

**What is Reading Comprehension (RC)?**

➤ In reading comprehension a passage is given, based on which, certain questions are asked. The questions can be multiple choice or subjective questions. In reading comprehension, there is a set of directions given at the starting of the questions and those directions mention a statement that says, 'Read the given passage very carefully.'

A reading comprehension comprises a wide variety of topics and fields of study.

**Different areas / topics for reading comprehension:**

- Social Sciences – History, Anthropology, Sociology, Government
- Natural Sciences – Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Botany
- Humanities – Art, Music, Literature, Philosophy
- Business – Economics, Marketing, Human Resources

**Types of Questions in Reading Comprehension**

- Type 1: Main Idea Questions
- Type 2: Tone of the Author Questions
- Type 3: Specific Fact Questions
- Type 4: Implied Questions
- Type 5: Structural Questions
- Type 6: Extrapolation Questions
- Type 7: Negative or Exception Questions
- Type 8: Contextual/Definition of a Term or Word Questions

**A few of them are discussed below:**

**1. Factual Questions / Specific Fact Questions:** These questions are based on the facts given in the passage. Fact-based questions intend to check whether the given information is correct or incorrect.

**Examples:**

According to the passage,....

The passage states that:

- Which, out of the following, is true/false?
- Which \_\_\_\_\_ has not been cited as \_\_\_\_\_?
- According to the author, what is \_\_\_\_\_?
- By a \_\_\_\_\_, the author means \_\_\_\_\_
- According to the passage, \_\_\_\_\_?

**2. Central theme/Main idea** – In such questions option based on the central theme or the main idea of the passage is chosen as the correct answer.

**Examples:**

- Which of the following most accurately states the central theme/ main idea of the passage?

The gist of the passage is:

- Which of the following is the central/principal topic of the passage?

Summarize the passage in one line.

- Which of the following best states/expresses the central idea/theme of the passage?

The most appropriate/apt title for the passage is:

Select the most appropriate/suitable title for the passage from the following:

**3. Inference / Implied Questions** – These questions are not direct and one has to infer i.e. deduce the information from the given facts from a passage.

**Examples:**

- It can be inferred from the passage:
- It cannot be inferred from the passage:
- The given passage uses ' \_\_\_\_\_ ' to imply that ' \_\_\_\_\_ '.
- What can be inferred when the author states \_\_\_\_\_?
- The sentence, ' \_\_\_\_\_ ', implies that:

**4. Contextual/Definition of a Term or Word Questions** – Through these types of questions the examiner tests a candidate's vocabulary. They ask the meaning/synonym/antonym of a word or phrase. The contextual meaning of the words has more importance in these questions.

**Examples:**

- Identify the meaning of the word, '.....', in the given context.
- In the given passage, the phrase ' \_\_\_\_\_ ' refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
- In the sentence, \_\_\_\_\_, what is the meaning of ' \_\_\_\_\_ '?

**Important Strategies to Solve Comprehension Passages**

- ✓ Read the passage as fast as possible.
- ✓ Get involved with the passage to understand it.
- ✓ Underline important lines or parts of the passage to answer the questions. It will also help to understand the main idea of the passage or the tone or mood of the author.
- ✓ Try to translate a complex line into an easy one in your own words and language. This will help in analysing the main idea of the paragraph and in seeking the cause and effect of the passage.
- ✓ Underline or mark the keywords. This will help to discover the logical connections in the passage and help in understanding it better.
- ✓ Try to understand the unfamiliar words by reading the lines thoroughly.
- ✓ Determine the main idea, tone or mood, inferential reasoning, and other details from the paragraph.
- ✓ Do not assume anything based on your own beliefs as understanding of the passage needs to be rational.
- ✓ Refer back at the passage when in doubt.
- ✓ Read the questions and all the given alternative options provided and choose the most appropriate option.

**Tricks to Solve Comprehension Passages**

1. Jump to the question
2. Improve vocabulary
3. Note the 'keywords'.
4. Read the passage carefully.
5. Practice making summary of passages.
6. Read English newspapers daily, especially the editorial section for almost half an hour. This will not only enhance your general knowledge and vocabulary, but will surely prepare you for reading comprehension as this part demands a quick reading quality.
7. Practice five passages daily. Read the questions first and then, read the passage.
8. Do not leave any sentence in order to answer the questions.

