

Reading Comprehension Super Review



Overview of the Webinar

- Fundamental Questions
- Overview of the section
- Challenges of RC
- Pacing
- How to approach passages
- Passages drill
- How to approach questions
- Prediction in RC
- Looking at bad answers
- Questions Review
- We'll stop every half hour for questions
- We appreciate you being here!
- Stay for a survey at the end for a chance to win the newest LSAT PrepTests!
- This information can be found in even more depth in our free course

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Fundamental Questions



- What are your strengths in this section?
- Where could you improve?
- How will you prepare?

What to Expect

- 4 passages
- 26-28 questions
- 35 minutes
- Passages are 55-60 lines a piece
- Topics:
 - Humanities
 - Social Sciences
 - Natural Sciences
 - Law

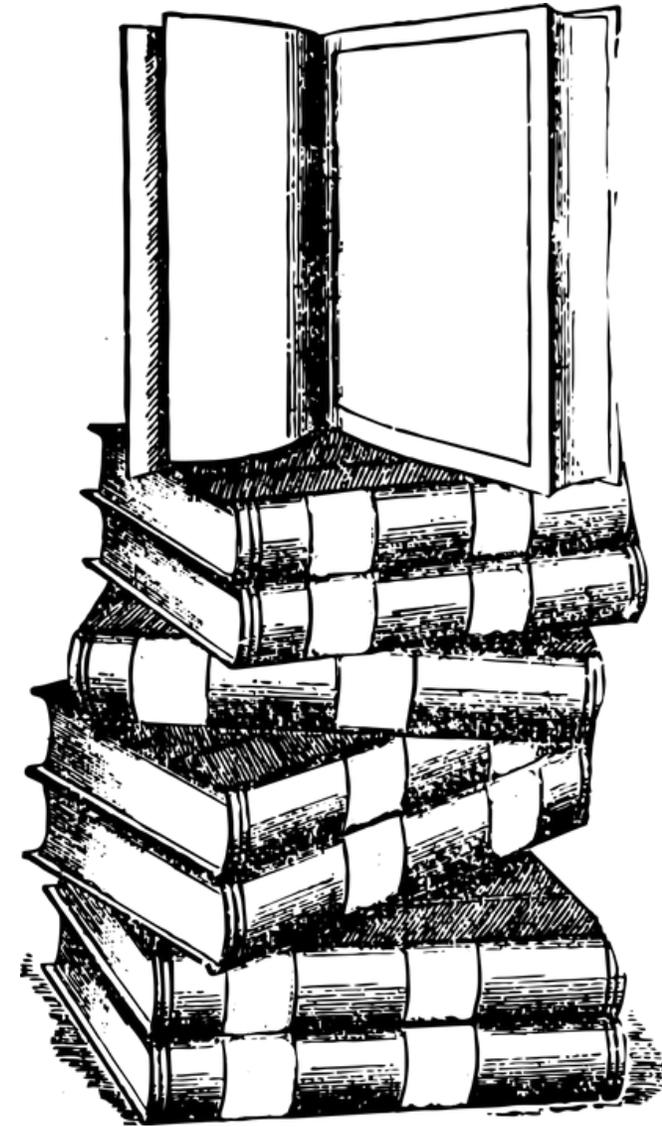
Improvement in RC

- RC is the section on which students typically start strongest and improve the least.
- The skills tested in RC are built over the course of your life and can be difficult to change.
- Set aside time to read every day:
 - Philosophy
 - The New Yorker
 - Literature over 100 years old



Modes of Improvement

- Passages
 - Long term challenging reading assignments.
 - Take notes on even fiction works you read
 - Practice summarizing and paraphrasing articles and books as you go
- Questions
 - Practice paraphrasing question tasks
 - Catalog question types as you see them to find patterns
 - Predict as much as you can, and measure how your predictions change
- Answers
 - Note common traits of wrong answers
 - Pay attention to small words that can rule out answers
- Speed
 - Work under time constraints, try moving as fast as you can



Pacing

- 35 minutes and average of 27 questions per section
- How much time should you spend reading the passages?
- If you spend...
 - 6 minutes per passage → 24 seconds per question
 - 5 minutes per passage → 33 seconds per question
 - 4 minutes per passage → 42 seconds per question
- We recommend you spend at most 3 minutes per passage
- This gives you 51 seconds per questions



Counting Down and Counting Up

- Typically when you do a section, *count down*
 - Give yourself a set amount of time (e.g. 35 minutes for a full section)
- Periodically, especially early on, *count up* with a stopwatch
 - See how long it takes you to read a passage (without questions) when you push yourself
 - See how long it takes you to read a passage when you don't
 - See how long it takes you to do a passage's questions when you push yourself
 - See how long it takes you to do a passage's questions leisurely.



