choice E is outside the scope. There is no mention of lawyer's perception of juror's ability to make decisions or to ascertain the truth.

We must pick choice A.

Let us examine the last question from this passage.

QUESTION 7

"The author would be most likely to agree with which one of the following generalizations about a jury's decision-making process?"

- (A) The more evidence a jury has, the more likely it is that the jury will reach a reliable verdict.
- (B) Juries usually overestimate the value of visual evidence such as photographs.
- (C) Jurors have preconceptions about the behavior of defendants that prevent them from making an objective analysis of the evidence in a criminal trial.
- (D) Most of the jurors who make inferential errors during a trial do so because they are unaccustomed to having to make difficult decisions based on inferences.
- (E) The manner in which evidence is presented to a jury may influence the jury either to overestimate or to underestimate the value of that evidence.

The passage mentions in the context of the anchor phrase "jury's decision-making process" the following in the second paragraph:

"a jury may give more probative weight than objective analysis would allow to vivid photographic evidence depicting a shooting victim's wounds, or may underestimate the weight of defense testimony that is not delivered in a sufficiently forceful or persuasive manner. Finally, complex or voluminous evidence might be so confusing to a jury that its members would draw totally unwarranted conclusions or even ignore the evidence entirely."

The inference is that the jury tends to overestimate the importance of some evidence and underestimate that of others solely on the basis of the manner of presentation.

This is the inference we are allowed to make and have the author agree with. Let us see what choice will make this inference.

Choice A is a contradiction. The passage states that the jury is confused by voluminous evidence. We must kill this choice.

Choice B is another contradiction. In the second paragraph, we learn that visual evidence predisposes juror's views.

Choice C is tempting but we must check it out carefully. The passage states in the second paragraph:

"For example, evidence that the defendant in a criminal prosecution has a prior conviction may encourage jurors to presume the defendant's guilt, because of their preconception that a person previously convicted of a crime must be inclined toward repeated criminal behavior."

Jurors make presumptions based on evidence of prior criminal act but the choice C states that they have a preconception of defendant's behavior on their own. This choice is not acceptable because of this wrinkle. Tempting choice but no cigar there.

Choice D is another contradiction because the passage states that the jurors use the same cognitive tools during the trial as during other situations. Obviously, jurors are used to making decisions based on inferences.

Choice E is right on the money. The manner in which evidence is presented can sway the jury one way or the other. This is the inference we predetermined, and this is the choice we must select.

SAMPLE PASSAGES IN COMPARATIVE READING

(LSAT AND SAT TEST COMPARATIVE READING; GMAT AND GRE WILL LIKELY FOLLOW SUIT but the computer-based testing may make displaying two passages on the screen without too much scrolling difficult if not impossible)

Questions 6-9 are based on the following passages.

Passage 1

Farm families are able to achieve efficiency only through a brutal work schedule that few people could tolerate. "The farm family does physically demanding
Line work and highly stressful work at least 14 hours a day
5 (often at least 18 hours a day during harvest season),
7 days a week, 365 days a year, without a scheduled vacation or weekends off," wrote Minnesota politician and farm alumnus Darrell McKigney. "The farmer must endure all of this without . . . any of the benefits that most
10 United States labor unions demand." A dairy farmer, for instance, cannot just take off for a two-week vacation and not milk the cows. "Farmers lose perspective on the other things in life," one psychologist has written. "The farm literally consumes them."

Passage 2

15 Americans have distanced themselves from the ethics and morals of food production, except where it serves them to think nostalgically about family farms as the source of our better values. Little wonder that a poll taken by *The New York Times* finds a majority
20 of Americans seeing farm life as superior to any other kind of life in this country. As consumers, Americans have enjoyed relatively inexpensive food. What will happen if family farms disappear? What will we do without family farmers to watch over the system for
25 us, to be our dupes, and to create that pleasant situation through their own great discomfort?