**EXERCISE****Passage 1**

In a free country, the man who reaches the position of leader is usually one of outstanding character and ability. Moreover, it is usually possible to foresee that he will reach such a position, since early in life one can see his qualities of character. But this is not always true in the case of a dictator; often he reaches his position of power through chance, very often through the unhappy state of his country. It is possible that Hitler would never have become the leader of Germany if that country had not been driven to despair.

1. In a free country, one who becomes a leader:
  - (a) must be of outstanding character and ability.
  - (b) must show qualities of character from an early age.
  - (c) is generally of a remarkable character and ability.
  - (d) must see that his country is free from despair.
2. Hitler became a leader because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) he exhibited leadership qualities
  - (b) Germany was a free country
  - (c) Germany was in despair
  - (d) Germans wanted to be a dictator
3. The passage seems to suggest that:
  - (a) despair sometimes leads to dictatorship
  - (b) Hitler was no leader
  - (c) a leader is chosen only by a free country
  - (d) a leader foresees his future position

**Passage 2**

The dog is a very intelligent animal and it can be trained for many duties. Some dogs work with the police and the army as sentries and trackers, and there are medals that are awarded to dogs for bravery in action. Other dogs act as seeing-eyes for the blind, and some breeds are specially trained for rescue work among mountains and snow. Jobs like herding sheep and cattle and guarding homes are also done by them. Whenever man lives and works in the Arctic Circle, in the desert, in the jungle, in the moors or mountains, the dog is his faithful companion and help. A common mongrel may possess these qualities just as much as the aristocratic bloodhound.

4. The passage tells us that dogs \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) can be trained to do different kinds of work
  - (b) are capable of difficult work

- (c) are of different types
  - (d) alone are a great help to man
5. Medals are awarded to some dogs for:
  - (a) their brave deeds
  - (b) working with the police
  - (c) serving as sentries
  - (d) being able to perform difficult work
6. The passage implies that:
  - (a) only dogs are faithful but not man.
  - (b) man would have felt helpless without dogs.
  - (c) the dog has certain qualities that makes it man's trustworthy companion.
  - (d) dogs can do almost anything.
7. The phrase 'aristocratic bloodhound' in the passage means:
  - (a) the dog kept by wealthy people
  - (b) a pedigree dog
  - (c) a dog fond of blood
  - (d) any big dog

**Passage 3**

Cambridge was my metaphor for England, and it was strange that when I left, it had become altogether something else because I had met Stephen Hawking there. It was on a walking tour through Cambridge that the guide mentioned Stephen Hawking, 'poor man, who is quite disabled now, though he is a worthy successor to Isaac Newton, whose chair he has at the university.' And I started, because I had quite forgotten that this most brilliant and completely paralysed astrophysicist, (scholar of astrophysics — branch of physics dealing with stars, planets, etc.) the author of *A Brief History of Time*, one of the biggest best-sellers ever, lived here. When the walking tour was done, I rushed to a phone booth and, almost tearing the cord so it could reach me outside, phoned Stephen Hawking's house. His assistant came on the line and I told him I had come in a wheelchair from India (perhaps he thought I had propelled myself all the way) to write about my travels in Britain. I had to see Professor Hawking — even ten minutes would do. 'Half an hour,' he said. 'From three-thirty to four.' And suddenly I felt weak all over. Growing up disabled, you get fed up with people asking you to be brave, as if you have a courage account on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque.

The only thing that makes you stronger is seeing somebody like you, achieving something huge. Then you know how much is possible and you reach out further than you ever thought you could. 'I haven't been brave,' said his disembodied computer-voice, the next afternoon. 'I've had no choice.' Surely, I wanted to say, living creatively with the reality of his disintegrating body was a choice?

But I kept quiet, because I felt guilty every time I spoke to him, forcing him to respond. There he was, tapping at the little switch in his hand, trying to find the words on his computer with the only bit of movement left to him, his long, pale fingers.

