



Introduction

Reading with purpose

Multiple-choice reading tests are all pretty much the same. You read one or two short reading selections, then you answer questions about what you read. Some of the questions will ask you to remember details, some will ask for main ideas or important concepts, and some will ask you to use your brain power to make an *inference* (a conclusion based on a combination of details and logical thinking).

Good readers use different methods when they are reading for different purposes. When you read for the purpose of taking a test, there are special methods that will help you get a better score. This book will help you learn those test-taking strategies.

What's in *Reading Test Success*?

This book has been written to help you learn to read for the purpose of taking multiple-choice reading tests. It contains a review of the basic reading skills required by most tests. These skills will help you with reading throughout your school career. And, believe it or not, improving your reading skills may actually make reading more fun. After all, anything is more fun if you do it well.

The workbook also contains test-taking tips. These tips will give you a better understanding of the test-taking process and help you to do your personal best on test day.

You can do it (with a little motivation and practice).

You probably read better than you think you do. It's mostly a matter of motivation. If someone were to place a dry, boring textbook in front of you, you may not be motivated to read it. You might say, "I can't read this stuff. It's too hard" (or too "boring").

But if someone were to put a collection of *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strips next to that textbook, how easy would it be to read? (Don't think that just because *Calvin and Hobbes* is a comic strip that it doesn't count as real reading. Calvin has a pretty amazing vocabulary for a comic book character—*marketable, consensus, ambiguity, complexity, solidarity, exploited, and zealot* all appeared in one *Calvin and Hobbes* Sunday comic strip.) The point is: Reading is easy if you want to do it.

Reading cereal boxes

Some people have trouble reading. Others read *everything*. They just can't stop. Which kind of person are you? Or are you somewhere in the middle?

If you have a hard time getting motivated to read stories or books, try reading the back of your cereal box while you eat breakfast. If you can't get excited about reading the Wheaties box, try reading the funnies in the newspaper or a *Spiderman* comic book.

If you are having trouble getting started as a reader, it doesn't matter so much *what* you choose to read, just that you *read*. As Samuel Clemens (better known as Mark Twain) said, "One who doesn't read has no advantage over one who can't."

Enhance your reading skills!

Reading tests give you some selections and then ask you several different kinds of questions about them. The questions ask about main ideas, cause and effect, details, author's purpose—things like that. Even if these terms sound like a foreign language, you've probably seen all of these types of questions before.

In each unit of this book, you'll review a type of reading question. You'll have an opportunity to practice reading one or two selections and answering questions—the same kinds of questions you're most likely to see on a real test.

By studying each unit, you'll know what to expect on test day. If you study now, you're sure to do better.

General Tips for Taking Reading Tests

Taking a reading test is a lot like playing a game. Getting a good score depends on your talent and skill. But it also depends on three other important things:

1. How much you have practiced
2. How good your strategy is
3. How well you concentrate on getting your best score

Here are some general tips to think about while you practice.



Learn how to do a “first read” on a selection.

The first time you read a selection, you must read every word. Don't skim or skip over anything. By reading every word, you'll learn what the selection is *mainly* about. At this point, you don't have to be concerned with every detail. Just try to get a feel for the main ideas and where things are mentioned in the selection.

It's okay to slow down and go back over a difficult idea. But don't stop or get bogged down. Keep moving until you come to the end of the selection.



Learn how to answer the different question types.

Each of the units in this book explains a type of question found on standardized reading tests and gives you tips on how to answer that question type.



Base your answers only on what is in the selection.

You're being tested on how well you read, not on how much you know. You don't need to use outside knowledge to answer the reading questions.



Read every question carefully.

Make sure you understand each question before you select your answer. Don't jump ahead and select an answer before you've read the entire question and all the answer choices.



Learn how to go back and “skim” a selection for the right answer.

Skimming is an important skill on a reading test, but you need to know when to use it. Never skim during the first reading. After you’ve read the entire selection, the best way to find an answer is usually to skim to find key words.



Answer every question, even if you have to guess.

Even if you aren’t sure of an answer, you should always make your best guess. *Before* you guess, always eliminate answers that seem like they might be wrong.

By answering, you at least have a chance to get the question right. Not answering is a guaranteed miss.



On test day, relax.

If you’ve practiced the material in this book, your new skills will be “built-in” by test day. You won’t be worried, because you’ll know that you can do your best. You can relax—and maybe even have some fun playing the Reading Test Game!