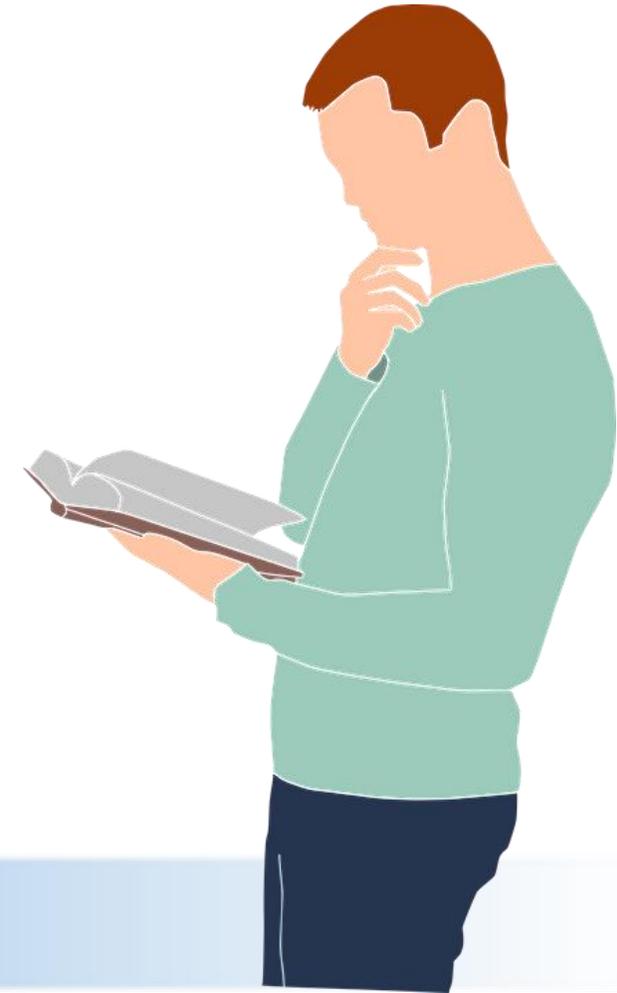
Passage Order

- Two approaches to what order to do the passages.
- (Hint: you don't need to do them in the order they appear)
- Approach One: Question Emphasis (Timing Is An Issue)
 - If you're having trouble finishing the entire RC section, **do the passages with the most questions first**, and save the passage with the fewest question until the end
- Approach Two: Topic Emphasis (Timing Is Not An Issue)
 - If you're getting through the section with enough time, consider doing the passages you are most interested in first
 - You read more attentively when you are interested, and slower when you are bored/uninterested



Doing 3 passages well

- If you are having serious timing issues in RC and aren't able to sufficiently fix them in time...
- Consider doing 3 passages well, and guessing on the 4th passage
- Guess on the passage with the fewest questions
- You can still get 21-22 questions in the section correct this way.
- Make the final call on this 2-3 weeks before your test. Know your approach before you sit for the test.



Passage Strategy 1: Taking Notes

- Write 1-6 words at the end of each paragraph as summary
- LSAT questions emphasize *relationships* and *roles*, more than they emphasize specific content and definitions
- Good notes reflect the structure of the passage, the author's view, how the main idea was advanced
- A good way to take notes is to ask the following question after each paragraph: *How did this paragraph advance the main idea?*



Passage Strategy #2: Highlighting

- You may bring and use a highlighter on the LSAT
- Experiment with LSAT highlighting as you work through RC sections. Try highlighting:
 - The key sentence of every paragraph. The key sentence explains the purpose of the paragraph
 - Changes in perspective: when the author references any other opinions but their own
 - Transition Words
 - Key terms
 - Definitions of key terms
- Don't use all of these methods on test day. See what works for you!



Passage Strategy #3: Author and Main Idea

- When you finish the passage, take a second to ask yourself two questions:
 - What was the main idea (or: why did someone write this? What was the point?)
 - How did the author feel about the subject
-
- You will be asked about the main idea and the author, so it's a good idea to have an idea in your mind before you go to the questions.



Sample Passage

- Take a minute to pull up the June 2007 LSAT (available for free online)
- We'll be tackling the first passage on page 22
- Don't do the questions yet!
- Take a short note on each paragraph
- Summarize the main idea and the author's position on the subject (use 1-2 adjectives to describe the author)
- You'll have 5 minutes, but I will give you a 3 minute warning.

