

CSAT (GS II) EXAM
READING COMPREHENSION SEGMENT

LECTURE 1

Why is Reading Comprehension a critical component of the CSAT exam ?

- **Total Number of questions: 80** -Objective-Type (MCQ) questions
- **Maximum Marks: 200**
- **Each question carries: 2.5 marks**
- **CSAT qualifying marks: 66 marks (33% qualifying criteria)**
- Weightage of RC questions in the previous 10 year CSAT exam papers-

Number of RC Questions 2011- 2020

Exam Year	No. of RC Questions (Out of total 80)
2011	39
2012	40
2013	33
2014	31
2015	30
2016	28
2017	30
2018	26
2019	30
2020	26

What is Reading Comprehension?

- Reading Comprehension (RC) is the ability to actively read the information (mostly passages) provided, and assimilate the information to answer a given set of questions.

So, to solve the reading comprehension questions, one must be able to:

- Understand the crux of the passage
- Answer questions based on the text provided
- Develop a perspective on the tone and theme of the given passage
- The most followed rule in the RC section is to understand what you read. It will prove a boon for you if you are able to read fast. Nevertheless, speed is always secondary to understanding.

Critical points to consider before starting your preparation for RC

- What are the types of questions that are asked in a Comprehension?
- What should be the strategy followed for answering Comprehension?
- What skills are tested in Comprehension?
- How should one improve in Comprehension ability ?

Types of RC Questions

● Passage Based

- These are fact-based/Specific Detail/Target Questions.
- Answers can be found directly, from the exact words of the passage.

Format of such questions

- 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, " _____ "?
- Which factor has not been cited _____?

Example of Passage Based Questions

A library is a collection of sources of information and similar resources, made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. It provides physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space or both. A library's collection can include books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, ebooks and other formats. Libraries range in size from a few shelves of books to several million items.

What is the size of libraries?

- Medium sized halls or large rooms.
- A fixed number of shelves arranged alphabetically in a hall.
- Few rooms inside the premises of a school or college.
- Range from a few shelves of books to a several million items.

Vocabulary Based Questions

- These questions test your vocabulary- ask you either the meaning/ synonym of a word/phrase/. Or, the opposite/antonym of a word/phrase. The **contextual meaning of the word** holds more importance here.
- Synonyms and Antonyms of certain proverbs stated in the passage, may be asked.
- Meaning of certain words of French or Latin origin used in the passage can also be asked.

Example of Vocabulary Based Questions

A library is organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution, a corporation, or a private individual. Public and institutional collections and services may be intended for use by people who choose not to—or cannot afford to—purchase an extensive collection themselves, who need material no individual can reasonably be expected to have, or who require professional assistance with their research. In addition to providing materials, libraries also provide the services of librarians who are experts at finding and organizing information and at interpreting information needs.

Which word has the opposite meaning of - INTENDED ?

- Deliberate
- Extension
- Forcefully
- Unknowingly

Tone Based Questions

The **tone** of any given passage is the author's emotion or feeling, usually towards his subject. **Tone based questions** will enquire the "attitude," "tone," "style," "feeling," of the author.

Example

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What is the tone of the author here?

Expository

Apologetic

Patronising

Informative

Inference Based Questions

Example -

Many pathogens that cause foodborne illnesses are unknown. Food contamination can occur at any stage from farm to plate. Since most cases of food poisoning go unreported, the true extent of global foodborne illnesses is unknown. Improvements in international monitoring have led to greater public awareness, yet the rapid globalization of food production increases consumers' vulnerability by making food harder to regulate and trace. "We have the world on our plates", says an official of WHO. **(CSAT EXAM - 2018)**

Q- Which of the following is the most logical corollary to the above passage?

- (a) With more options for food come more risks.
- (b) Food processing is the source of all foodborne illnesses.
- (c) We should depend on locally produced food only.
- (d) Globalization of food production should be curtailed.

Questions on Central Idea/Theme of the passage

These can be in the following format.

- ❖ Which of the following most accurately states the main idea of the passage?
- ❖ Which of the following best states the central idea of the passage?
- ❖ The gist of the passage is?
- ❖ Which of the following is the principal topic of the passage?
- ❖ Sometimes you may be asked to suggest a suitable title to the passage as well.