6. Unlike Passage 2, Passage 1 is primarily concerned with the

- (A) ethical implications of food production
- (B) harsh working conditions on many farms
- (C) need for farmers to form a labor union
- (D) plentiful and varied food available in the United States
- (E) beliefs of many Americans regarding farm life

7. Both passages serve to discourage the

- (A) reliance on polls for accurate information
- (B) desire of many farmers to take annual vacations
- (C) tendency of Americans to buy inexpensive foods
- (D) romanticization of farm life by nonfarmers
- (E) rise in price of home-grown produce

8. The author of Passage 1 would most likely assert which of the following about the "majority" (line 19, Passage 2) ?

- (A) They would be bored by the routine chores that are performed on a farm.
- (B) They have little understanding of the realities of farm life.
- (C) They admire the efficiency of the average family farm.
- (D) They wish to improve the arduous life of many farmers.
- (E) They are impressed by the current research on economical food production.

9. Unlike the author of Passage 2, the author of Passage 1 does which of the following?

- (A) Explains a study.
- (B) Offers a solution.
- (C) Argues a position.
- (D) Discusses a phenomenon.
- (E) Quotes an authority.

The first passage describes the **'brutal work schedule'** (that is a strong way to characterize the work done by Farm Families, and you should pay attention to any strong adjectival or adverbial characterizations) endured by farm families and that 'few people could tolerate'. It describes why the schedule is 'brutal' (14-18 hours a day of work 7 days a week and 365 days a year, without a scheduled vacation or weekend holidays). Then it quotes a politician from Minnesota and a psychologist in support of the characterization that family farms involve brutal work schedules.

The Passage 2 is about how Americans have 'distanced themselves from the **ethics and morals** of food production' (another strong characterization) and how the views held by a majority of Americans (as revealed in a poll by NYT) are totally unrelated to the conditions under which family farms operate. The author characterizes the family farmers as **'dupes** who create pleasant conditions for Americans through their own **great** discomfort'.

The tone in the Passage 1 is one of sympathy and empathy for the family farmers whereas the tone in the passage 2 is one of critical examination of Americans attitudes toward family farms, attitudes that are unrealistic.

The answer to Q6 is easy to determine, once we have processed the passages in the manner described above. The answer is B. Choice A is not correct because the first passage is not about the ethics of food production. Choice C cannot be the answer because it illogically interprets the statement that 'the family farmers work without the benefits that most unions demand for their workers'. This statement does not mean that they should also organize as unions. Choice D is not good because there is no reference to plentiful food in the first paragraph. Choice E is not correct because it does not discuss the 'beliefs' of Americans.

The answer to Q7 is D. The first passage describes the conditions as brutal and hardly romantic. The second passage is critical of how oblivious American consumers are about the role played by family farmers in creating the pleasant situations through their own GREAT discomfort. Therefore, both passages warn against romanticization of family farm life.

The answer to Q8 is B. The reference to 'majority' in passage 2 is in the context of the poll results that indicate that a majority of Americans polled thought that farm life is superior to non-farm living. The author of passage 1 describes the BRUTAL realities of farm life. Therefore, the author of passage 1 would regard the 'majority' of Americans cited in the Passage 2 as having little understanding of the realities of farm life.

The answer to Q9 is E. The question is about what the passage 1 does that the passage 2 does not. Passage 1 quotes authorities (a politician and a psychologist) whereas the passage 2 does not quote anyone. Choice D, a tempting answer, is not correct because both passages discuss 'a phenomenon' – farm life. **The question is about the distinction, not about the commonalities. Process the question well so that you do not get tripped up.**

As you can see, comparative reading is not all that hard or challenging.

Let us take a look at another example of COMPARATIVE READING, this time involving longer passages.

COMPARATIVE READING 2 (PRINT OUT THIS PAGE SO YOU CAN DEAL WITH THE QUESTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE)

Questions 13-24 are based on the following passages.

These two passages discuss different aspects of the impact of the First World War (1914-1918) on British people and society. Passage 1 is from a book that examines the depiction of the war in literature, letters, and newspapers; Passage 2 is from a book that examines the differences between men's and women's experiences of war.

Passage 1

Line
5 Even if the civilian population at home had wanted to know the realities of the war, they couldn't have without experiencing them: its conditions were too novel, its industrialized ghastliness too unprecedented. The war would have been simply unbelievable. From the very beginning a fissure was opening between the army and the civilians.