Every so often, his eyes would shut in frustrated exhaustion. And sitting opposite him I could feel his anguish, the mind buoyant with thoughts that came out in frozen phrases and sentences stiff as corpses.

8. Astrophysics deals with:
- (a) computers (b) diseases  
(c) stars and planets (d) creative writing
9. The narrator pulled the telephone cord outside the phone booth because he was:
- (a) eager to call Stephen Hawking's home.  
(b) not able to hear clearly in the booth.  
(c) desperate to get an appointment with Stephen Hawkings.  
(d) unable to enter the booth on a wheelchair.
10. Which of these facts is NOT true about Stephen Hawkings?
- (a) A paralysed man  
(b) A worthy contemporary of Newton  
(c) A brilliant astrophysicist  
(d) A professor at Cambridge
11. The narrator felt the professor's anguish in:
- (a) the extreme exhaustion in his face.  
(b) his inability to express his thoughts in words.  
(c) the loss of movement in his legs.  
(d) his effort to put up a brave front.
12. Complete the sentence to make it true. The narrator :
- (a) is the author of A Brief History of Time  
(b) came to Britain to study astrophysics  
(c) dislikes people asking him to be brave  
(d) met Stephen Hawkings accidentally

**Passage 4**

Since September, at least 25 people have died and thousands have been made homeless. Every state and territory in Australia have experienced fires this summer. But the biggest fires burn along stretches of the eastern and southern coast, where most of the population lives. This includes areas around Sydney and Adelaide.

More than 6.3 million hectares (63,000 sq. km. or 15.6 million acres) have been burned so far – one hectare is roughly the size of a sports field. To put that in perspective, around 800,000 hectares were engulfed in a bush fire in 2018 in California. Australia has always experienced bushfires – it has a 'fire season'. But this year they are a lot worse than normal.

Fires are usually caused by lightning strikes or accidentally by a spark – but some fires are also started deliberately. This year, a natural weather phenomenon

known as the 'Indian Ocean Dipole' has meant a hot, dry spell across the country. This year, Australia twice set a new temperature record: an average maximum of 41.9°C was recorded on 18 December. That comes on top of a long period of drought.

Scientists have long warned that this hotter, drier climate will contribute to fires becoming more frequent and more intense.

The more extreme weather patterns and higher temperatures increase the risk of bushfires and allow them to spread faster and wider.

Fire fighters are spraying water and fire retardant from planes and helicopters as well as from the ground. But fighting bushfires is extremely difficult and often authorities have to focus on just stopping the spread, rather than putting the fire out. The spread can for instance be best contained by digging earth boundaries to stop the flames from spreading.

The priority is saving lives.

Professional fire fighters are the first in line to battle the flames, but they are outnumbered by the thousands of volunteers. Three of them have died. There's also help coming from abroad: the US, Canada and New Zealand have sent fire fighters to help. Australia's police, military and navy are involved in rescue and evacuation efforts.

While people can flee the fires and are being evacuated if need be, the flames are devastating wildlife in the affected areas. One study estimated that half a billion animals have died in New South Wales alone.

Zookeepers take animals home to save them from fire, but the fires don't only kill animals directly, they also destroy the habitat, leaving the survivors vulnerable even when the fires have gone. So the true scale of loss isn't yet clear.

Experts say more than 100,000 cows and sheep may also have been lost, which is devastating for farmers.

Each state runs its own emergency operation, but Prime Minister Scott Morrison has promised better funding for fire-fighting and payouts for volunteer fire fighters, and an additional A\$2billion (\$1.4billion; £1 billion) for the recovery.

But the national government has come under strong criticism from its opponents that it has not been doing enough against climate change. The country is one of the world's biggest per capita greenhouse gas emitters but under international agreements it has committed itself to reduction targets.

13. Which statement is NOT true according to the passage?
- (a) Around 800,000 hectares have been destroyed due to a bush fire in Australia.  
(b) The volunteers outnumber the professional fire fighters in Australia.  
(c) Australia is one of the world's biggest per capita greenhouse gas emitters.  
(d) Zookeepers take animals home to save them from fire.
14. Where did the biggest fires burn in Australia?
- (a) Along the western and northern coasts.  
(b) Along the eastern and southern coasts.