Example of Central Idea/Theme of the passage

The Holland Tunnel is a roadway under the Hudson River. At one end of the tunnel is New York City. At the other end is the state of New Jersey. Almost 50,000 cars and trucks go through the Holland Tunnel each day. The distance is just over one and a half miles. Depending on the time of day, it can be a long or short trip.

What is the central idea of the above passage?

- A. What the Holland Tunnel is?
- B. The length of the Holland Tunnel
- C. What the Hudson River is like?

TYPICAL RC QUESTIONS FORMAT -

The Maharashtra government will bring in a law to give five per cent reservation to Muslims in educational institutes, state minister for minority affairs Nawab Malik said in the **(A)Legislative Council** Friday. The Bombay High Court has upheld the five per cent reservation in educational institutes given to Muslims in 2014. The government will soon bring a law to provide that benefit Malik said responding to a question by Congress legislator Sharad Ranpise.

He added that the government **(B)** _____. The government will take appropriate decision on bringing in the law before school admissions start in June. In a written reply to a starred question on Muslim reservation by Ranpinse, Malik said the government had given five per cent reservation to Muslims in government jobs and educational institutes through an ordinance in July 2014. Petitions were filed against it and the Bombay High Court in its interim order in November 2014, upheld five per cent reservation in government and government-aided educational institutes. But it had stayed the reservation given in private educational institutes and government jobs said the minister.

- 1)What is the central theme of the passage?
- 2) Which of the following is/are correct according to the passage?
- 3) Which of the following options is false according to the passage?
- 4) Choose the option which is most opposite to the word marked ?
- 5) Choose the option which is most similar to the word petitions, as used in the paragraph.

How is the RC segment in CSAT exam different from most other exams ?

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1. Length Of The Passages Is Small -

Eg 1- Flamingos in large flocks in the wild are social and extremely loyal. They perform group mating dances. Parents are very fond of their chicks, gathering them into crèches for protection while both males and females fly off to search for food. (**CSAT 2015**)

Which among the following is the most logical corollary to the above passage?

- (a) Mass nesting in all species of birds is essential to ensure complete survival of their offspring.
- (b) Only birds have the capacity to develop social behaviour and thus can do mass nesting to raise their chicks in safety.
- (c) Social behaviour in some species of birds increases the odds of' survival in an unsafe world.
- (d) All species of birds set up creches for their chicks to teach them social behaviour and loyalty.

Eg 2- Today, the top environmental challenge is a combination of people and their aspirations. If the aspirations are more like the frugal ones we had after the Second World War, a lot more is possible than if we view the planet as a giant shopping mall. We need to get beyond the fascination with glitter and understand that the planet works as a biological system. (**CSAT 2018**)

Q- Which of the following is the most crucial and logical inference that can be made from the above passage?

- (a) The Earth can meet only the basic needs of humans for food, clothing and shelter.
- (b) The only way to meet environmental challenge is to limit human population.
- (c) Reducing our consumerism is very much in our own interest.
- (d) Knowledge of biological systems can only help us save this planet.

Eg 3-" The individual, according to Rousseau, puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the General Will and in our corporate capacity we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole."

Q- In the light of the above passage, the nature of General Will is best described as

- (a) the sum total of the private wills of the individuals
- (b) what is articulated by the elected representatives of the individuals
- (c) the collective good as distinct from private wills of the individuals
- (d) the material interests of the community

2. Language used is not Simple -

Private investment in general is volatile. Foreign private investment is more volatile because the available investment avenues are significantly greater (i.e., the entire world). Therefore, the responsibility of providing employment cannot be left to Foreign Direct investment (FDI). The current FDI inflows are volatile over time and across sectors and regions, which is a necessary consequence of their search for the highest returns. The adverse consequences are unstable employment and an accentuation of income and regional inequalities. A probable positive consequence of foreign investment is the inflow of new technology and its subsequent diffusion. However, the technology diffusion is not at all certain because the existing state of physical and human capital in India may prove inadequate for the diffusion. (**CSAT 2020**)

Q. With reference to the above passage, the following assumptions have been made:

1. Relying on foreign investment in the long run is not an economically sound policy.
2. Policies must be undertaken to reduce volatility in foreign private investment.
3. Policies must be undertaken to strengthen domestic private investment.
4. Public investment should be given priority over private investment.
5. Substantial public investment in education and health should be undertaken.

