

Reading Comprehension

Introduction

The reading comprehension section tests the level of understanding of a student. It involves the ability to understand the meaning of what one reads and to use the information to answer the questions that follow.

In this section, questions are asked based on the given passages. These questions are meant to assess the vocabulary of the students as well as to test comprehension, inference, evaluation and analysis. In other words, students are tested for their understanding of the passage and its implications.

Types of passages:

The passages given in the reading comprehension section may be of the following types:

1. *Factual texts*: Texts that can be categorised under this category are reports, scientific findings, historical revelations, etc.
2. *Literary texts*: Texts that can be categorised under this category are extracts from novels, poetry, short stories, etc.
3. *Discursive texts*: Texts that can be categorised under this category are articles that present a reasoned argument to express one's views on a topic.

Types of questions:

Questions of reading comprehension could be of the following types:

1. *Multiple choice questions*: In these questions, a set of alternatives are provided as the answer to a question. Students are required to select the best possible answer out of the given choices.
2. *Gap filling*: These questions require a student to fill in the gaps in a given paragraph. These questions test a student's understanding and ability to use the language correctly.
3. *Sentence completion*: These questions require the students to complete the unfinished sentences based on their understanding of the passage.
4. *Table completion*: These questions require the students to complete the given table on the basis of their understanding of the passage. Sometimes, the table may be

partially filled in with answers. In such cases, students may take cues from them to fill in the required answer.

5. Word attack (vocabulary based): Such questions test a student's ability to understand the general and/or intended meaning of a word or phrase. These questions may include synonym, meaning, antonym, etc.

6. Short answer questions: These questions test a student's ability to answer the questions in a concise manner.

Tips and guidelines:

1. Read the given passage thoroughly in order to get a clear picture of what is being expressed.
2. Try to find and understand the main idea of the passage.
3. Read the question carefully and understand what is being asked.
4. Sometimes the tense used in the question gives a cue to the answer.
5. Use the information given in the passage intelligently to answer the questions.
6. For the vocabulary based questions, the students might have to make assumptions about the meanings of the words that they come across for the first time. For this, try placing the words in the context of the sentence and the passage as a whole.

Author's Note for Mahabharata and Ramayana

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the persons and incidents portrayed in the great literatures influence national character no less potently than the actual heroes and events enshrined in its history. It may be claimed that the former play an even more important part in the formation of ideals, which give to a character its impulse of growth.

In the moving history of our land, from time immemorial great minds have been formed and nourished and touched to heroic deeds by the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In most Indian homes, children formerly learnt these immortal stories as they learnt their mother tongue at the mother's knee. And the sweetness and sorrows of Sita and Draupadi, the heroic fortitude of Rama and Arjuna and the loving fidelity of Lakshmana and Hanuman became the stuff of their young philosophy of life.

Q 1: What influences national character?

Q 2: What according to the writer plays a more important part in the formation of ideals?

Q 3: What did children learn along with their mother tongue?

Q 4: What framed the young philosophy of life?

Q 5: What is the meaning of the word 'fortitude'?

Solutions:

1. Great literatures portraying persons and incidents as well as actual heroes and events enshrined in history influence national character.

2. According to the writer the great literatures plays a more important part in the formation of ideals.

3. Just as they learnt their mother tongue, Indian children formerly also learnt the two great epics of India, namely the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

4. The sweet and sorrowful stories of Sita and Draupadi, the heroic deeds of Rama and Arjuna and the loving fidelity of Lakshmana and Hanuman, all framed the young philosophy of life.

5. The word 'fortitude' means courage or bravery.

Technological Progress

Read the following passage carefully.

We are tempted to assume that technological progress is the real progress and that material success is the criterion of civilisation. If the eastern people become fascinated by machines and techniques and use them as Western nations do, to build industrial organisations and large military establishments, they will get involved in power politics and drift into the danger of death.

Scientific and technological civilisation brings opportunities and great rewards but also great risks and temptations. If machines get into the saddle, all our progress will have been in vain. The problem facing us is a universal one. Both east and west are threatened with the same danger and face the same destiny. Science and technology are neither good nor bad. They are not to be tabooed but tamed and assigned their proper place. They become dangers only if they become idols.

Based on your reading of the passage, complete the following sentences.

Q 1: Man is tempted to assume that _____.

Q 2: Science and technology become dangerous when _____.

Q 3: If eastern people use machines, they will get involved in _____.

Find words/ phrases from the passage that mean the same as the following.

Q 4: forbidden

Q 5: in control

Solution:

1. technological progress is the real progress and that material success is the criterion of civilisation.

2. they become idols

3. power politics and drift into the danger of death

4. tabooed

5. into the saddle

Those Winter Sundays by Robert Hayden

Read the poem carefully and answer the questions that follow by choosing the answers from the given options.

Sundays too my father got up early

and put his clothes on in the blueback cold,

then with cracked hands that ached

from labor in the weekday weather made

banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.

When the rooms were warm, he'd call,

and slowly I would rise and dress,

fearing the chronic angers of that house,
Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

Q 1: What does the word 'too' in the first line of the poem suggest?

- A. Continuity of action
- B. Change of circumstances
- C. Brevity of existence
- D. Freezing of good fortune

Q 2: Which of the following statements gives the theme of this poem?

- A. One gets disillusioned as one gets older.
- B. As a child, one always believes in unconditional love.
- C. One appreciates paternal love only in hindsight.
- D. It is difficult to come to terms with the fact that one has grown up.

Q 3: What does the word 'chronic' mean?

- A. Long-lasting
- B. Well-considered
- C. Hurried
- D. Unjustifiable

Q 4: What do the poet's father's actions indicate?

- A. good intentions are often misunderstood.

- B.** love expresses itself even without words.
- C.** faith in one's loved ones is equivalent to faith in god.
- D.** life's failures can be overcome with the aid of one's family.

Q 5: How did the poet speak to his father?

- A.** Comfortably
- B.** Indifferently
- C.** Happily
- D.** Lovingly

Solutions:

- 1. (A)**
- 2. (C)**
- 3. (A)**
- 4. (B)**
- 5. (B)**