- (c) Along the eastern and northern coasts.  
(d) Along the western and southern coasts.
15. The opposition in Australia is criticising the government for:  
(a) not fighting the bush fires  
(b) not allotting enough funds for firefighting  
(c) not doing enough against the climate change  
(d) not giving enough compensation to the deceased
16. 'Authorities have to focus on just stopping the spread, rather than putting the fire out.'  
This means that the authorities:  
(a) want only to slow down the spread of fire.  
(b) want to put out the fires once and for all.  
(c) do not want to put the fires out.  
(d) want to stop the fires from spreading first and then put them out.
17. 'Some fires are also started deliberately'. 'Deliberately' here means:  
(a) purposely (b) accidentally  
(c) unknowingly (d) inadvertently
18. The spread of fire can be contained effectively by:  
(a) spraying the forests with water  
(b) digging earth boundaries  
(c) spraying fire retardant from the air  
(d) spraying fire retardant from the ground
19. The passage is mainly about:  
(a) Australia's struggle with bush fires  
(b) the loss of wildlife due to bush fires  
(c) how the bush fires occur in Australia  
(d) the government's role in dealing with the bushfire
20. It can be inferred from the passage that this year's fire in Australia is mostly a result of:  
(a) a lightning strike  
(b) a deliberate attempt to put the forests on fire  
(c) an accidental spark in the jungle  
(d) a result of an extraordinarily hot and dry spell
21. What is the long lasting damage that the bush fires have caused to the wildlife in Australia?  
(a) The fires have not only killed animals directly, but also destroyed their habitat.  
(b) Many animals in the zoos have been killed.  
(c) Half a billion animals have died in New South Wales alone.  
(d) More than 100,000 cows and sheep may have been lost.
22. Which of the following countries has NOT sent help for firefighting?  
(a) The US (b) Canada  
(c) China (d) New Zealand

**Passage 5**

My most interesting visitor comes at night, when the lights

are still burning-- a tiny bat who prefers to fly in through the open door, and will use the window only if there is no alternative. His object in entering the house is to snap up the moths that cluster around the lamps. All the bats I have seen fly fairly high, keeping near the ceiling; but this particular bat flies in low, like a dive-bomber, zooming in and out of chair legs and under tables. Once, he passed straight between my legs. Has his radar gone wrong, I wondered, or is he just plain crazy?

23. Consider the following statements:  
(a) The tiny bat flew in low like a dive-bomber.  
(b) The tiny bat like all bats keeps near the ceiling.  
(c) It has lost direction because its radar has gone wrong.  
(d) It wants to entertain the author with its skill in flying.  
Which of the above statements may be assumed to be true from the information given in the passage?  
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 4 (d) 3 and 4
24. The bat entered the room:  
(a) because there was no alternative  
(b) to eat the moths round the lamps  
(c) as it had gone mad  
(d) as it preferred to fly in through the open door
25. After comparing the habits of the tiny bat with those of other bats, the author was:  
(a) sure that this bat had lost its direction  
(b) not sure of its preferences  
(c) surprised to find that it was an expert flier  
(d) unable to give the correct explanation for its behaviour
26. The author calls the tiny bat an "interesting visitor". This means:  
(a) the bat visits him at night  
(b) the bat is interested in the moths  
(c) the bat has peculiar qualities  
(d) the bat surprises him by zooming in and out like a dive-bomber
27. What, according to you, can be the most suitable title for the passage ?  
(a) Someone visits me (b) Night of Mysteries  
(c) My Nocturnal Visitor (d) A funny Visitor

**ANSWER KEY**

- |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c)  | 2. (c)  | 3. (a)  | 4. (a)  | 5. (a)  |
| 6. (c)  | 7. (a)  | 8. (c)  | 9. (d)  | 10. (b) |
| 11. (b) | 12. (c) | 13. (a) | 14. (b) | 15. (c) |
| 16. (d) | 17. (a) | 18. (b) | 19. (a) | 20. (d) |
| 21. (a) | 22. (c) | 23. (a) | 24. (b) | 25. (d) |
| 26. (d) | 27. (c) |         |         |         |

**ANSWERS & EXPLANATIONS**

1. Option (c) is correct.

*Explanation:* Refer to the first line of the paragraph, 'In a

free ..... ability'. It clearly states that a leader is supposed to be of a remarkable character and ability.