10 The causes of civilian incomprehension were numerous. Few soldiers wrote the truth in letters home for fear of causing needless uneasiness. If they did ever write the truth, it was excised by company officers, who censored all outgoing mail. The press was under rigid censorship throughout the war. Only correspondents willing to file wholesome, optimistic copy were permitted to visit France, and even they were seldom allowed near the battlefields of the front line. Typical of these reporters was George Adam, Paris correspondent of the *Times*. His *Behind the Scenes at the Front*, published in 1915, exudes cheer, as well as warm condescension, toward the common British soldier, whom he depicts as well fed, warm, safe, and happy—better off, indeed, than at home.

20 Lord Northcliffe, the publisher of the *Times*, eventually assumed full charge of government propaganda. It is no surprise to find Northcliffe's *Times* on July 3, 1916, reporting the first day's attack during the battle of the Somme* with an airy confidence which could not help but deepen the division between those on the spot and those at home. "Sir Douglas Haig telephoned last night," says the *Times*, "that the general situation was favorable." It soon ascends to the rhetoric of heroic romance: "There is a fair field . . . and we have elected to fight out our quarrel with the Germans and to give them as much battle as they want." No wonder communication failed between the troops and those who could credit prose like that as factual testimony.

* The British army had nearly 60,000 casualties, the largest number for any single day in the army's history.

Passage 2

35 The First World War is a classic case of the dissonance between official, male-centered history and unofficial female history. Not only did the apocalyptic events of this war have very different meanings for men and women, such events were in fact very different for men and women, a point understood almost at once by an involved contemporary like Vera Brittain. She noted about her relationship with

45 her soldier fiancé that the war put a "barrier of indescribable experience between men and women whom they loved. Sometimes (I wrote at the time) I fear that even if he gets through, what he has experienced out there may change his ideas and tastes utterly."

50 The nature of the barrier thrust between Vera Brittain and her fiancé, however, may have been even more complex than she herself realized, for the impediment preventing a marriage of their true minds was constituted not only by his altered experience but by hers. Specifically, as young men became increasingly alienated from their pre-war selves, increasingly immured in the muck and blood of the battlefields, increasingly abandoned by the civilization of which they had ostensibly been heirs, women seemed to become, as if by some uncanny swing of history's pendulum, ever more powerful. As nurses, as munitions workers, as bus drivers, as soldiers in the agricultural "land army," even as wives and mothers, these formerly subservient creatures began to loom larger. A visitor to London observed in 1918 that "England was a world of women—women in uniforms."

65 The wartime poems, stories, and memoirs by women sometimes subtly, sometimes explicitly explore the political and economic revolution by which the First World War at least temporarily dispossessed male citizens of the primacy that had always been their birthright, while permanently granting women access to both the votes and the professions that they had never before possessed. Similarly, a number of these women writers covertly or overtly celebrated the release of female desires and powers which that revolution made possible, as well as the reunion (or even reunification) of women which was a consequence of such liberated energies.

75 Their enthusiasm, which might otherwise seem like morbid gloating, was explained by Virginia Woolf, a writer otherwise known for her pacifist sympathies:

80 How . . . can we explain that amazing outburst in August 1914, when the daughters of educated men . . . rushed into hospitals . . . drove lorries, worked in fields and munitions factories, and used all their immense stores of charm . . . to persuade young men that to fight was heroic . . . ? So profound was (woman's) unconscious loathing for the education of the private house that she would undertake any task, however menial, exercise any fascination, however fatal, that enabled her to escape. Thus consciously she desired "our splendid Empire"; unconsciously she desired our splendid war.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