3. Only 2 Types of Questions are asked

- **Passage Based Questions -**

Eg 1 - Though I have discarded much of past tradition and custom, and am anxious that India should rid herself of all shackles that bind and contain her and divide her people, and suppress vast numbers of them, and prevent the free development of the body and the spirit; though I seek all this, yet I do not wish to cut myself off from that past completely. I am proud of the great inheritance that has been and is, ours and I am conscious that I too, like all of us, am a link in that unbroken chain which goes back to the dawn of history in the immemorial past of India. **(CSAT 2018)**

The author wants India to rid herself of certain past bonds because

- (a) he is not able to see the relevance of the past
- (b) there is not much to be proud of
- (c) he is not interested in the history of India
- (d) they obstruct her physical and spiritual growth

Eg 2- People believe that leadership is a quality which you have at birth or not at all. This theory is false, for the art of leadership can be acquired and can indeed be taught. This discovery is made in time of war and the results achieved can surprise even the instructors. Faced with the alternatives of going left or right, every soldier soon grasps that a prompt decision either way is better than an endless discussion. A firm choice of direction has an even chance of being right while to do nothing will be almost certainly wrong. **(CSAT 2018)**

Q- The author of the passage holds the view that

- (a) leadership can be taught through war experience only
- (b) leadership can be acquired as well as taught
- (c) the results of training show that more people acquire leadership than are expected
- (d) despite rigorous instruction, very few leaders are produced

- **Inference Based Questions**

Eg 1 -Cooking with biomass and coal in India is now recognized to cause major health problems, with women and children in poor populations facing the greatest risk. There are more than 10 lakh premature deaths each year from household air pollution due to polluting cooking fuels, with another 1.5 lakh due to their contribution to general outdoor air pollution in the country. Although the fraction of the Indian population using clean cooking fuels, such as LPG, natural gas and electricity, is slowly rising, the number using polluting solid fuels as their primary cooking fuel has remained static for nearly 30 years at about 70 crore. **(CSAT 2018)**

Which of the following is the most crucial and logical inference that can be made from the above passage?

- (a) Rural people are giving up the use of polluting solid fuels due to their increasing awareness of health hazards.
- (b) Subsidizing the use of clean cooking fuels will solve the problem of India's indoor air pollution.
- (c) India should increase its import of natural gas and produce more electricity.
- (d) Access to cooking gas can reduce premature deaths in poor households.

Eg 2 - 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. **(CSAT 2017)**

Q- The passage seems to suggest that

- (a) a leader foresees his future position
- (b) a leader is chosen only by a free country
- (c) a leader must see that his country is free from despair
- (d) despair in a country sometimes leads to dictatorship

What is Inference Making?

- Unlike the time saving reverse methodology which we employ for dealing with Vocabulary and Passage based questions, where we analyse the questions before reading the passage, in this exam we have to focus on just one thing i.e. - INFERENCE MAKING.

WHAT IS INFERENCE MAKING ?

- Inference can be defined as the process of drawing a conclusion based on the available evidence
- We need to make logical assumptions by using the evidences provided in the passage
- 'Making inference' means 'to read between the lines.'
- Inference-based questions ask you to pick up information that is indirectly given, rather than being directly stated in the passage.
- The central idea or the main point of the passage has to be explained.

Identifying Inference-Based Questions

- What can be deduced from the passage?
- What is the author most likely to agree or disagree with?
- What is the main idea behind the passage?
- Suitable heading for the passage!
- What about the passage is correct/incorrect?
- What is the theme of the passage?
- What is the most crucial and logical inference that can be made from the passage ?

Main Challenges In Solving Inference Based Questions

- **Understanding the passage is challenging -**

Most invasive species are neither terribly successful nor very harmful. Britain's invasive plants are not widespread, not spreading especially quickly, and often less of a nuisance than vigorous natives such as bracken. The arrival of new species almost always increases biological diversity in a region; in many cases, a flood of newcomers drives no native species to extinction. One reason is that invaders tend to colonise disturbed habitats like polluted lakes and post-industrial wasteland, where little else lives. They are nature's opportunists. (**CSAT 2019**)

- **Understanding the answer options is tricky-**

A vast majority of Indians are poor, with barely 10 percent employed in the organised sector. We are being convinced that vigorous economic growth is generating substantial employment. But this is not so. When our economy was growing at 3 percent per year, employment in the organised sector was growing at 2 percent per year. As the economy began to grow at 7 - 8 percent per year, the rate of growth of employment in the organised sector actually declined to 1 percent per year. **(CSAT 2019)**

Q- The above passage seems to imply that

1. most of modern economic growth is based on technological progress.
2. much of modern Indian economy does not nurture sufficient symbiotic relationship with labour-intensive, natural resource-based livelihoods.
3. service sector in India is not very labour-intensive.
4. literate rural population is not willing to enter organised sector.