**2. Option (c) is correct.**

*Explanation:* It is clearly stated in the paragraph that a dictator rises to power, preying upon the unhappy state of the country. Thus, it is true that Hitler became a dictator, as Germany was in a state of despair.

**3. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* Refer to the last line of the paragraph, 'It is possible ..... despair, which exemplifies the fact that despair sometimes leads to dictatorship.'

**4. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The writer has given various examples of how dogs act as companions to humans. This explanation makes option (a) the correct answer.

**5. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* Medals are usually awarded for achieving something. In this case, these are rewarded when dogs perform a brave deed, which makes option (a) to be the correct answer.

**6. Option (c) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The entire paragraph revolves around the various roles played by dogs; thus, we can say that option (c) is the correct answer.

**7. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* 'Aristocratic' means related to the upper class or the elite class. So, here it can refer to the dogs kept by the wealthy people.

**8. Option (c) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The line of the passage (scholar of ..... planets, etc.) conveys the definition of astrophysics.

**9. Option (d) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The 8<sup>th</sup> line of the passage conveys that the narrator pulled the telephone cord outside the phone booth because he was unable to enter the booth on a wheelchair.

**10. Option (b) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The statements given in the options (1), (3) and (4) have been mentioned in the passage.

**11. Option (b) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, the narrator felt the professor's anguish in his inability to express his thoughts in words. Refer to the line 'Every.....exhaustion'.

**12. Option (c) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The lines 'Growing up ..... cheque' mention that the narrator disliked people asking him to be brave.

**13. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, around 800,000 hectares have been destroyed due to a bush fire in California, US. So, the 1<sup>st</sup> option is the correct answer here which mentions the statement that the destruction happened due to a bush fire in Australia which is not true.

**14. Option (b) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, the biggest fires burnt along the eastern and southern coasts in Australia. Refer to the lines, 'But the biggest ..... population lives' in the first passage.

**15. Option (c) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, the opposition in Australia is criticizing the government for not doing enough against the climate change.

**16. Option (d) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, the 4<sup>th</sup> option is the correct answer here.

**17. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The word 'deliberately' means 'purposely'.

**18. Option (b) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, the spread of the fire can be effectively contained by digging earth boundaries.

**19. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The passage is mainly about Australia's struggle with bush fires.

**20. Option (d) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, the fire in Australia was mostly a result of an extraordinary hot and dry spell.

**21. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, the fires in Australia have not only killed animals directly but have also destroyed their habitats.

**22. Option (c) is correct.**

*Explanation:* As per the passage, China is the nation that has not sent any help for firefighting.

**23. Option (a) is correct.**

*Explanation:* Statement 1 is mentioned in the passage in the last third line, therefore, is true as per the passage. Statement 2 is contradicted in the passage. Statement 4 is not mentioned in the passage at all. Statement 3 seems to be true, but it is false because it is mere speculation on the part of the author and not an assertion.

**24. Option (b) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The author mentions that the bat's objective in entering the house was to snap up the moths clustered around the lamp.

**25. Option (d) is correct.**

*Explanation:* From the last line of the paragraph, it is clear that the author was not sure whether the bat's radar had either gone wrong or he was simply crazy.

**26. Option (d) is correct.**

*Explanation:* The author notices that the tiny bat that visits him at night is different from other regular bats because the regular bats fly close to the ceiling. This bat is interesting because it flies close to the floor; it comes in like a dive bomber and swoops under tables and chairs.

**27. Option (c) is correct.**

*Explanation:* 'Nocturnal' means something that turns active in the night. The passage talks about the tiny bat that visits the author in the night and how that bat is different from other bats.