QUESTIONS BASED ON THE TWO PASSAGES SHOWN ON THE PRECEDING PAGE

13. Passage 2 is unlike Passage 1 in that Passage 2
- (A) describes war as dehumanizing
 - (B) endorses the official view of the war
 - (C) discusses war in terms of how it affects women
 - (D) tries to identify the root causes of the conflict
 - (E) criticizes the censorship of information about the war
14. The “fissure” (line 6) was primarily caused by the
- (A) civilians’ ignorance about the soldiers’ experience
 - (B) discrepancy between the experiences of men and of women
 - (C) behavior of the officers who led the battles
 - (D) guilt that civilians felt about sending young men off to war
 - (E) special privileges granted to war correspondents
15. The footnote about the battle of the Somme adds information that
- (A) shows how history has been rewritten to glorify the war
 - (B) trivializes the dangers faced by most of the soldiers
 - (C) emphasizes the inaccuracy of the published reports
 - (D) suggests that the costs of war outweighed its benefits
 - (E) offers a journalist’s personal reflection on the war
16. In Passage 1, the author suggests that the attitudes of “those at home” (line 26) were strongly influenced by
- (A) the government’s inadequate control over propaganda
 - (B) the lack of opportunities for soldiers to write home
 - (C) the disparity between men’s and women’s views of war
 - (D) efforts of pacifists to end the war
 - (E) censored reports from the press
17. In line 33, “credit” most nearly means
- (A) award
 - (B) believe
 - (C) enter
 - (D) supply
 - (E) enrich
18. In Passage 2, the author mentions Vera Brittain (line 40) primarily to
- (A) support an argument by quoting material written at the time of the war
 - (B) present an example of the kind of powers women gained during the war
 - (C) describe how a writer manipulated the facts about the war
 - (D) discuss the wartime literature produced by women
 - (E) dispute recent historians’ views of the war
19. In line 58, the reference to “wives and mothers” most directly implies the author’s assumption that
- (A) families prospered more when women became head of the household
 - (B) soldiers were unaware of the fundamental change taking place in society
 - (C) women embraced their chance to work outside the home
 - (D) women were anxious about fulfilling family responsibilities
 - (E) women in domestic roles had previously exercised little authority
20. In line 64, the “revolution” refers to
- (A) women’s literary output during the war
 - (B) women’s pursuit of rights previously unavailable to them
 - (C) the change that men underwent after experiencing war
 - (D) the redistribution of power from the upper to the middle class
 - (E) the growing equalization of men’s and women’s wages
21. The author of Passage 2 implies that women’s enthusiasm “might . . . seem like morbid gloating” (lines 74-75) because
- (A) women’s progress caused the deterioration of men’s status
 - (B) women achieved recognition as the real peace-makers in the war
 - (C) women boasted that the war would be lost without them
 - (D) women celebrated the fact that they did not have to fight in the war
 - (E) women were enjoying power while men were in battle

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

22. In lines 84-85, the discussion of women's involvement with "menial" tasks and "fatal" fascinations primarily serves to emphasize the
- (A) far-reaching consequences of women's roles during wartime
 - (B) extent to which women felt stifled in their traditional roles
 - (C) contrast between how women idealized war and what it was really like
 - (D) desire by women to escape the horrors of war
 - (E) risks that women took to fight in the war
23. What do *Behind the Scenes at the Front* (lines 16-17) and "wartime poems, stories and memoirs" (line 62) have in common?
- (A) Both caused needless uneasiness among civilians.
 - (B) Both deliberately reflected the views of the government.
 - (C) Both changed the status quo for women in war-time Britain.
 - (D) Both encouraged writers to take their craft more seriously.
 - (E) Neither focused on the realities of the battlefield.
24. Which of the following statements about the effect of the First World War is supported by both passages?
- (A) Officers resented the government's complacency.
 - (B) Women gained independence in postwar Britain.
 - (C) Soldiers felt isolated from parts of civilian society
 - (D) Writers failed in their attempts to describe the atrocities of war.
 - (E) War proved an undesirable way to resolve the European conflict.

EXPLANATION OF ANSWERS

Q13 asks us to identify the reason why passage 2 is **UNLIKE** passage 1. Passage 1 is about how there was a disconnect between the army and the civilians and how or why the civilians failed to comprehend the realities of war: there was censoring of news reports and soldiers were unwilling to write about the realities of the battlefield; even if they did, their writings were censored. Passage 2 is about how the WWI made women assume roles and power that they could not have

Achieved were it not for the war. Therefore, Choice C is the correct answer expressing the distinction between the two passages.

Q14 asks us to identify the reason that caused the 'fissure' or the 'division' between the army and the civilians. The answer is an obvious A. The civilians were not brought up to speed on the realities of the battlefield because news reports were censored and because soldiers were unwilling to write about the realities or censored.

