

ACT Strategy Summary Sheet
READING

Seven Item-Types

1. Main Idea: Main idea items ask about the central theme that unifies the passage.
2. Explicit Detail:
 - Explicit Detail items ask about details that are specifically mentioned in the passage.
 - Explicit details are points provided by the author in developing the main idea of the passage.
 - Explicit details items provide “locator words” that identify the required information in the passage.
3. Vocabulary: Vocabulary items test the understanding of a word or phrase in context.
 - The correct answer choice will make sense when it is substituted for the referenced word.
 - The correct answer choice may not be the most commonly used meaning of the word. Favor the less commonly used meaning.
4. Development: Development items ask about the overall structure of the passage or about the logical role played by a specific part of the passage.

EXAMPLES: The author develops the passage primarily by.....
The author mentions....in order to.....

5. Implied Idea: Rather than ask about what is specifically stated in the passage, Implied Idea items ask about what can be logically inferred from what is stated in the passage.

EXAMPLES: The passage implies that....
The author uses the phrase”....” To mean

6. Application: Application items are similar to Implied Idea items, but they go one step further: Examinees must apply what they have learned from the passage to a new situation.

EXAMPLES: With which of the following statements would the author most likely agree?
The passage is most probably taken from which of the following sources?

7. Voice: Voice items ask about the author’s attitude toward a specific detail or the overall tone of the passage.

EXAMPLES: The tone of the passage can best be described as.....
The author regards...as...

GENERAL STRATEGY

This is not an exact science. Practice is essential to mastering the following techniques:

1. **Read the first two sentences of each passage in the test section. Read this introduction to gauge interest.** Read the first two sentences of each passage to determine how hard it is to read. Label each passage “Easy” or “Hard” based on your initial understanding of the material and your level of interest. Do the easiest ones first.
2. **Preview the first and last sentences of each paragraph.**
3. **Preview the item stems for a given passage.**
4. **Read the passage.** Ask what the author is attempting to describe.
5. **Circle the answers to the items in the test booklet, and transcribe the answers to all the items for a passage to the answer sheet after finishing each passage.**
6. **When time is almost up, transcribe the answers individually.**