Sample Passage Notes

- Paragraph notes for each paragraph:
- Paragraph 1: Fiction/poetry taught differently – why?
- Paragraph 2: Explanation for rift: “generalism”
- Paragraph 3: Generalism more accepted, example: Rita Dove
- Paragraph 4: Love crosses genre
- Main Idea: Fiction/poetry split diminishes, Love shows unity of two
- Author: Impartial, favors crossing genre

Question Strategy

1. Try to rephrase the questions in your own words
2. Check relevant parts of the passage if you need to
3. If possible, guess the answer in your own words: what do you expect the correct answer to do?
4. Eliminate bad answer choices



Question 1

Main Idea question. Subject is not Rita Dove: she is an *example* of blended genres, so we want something along those lines

- (A) RD isn't the subject, and "because" isn't right here.
- (B) RD isn't the main subject! She's only in the latter 50% of the passage
- (C) "Shows it can enhance" isn't the problem: it's expertise, not that they can't go well together.
- (D) She blends traditional techniques, it's not that she doesn't rely on them at all
- (E) Correct. "Exemplifies a trend" is safer than "can effectively enhance" in C.

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Question 2

This is a tough question and might be one to come back to. We'll try it now, but take 90 seconds, use the method, and see if you can find an answer.

We need someone who goes against an accepted order and combines two existing ideas.

- (A) “nontraditional” rules this out.
- (B) No blending of ideas
- (C) Two entities (actor, agency), not one (author)
- (D) Correct. Two existing arts combined
- (E) Time discrepancy is wrong, it's not a past/present difference, but a genre difference.

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Question 3

A local question. There's a specific part of the passage this refers to.

We want an answer such as: "genres shouldn't cross over, people should be good at one thing."

- (A) Correct. These are qualities of narrative fiction, which Love combines with poetry against the tradition.
- (B) Both are described as academic in the passage
- (C) Graduate writing focuses on one to the exclusion of the other; this is too narrow by speaking only about poetry excluding fiction.
- (D) Scholars in the US feel the opposite of this; this is Love's view
- (E) We don't know how European literary culture views generalism. Germans seem to embrace generalists, but we can't say.

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Question 4

Is the author in favor of the poetry/fiction partition?

NO

- (A) Author isn't "perplexed," they offer a theory of the origin: suspicion of generalism
- (B) Author suggests that academics perpetuate the rift by highly specializing
- (C) "Ambivalence" is 100% wrong here
- (D) "Pessimism" is too bleak for the author
- (E) Correct. The author thinks the rift is bad and caused by misperception. This answer is about the author's disagreement with the views that shape and create the rift.

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Question 5

What caused the divide?

Two things: Suspicion of generalism, and perpetuation of the rift by trained poets and writers.

- (A) “Superior” is too strong. It’s not better, just that it’s not enhanced by blending the two.
- (B) This would explain the difference, but the author doesn’t really delve into training as the root cause, nor that poetry, specifically, is different than all other literature’s training
- (C) Publishers are never mentioned anywhere.
- (D) Correct. The author feels the suspicion of generalism stops people from exploring new territory and incorporating elements outside their discipline.
- (E) There’s no reason to think this fiction is superior to poetry. The author reveals no bias on this particular issue.

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Question 6

Why did they bring up Germany?

To show that this “suspicion of generalism” doesn’t exist anywhere

- (A) “English-speaking” is out of scope – we know nothing of Canada, the UK, Jamaica, etc. It’s the US only, not the Anglophonic world
- (B) Correct. This is a safe answer: Dove saw the benefits in blending the two firsthand.
- (C) This is a stretch – “Strengths as a writer” is too far from “she saw people in Germany do things differently.”
- (D) Confusing answer. Dove fits a role here: she’s an example of success of blending genres. And the Germany anecdote also served a clear purpose.
- (E) This is too strong. We don’t know how Dove felt about the suspicion of generalism before her German experience. She may have been disapproving (like the author) before she went to Germany, or long after.

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Question 7

“Infer” is hard to predict, so it’s basically: what answers go to far? What’s a safe bet?

- (A) Correct, but this is very hard. Let’s discuss why the others are wrong
- (B) The author doesn’t weigh in on the value of narrative, poetry, or lyrical narrative in the passage. They allude to what people *suppose* the value of these genres is.
- (C) “Without precedent” is too strong. We just have no idea if this is true.
- (D) The author doesn’t express a preference, “aesthetically superior,” but instead contends that blending them has value (the author isn’t comparing)
- (E) “Drama” is actually never mentioned in the passage, only plays. And it’s beyond a stretch to invoke the word “Often”

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(A) Is correct because the others are wrong.

If you read closely in paragraph 4, the author describes Love’s poetry as having elements of fiction, and Love’s fiction as having elements of poetry. This implies that she writes in both genres, not in unclassifiable mixture of the two.

This was a hard one.

Question 8

How does the author view the trend, the trend Love belongs to?