Q15 asks about the significance of the footnote about the battle of Somme. The footnote is an elaboration of the asterisk that is attached to battle of the Somme. Our anchor phrase look up shows the following: "It is no surprise to find Northcliffe's Times on July 3, 1916, reporting the first day's attack during the battle of the Somme (footnote referenced) **with an airy confidence that could not help but deepen the division between those on the spot and those at home**' The next sentence talks about how Sir Haig was telephoning about 'favorable general conditions' when the army lost 60,000 soldiers on a single day. **Choice C is the correct answer that is consistent with the way things are presented in the passage.**

Choice A is not correct because there is nothing said or implied that points to a glorification of the war. Choice B is not correct because the anchor phrase reference does not trivialize anything. Choice C is not correct: there is no reference to 'costs' of war versus its benefits. (This is an answer that makes sense to most pacifists but make sure that the answer is supported by information in the passage and not by how you view things). Choice E is not correct because the reference is not about a personal reflection but about how an editor 'quotes' a military officer. Pay critical attention to the wording of answer options and make sure that they are appropriately worded.

Q16 requires us to identify the factor that influenced the attitude of 'those at home' (line 26). Our anchor phrase lookup shows that the REPORTING by Northcliffe had an airy confidence (although deceptive) that deepened the division between those at home and those at the spot. Why did Northcliffe report a false information? Because he was made in charge of government propaganda that repressed bad report from reaching the civilians. Choice E is the best answer that is consistent with the information presented in the passage and relevant to the question.

Q17 requires us to paraphrase 'credit' as used in the statement "No wonder communication failed between the troops and those could CREDIT PROSE like that as factual testimony. Obviously, the division is between those at home and those on the spot. Therefore, those who 'credit prose' as fact are those at home. They 'believed' the reporting as factual information. Therefore, 'credit prose' is synonymous with 'believe prose' or 'assume the reporting as factual'. Choice B is the correct answer.

Q18 requires us to identify the reason why Vera Brittain is mentioned in the passage 2. Our anchor phrase reference shows that the author is making the point that the war had different meanings for men and women and also the events of the war were different for the two sexes. The author states that THIS POINT WAS UNDERSTOOD BY CONTEMPORARIES LIKE VERA. Then the author quotes her to buttress his or her argument. Therefore, choice A is the correct answer that is consistent with this literal understanding. Choice B is not correct because Vera is not mentioned in the context of how women 'gained any power'. Choice C is not correct because there is no manipulation of facts in passage 2. We need to be careful to note that the passage 1 may be about how facts were distorted and presented those at home but passage 2 is not about this point. Choice D makes a reference to 'war-time literature produced by WOMEN' (note the plural case here). Vera is not women and her writing is not part of any literature. Choice E is not correct because there is no dispute of any historical interpretation of events, leave alone a RECENT historian's views of the war. You need to pay attention to the wording of answer options and make sure that the wording is acceptable. Do not be Humpty-Dumpty, if you want to do well in this section.

Q19 is about the references to 'wives and mothers' and about what assumption underlies the author's statement. Our anchor-phrase lookup shows the following: "(women seemed to become, as if by some uncanny swing of history's pendulum, ever more powerful). As nurses, etc., and **even as mothers and wives, those formerly subservient creatures seemed to loom larger**". The lookup reveals that the women felt powerful and those 'formerly SUBSERVIENT creatures' loomed larger. Subservience implies 'serving beneath another' and suggests that women had

no power previously. Choice E is the correct answer. “Mothers and wives” is a clear reference to domestic roles, and choice E has the correct paraphrasing.

Q20 requires that we identify what ‘revolution’ in line 64 is referring to. Our anchor-phrase lookup shows the following: “The wartime poems, stories, and memoirs by women sometimes subtly and sometimes explicitly explore the political and economic **REVOLUTION by which WWI at least temporarily dispossessed male citizens of their primacy that has always been their birthright.**” The Revolution stripped males of their primacy, at least temporarily, and ‘primacy’ was the birthright of males, so says the passage. Therefore, revolution refers to the gaining of power or primacy by women, primacy that they did not enjoy prior to the start of war (because it was the birthright of males). Choice B is the correct answer that is consistent with this literal interpretation of context-specific information relevant to the question.