- **Options are Overlapping/Confusing -**

Scientific knowledge has its dangers, but so has every great thing. Over and beyond the dangers with which it threatens the present, it opens up as nothing else can, the vision of a possible happy world; a world without poverty, without war, with little illness. Science, whatever unpleasant consequences it may have by the way, is in its very nature a liberator. **(CSAT 2018)**

Q- Which one of the following is the most important implication of the passage?

- (a) A happy world is a dream of science.
- (b) Science only can build a happy world, but it is also the only major threat.
- (c) A happy world is not possible without science.
- (d) A happy world is not at all possible with or without science.

Cardinal Method For Solving Inference Based Questions

- Focus on Independent Clauses
- Ignore Dependent Clauses
- Ignore the Relative Clauses
- Focus On Structure Words
- Rephrase the information in your mind

The RC passages are generally extracted from the areas below:

- **Business and Economics**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has maintained its position on India's economic outlook as positive, indicating that the country has neither made major progress nor gone off course. It remains on track to achieve a robust growth rate of 8 per cent and above. As such, the IMF's World Economic Outlook report must be seen as further encouragement to the Central government as well as a timely reminder for introspection on the future course of action.

Compared to other economies, India is expected to have a better growth rate at 7.5 per cent as against the global average of 3.2. However, it is still far away from the 8.4 per cent reported in July 2014. In fact, the country had even touched 10.26 per cent gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2010, which arguably is one of the best since the 1990s when the Indian economy was liberalized. (**CSAT 2016**)

- **Natural Sciences-**

In a study, scientists compared the microbiomes of poorly nourished and well nourished infants and young children. Gut microbes were isolated from faecal samples of malnourished and healthy children. The microbiome was "immature" and less diverse in malnourished children compared to the better developed "mature" microbiome found in healthy children of the same age. According to some studies, the chemical composition of mother's milk has shown the presence of a modified sugar (sialylated oligosaccharides). This is not utilized by the baby for its own nutrition. However, the bacteria constituting the infant's microbiome thrive on this sugar which serves as their food. Malnourished mothers have low levels of this sugar in their milk. Consequently, the microbiomes of their infants fail to mature. That in turn, leads to malnourished babies. **(CSAT 2019)**

Social Science-

The Arctic's vast reserves of fossil fuel, fish and minerals are now accessible for a longer period in a year. But unlike Antarctica, which is protected from exploitation by the Antarctic Treaty framed during the Cold War and is not subject to territorial claims by any country, there is no legal regime protecting the Arctic from industrialization, especially at a time when the world craves for more and more resources. The distinct possibility of ice-free summer has prompted countries with Arctic coastline to scramble for great chunks of the melting ocean. **(CSAT 2018)**

- **Humanities**

Set against a rural backdrop, 'Stench of kerosene' is the story of a couple, Guleri and Manak, who have been happily married for several years but do not have a child. Manak's mother is desperate to have a grandchild to carry on the family name. Hence, she gets Manak remarried in Guleri's absence. Manak, who acts as a reluctant but passive spectator, is meanwhile, informed by a friend that Guleri, on hearing about her husband's second marriage, poured kerosene on her clothes and set fire to them. Manak is heartbroken and begins to live as if he were a dead man. When his second wife delivers a son, Manak stares at the child for a long time and blurts out, "Take him away ! He stinks of kerosene". **(CSAT 2015)**

Tips to perform better in Reading Comprehension

- **Wider reading**
- **Identify Keywords**
- **Always search for the main idea, instead of focusing on minor details**
- **Learn more synonyms and antonyms of new words - Example -**

Skeptical- Synonyms- doubtful, cynical, dubious, questioning, doubting, hesitating, scoffing, hesitant, unconvinced, disbelieving, incredulous.

Ingenuous- Antonyms - perverted, disingenuous, distorted, sophisticated, artful, misrepresented, twisted.