The author thinks the “suspicion of generalism” is fading and that more writers will blend genres

- (A) Correct. The author believes more writers will bend the two genres
- (B) There is no mention of a “market for lyrical poetry” in the passage, let alone its size or what might cause it to shrink.
- (C) “Probably” is an extremely strong word in this case. It’s possible the author may think this, but we can’t support that the author would “probably” think this.
- (D) The author predicts the opposite, and that specialization (thus in programs as well) will decline.
- (E) This also goes too far, especially as the author doesn’t really regard audiences and what audiences like or want.

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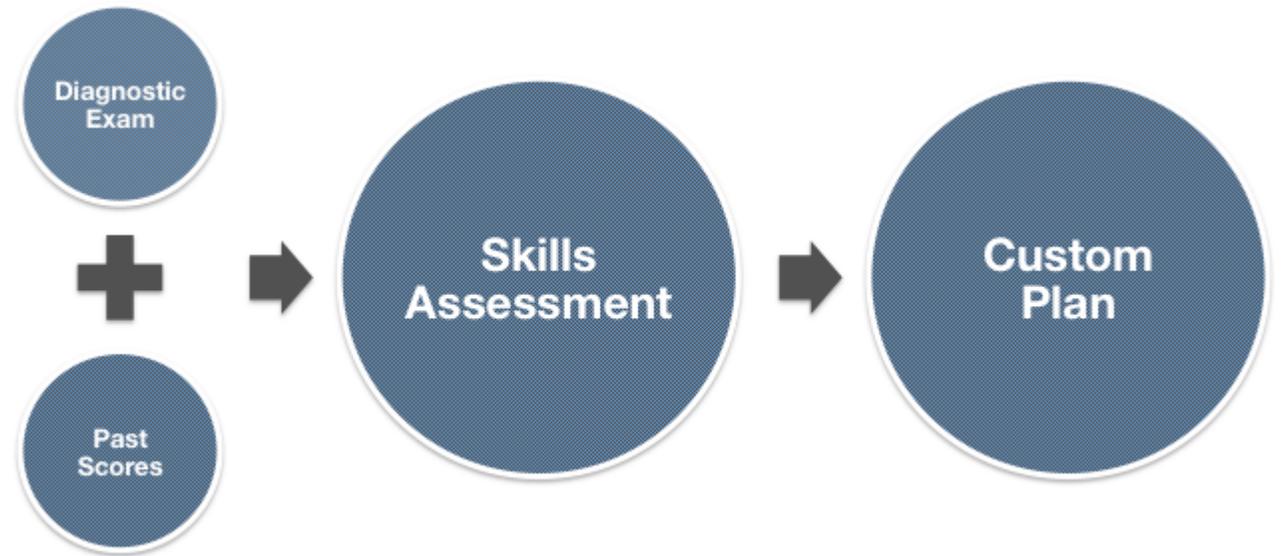
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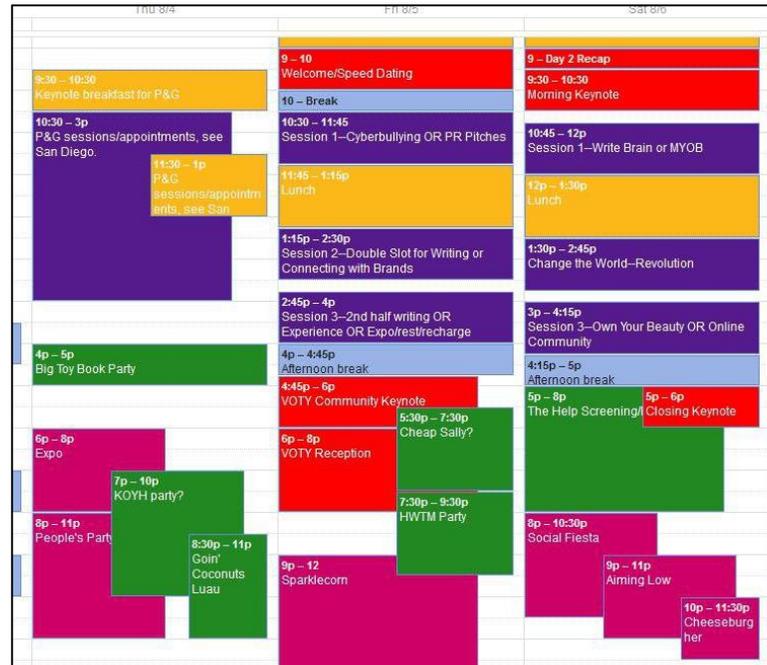
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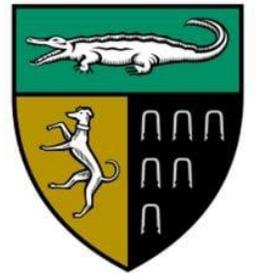
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