Do's and Don'ts for Taking a Standardized Test

**Note how the material is organized** -

- Skim the stems of the multiple-choice questions to discover what kind of information is wanted.

- Most selections have a central subject or main idea, which could be used as a title. Often you will find this in the first sentence of a paragraph. Underline the main topic especially ideas you note in answer to the questions you skinned.

- Key words and facts will help solidify the main idea. These are the details. Always look for the key words.

- Details are usually of two types. The main details will develop the central theme. These may be broken down further into subordinate details.

- Read with questions in mind. Ask **who**, **what when and where** to find key ideas. Ask how and **why** to find reasons.

**Some further ideas** -

- Avoid word-by-word reading or backtracking (rereading). Try reading at approximately the same speed as you are thinking.

- Staying actively involved will help you concentrate. Read critically.

- Look for a general impression, main thought and implications so that you may draw some inferences. In other words read for ideas!! Then look for supporting information.

- Realize that while main ideas will usually be found in the first sentence or the summary sentence they can also be found in other places in the paragraph.

- Read through a whole selection or at least a paragraph before you do any rereading. If you need to clarify a point or two, *then* go back and spend the time sorting out the ideas.
As you read a selection composed of several paragraphs, determine whether succeeding paragraphs expand the ideas or points raised in preceding paragraphs or whether they provide an example or illustration of them.

Don’t get too involved with the reading selection. Answer the questions on the basis of only what is presented. Don’t read more into it than is there. Don’t jump to a conclusion before you have read the whole passage.


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