

The Reading test

- ✓ **56 selected-response questions in 85 minutes**
- ✓ Every question is answered from the passage — **no outside knowledge** is needed or rewarded
- ✓ Usually five choices; some questions ask for more than one answer
- ✓ Four kinds of passage, from print and online sources:
 - **Brief statement:** one question
 - **Short passage** (about 100 words): two or three questions
 - **Long passage** (about 200 words): four to seven questions
 - **Paired passages** (about 200 words together): four to seven questions
- ✓ Passages can be **visual**: graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, maps

Content categories

Category	Share	Questions	What it asks
Key Ideas and Details	35%	17–22	Main idea and purpose, supporting details, inferences
Craft, Structure, and Language Skills	30%	14–19	Tone, organization, transitions, word meaning, fact or opinion
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	35%	17–22	Graphics, evaluating arguments, comparing two texts

How to read a passage

- ✓ **Read the question first**, then the passage — not the answer choices
- ✓ Read the passage **straight through** for its main idea; reread for details
- ✓ **Read in context**: start a sentence before the line asked about and read a sentence past it
- ✓ Note what the author says is important, and every **transition** — new information follows one
- ✓ **Predict the answer** yourself, then choose the closest match
- ✓ Take the passage **literally**: the simple reading beats the clever one
- ✓ Work at a steady pace; skimming and reading the choices first both backfire

Classic wrong answers

- ✓ **Half right, half wrong**: starts well and goes wrong by the end — read every choice to its last word
- ✓ **Matching keywords**: repeats the passage's words but says something the passage doesn't
- ✓ **Extreme language**: *always, never, only, completely* — real writing is more nuanced
- ✓ **Overly broad**: turns one study into "studies," or one case into a rule
- ✓ **True, but not stated**: relies on background knowledge; if the passage doesn't state or imply it, it's wrong
- ✓ **One word changed**: a swapped name, date or relationship, or a single word added or dropped

Second-guessing

- ✓ Change an answer **only for a clear, specific reason**
- ✓ On vocabulary questions, trust your first sense of a word: your passive vocabulary is far larger than the words you use
- ✓ You can retake the test, and you choose which scores to send

Myths

- ✓ The word you don't know is **not** the answer by default — pick it only if every other choice is wrong
- ✓ Neither the shortest nor the longest choice is reliably right
- ✓ A run of the same letter means nothing: the order of the choices is randomized
- ✓ There are no trick questions