Q21 asks us to identify what is implied in the statement that ‘women’s enthusiasm might seem like morbid gloating’. The anchor-phrase lookup reveals the following content: “Their enthusiasm might sound like morbid gloating but Virginia Woolf puts their enthusiasm context; So profound was women’s loathing for the education of the private house that she would undertake any task, however menial, exercise any fascination, however fatal, that enabled her to escape. Thus consciously she desired ‘our splendid Empire’; unconsciously, she desired our splendid war”. So, we learn that the women’s enthusiasm for some of the tasks they performed ‘enabled her to escape’ and because she loathed the education of the private house, she would do anything – even menial – or exercise any fantasy – even fatal – in order to escape. The reference to splendid war indicates that women were subliminally enjoying the new-found power while men were at war. Choice E is the correct answer that expresses this literal interpretation of context-specific information.

Q22 asks us to show how we comprehend the reference to ‘menial tasks’ and ‘fatal fascinations’. The anchor-phrase reference for this question is the same as the one we used for the previous question. We learn that these menial tasks and fatal fascinations ‘enabled a woman to escape’ from the ‘education of the private house’. The reference, therefore, shows the extent to which women hated the subservience as domestic creatures and felt liberated. Choice B is the correct answer that is consistent with this literal understanding.

Q23 “**What do ‘Behind the scenes at the front’ (lines 16-17) and ‘wartime poems, stories, and memoirs’ (line 62) have in common?**”

The reference to Behind the scenes.. is about George Adam’s publication in 1915 in which he exuded cheer and warm condescension toward the common soldier, whom he described as ‘well fed, warm, SAFE, happy – better off than at home’. In reality, things may not have been as rosy as presented here. He was allowed to visit France because he was described as WILLING TO FILE wholesome, optimistic copy about the war.

The reference to Wartime poems, etc. explore the political and economic revolution by which WWI temporarily at least stripped males of their primacy and empowered women.

Therefore, neither ‘behind the scenes’ nor those ‘poems, stories, and memoirs’ dealt with the realities of war as they existed on the battlefield. Choice E is the correct answer consistent with this comprehension.

Q24. “Which of the following statements about the effects of WWI is supported by BOTH passages”?

Notice that there is no clear anchor-phrase allowing us to hone in on a specific section of the passage. We must, therefore, play the ‘elimination game’ more actively here. We can kill option A because there is no reference in either passage – let alone in both – to any resentment felt by officers. Choice B can be deepsixed because there is no reference to ‘POSTWAR’ Britain in either passage. (Pay attention to the wording of answer choices). **Choice C is consistent with either passage. The reference to Vera Britain in passage 2 describes the indescribable barrier that existed between the soldiers and those at home. The passage 1 was about the same thing: civilians were made to relate to the war in ways that were not necessarily representative of the realities on the spot.** We can eliminate option D because there is no reference in either passage to ‘ATROCITIES’ of war. The passage 1 refers to ‘realities’ of war, not to ‘atrocities’ of war. Watch out for the tendency to use ‘commonsense’ to determine whether this could be an acceptable answer. In real-life, because of CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera, one may think of war in terms of ‘atrocities’ but the passage is not allowing us to draw this inference from the reference to the ‘realities of war’. Watch out for answer options that are ‘commonsensical but expectational’. Choice E can be knocked off the ball-park because there is no reference – explicit or implied – to **any way**, let alone UNDESIRABLE WAY, to resolving the EUROPEAN CONFLICT. Words have to be critically parsed and examined for their appropriateness.

We must choose option C for this question.

Notice that Comparative Reading section is no different from the normal passages: both require you to do anchor-phrase lookups and both require you to come up with LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF CONTEXT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION relevant to the question and as identified in the Anchor phrases.

So. The process of dealing with Reading Comprehension is about understanding the anchor phrases, about paying attention to choice of words in answer options, and about making anchor phrase lookups to confirm the appropriateness of the wording in the answer options that you are tempted to pick..