

Understanding What You're Reading



Reading It to Get It...

Conquering the Navigation

Throughout this presentation you will find links to more information. You probably won't need all of them, but you will need some.

When you see a bright **green** word, you can click that and get more information. After you've clicked, the word will turn to a **darker green**.

The new pages will have **green** headings instead of the **aqua** ones you see here, so you will know where you are. Examples have a nice **butterscotch** heading.

When you're finished, simply click your browser's "Back" button to return to the main presentation.

If you would like to open the presentation in a new window, use the "Ctrl" key while you click

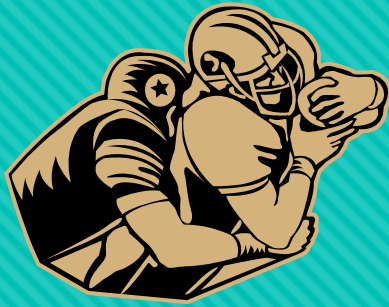
Before You Get Started, Know What to Expect



The second part of the VPT will be a multiple choice test that includes short reading selections.

Some questions simply try to see how well you have understood what you have read. In order to answer other— sometimes harder— questions, you'll need to understand the reading first.

- Be sure to read the questions carefully.
- Decide whether the question is about just a paragraph, or the entire selection.
- Familiarize yourself with some of the vocabulary here and in other sections of this course to help you understand what the questions are asking you.



Tackling Questions about Topics

If a VPT question asks you about the topic of a reading, it's asking you about the subject of the paragraph or selection you've read.

The topic is the ONE THING the paragraph is about.

You can typically describe the topic in a word or short phrase.

- **TIP:** The title or subtitle of a selection often includes the topic.
- **TIP:** If you are really unsure about the topic, pay attention to the word or phrase that gets repeated the most throughout the selection; it's often the topic.

Need to see examples?



... And Those Questions about Main Ideas and Topic Sentences

On the VPT, you might be asked about the main idea of a paragraph or selection. The main idea can have other names–

the point

the controlling point

the main point

Often, if the main idea is actually written out in a sentence, it's called the **topic sentence**.

To figure out the main idea, ask yourself, “What is the main point the writer is trying to make about the topic?” Your answer should express a complete thought.

Want to see some EXAMPLES?

Where Is that *Pesky* Main Idea?

Sometimes the main idea is written out as a topic sentence, and if it is, you can often find it in the **first or second sentence of the paragraph**, but not always.

Sometimes it is the **last sentence**. Occasionally, it's somewhere in the middle of the paragraph or selection.

Other times, the main idea is not written out at all; you have to figure it out based on what you have read.

TIP: If you encounter a question about the main idea or main point of a selection, review all the answers. The correct one will mention the topic. Also ask yourself, "is everything in the paragraph about this point?" If not, it's not likely the right answer.

There Could be Questions about Supporting Details...

Paragraphs and selections are mostly made up of **supporting details**. These sentences help the writer explain the main idea– they support the main point and include:

Facts

Examples

Reasons

Statistics

Descriptions

Steps

Procedures



How the Writer Supported the Point...

An additional way to help you understand paragraphs is to think about what is happening with these details... or, in other words, what pattern the details create.

What do the details add to the paragraph exactly? An example? A comparison?

Thinking about these patterns will give you a deeper understanding of what is going on in the reading selection. When you are taking the VPT, you might even be asked about what pattern a paragraph or selection uses.

One last consideration...

To show you understand what you have read, you might be asked to identify the best summary of a selection.

Want to see an example?

SUMMARY is:

- a short restatement of a reading's main points and key details
- usually is written in different words than the original but keeps the same idea
- doesn't include any information not in the original, such as another opinion or new example

REMEMBER...



- The VPT is not timed, so take time to read the full selections
- Read the question first, so you know what information you are looking for as you read the selection
- Read each question carefully