

Reading Comprehension Practice

Both the SAT and the ACT require you to read passages and answer multiple-choice questions about them. Use the models below for practice. The strategies in the margins will guide you as you read the passages and answer the questions.

ACT MODEL

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage. Then answer questions 1 through 6. You may refer to the passage as often as necessary.

HISTORY: The following passage is taken from an informational article about World War I.

The Great War

War Affects the Home Front

SAT/ACT

STRATEGIES

FOR THE READING PASSAGE

Look for the main idea.

The title and opening paragraph will often help you identify the main idea of a passage.

Use subheadings.

These help you understand how the article is organized and find information quickly.

Use context clues.

Look for restatement, examples, or other clues that help you understand the meaning of unfamiliar words. This paragraph explains what *propaganda* means.

By the time the United States joined the Allies, the war had been going on for nearly three years in Europe. In those three years, Europe had lost more men in battle than in all the wars of the previous three centuries. The Great War, as the conflict came to be known, affected everyone. It touched not only the soldiers in the trenches, but civilians as well. It affected not just military institutions, but also political, economic, and social institutions.

Governments Wage Total War

World War I soon became a total war. This meant that countries devoted all their resources to the war effort. In Britain, Germany, Austria, Russia, and France, all the resources of each government were dedicated to winning the conflict.

In each country, the government took control of the economy. Factories were told what products to produce and how many of each. Numerous facilities were converted to munitions factories where weapons and ammunition were manufactured. Nearly every able-bodied civilian was put to work. Unemployment in many European countries nearly disappeared.

So many goods were in short supply that governments turned to rationing. Under this system, people could buy only small amounts of those items that were needed for the war effort. Eventually, rationing covered a wide range of goods, from metals to butter and shoe leather.

Governments also suppressed antiwar activity—sometimes by force. In addition, they censored news about the war. Many leaders feared that honest reporting of the war would turn people against it. Governments also used propaganda—persuasive information designed to promote their goals and opinions—to keep up morale and support for the war.

The War's Impact on Women

Total war meant that governments turned to women for help as never before. Thousands of women replaced men in factories, offices, and shops. Women built tanks and weapons, plowed fields, paved streets, and ran hospitals. They also kept troops supplied with food, clothing, and weapons. The propaganda effort sought to glorify women's part in the war effort. In reality, much of the women's work was dangerous and low paying.

Although most women left the work force when the war ended, their work for the war effort set an important precedent.

Now answer questions 1 through 6 on a separate sheet of paper. Base your answers on the article "The Great War."

SAT/ACT

STRATEGIES FOR
ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

Eliminate incorrect answer choices. If you are not sure of an answer, eliminate answer choices that you know are incorrect.

- 1** According to the author, the Great War affected:
 - A. soldiers and civilians.
 - B. military personnel and institutions around the world.
 - C. American and European society at large.
 - D. women most of all.
- 2** Which heading would be most appropriate for the fifth paragraph (lines 21–25) of the article?
 - F. Propaganda and Media
 - G. Keeping Up Morale
 - H. Crack Down! Controlling Anti-War Activity
 - J. Governments Control Images of War
- 3** In the third paragraph (lines 12–14) the author states, "Numerous facilities were converted to munitions factories where weapons and ammunition were manufactured." After the war, these factories most likely were:
 - A. destroyed.
 - B. converted again to produce something else.
 - C. run by women.
 - D. converted to housing for returning soldiers.
- 4** Which of the following conclusions can reasonably be drawn from the article?
 - F. Women would become soldiers if there was another war.
 - G. Female workers were as productive as male workers.
 - H. Many men would lose their jobs to women.
 - J. Women would have a difficult time keeping their jobs or getting new jobs once men returned from war.

Refer back to the text.
If the question refers you to a specific part of the passage, reread that section.

- 5** In the fourth paragraph, the word *rationing* means:
- A. limiting how much of a resource people can buy.
 - B. replacing one material with another that is less in demand.
 - C. making people wait in long lines to get their goods.
 - D. producing only goods needed for the war effort.
- 6** The main idea of the section “The War’s Impact on Women” is that:
- F. the war did not affect women very much.
 - G. people finally recognized women as heroes.
 - H. women played an important role in the war.
 - J. during the war, women were subjected to great danger.

SAT/ACT

STRATEGIES FOR THE READING PASSAGE

Put it in context.
Descriptions or explanations that appear before the passage may provide context for the passage or help you focus your reading by identifying a main idea or asking a question.

Recognize sequence of events. Notice tense, past or present, and words that identify time to help you understand the sequence of events.

SAT MODEL

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage. Then answer questions 7 through 9. You may refer to the passage as often as necessary.

The following passage is from President Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address. He delivered the speech on March 4, 1865, while the Civil War was still raging.

Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address

Fellow countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

Now answer questions 7 through 9 on a separate sheet of paper. Base your answers on the excerpt from Lincoln's *Second Inaugural Address*.

- 7** What was the purpose of Lincoln's previous inaugural address?
- (A) to avert war while saving the Union
 - (B) to arouse the nation's continued support for war
 - (C) to gain support for war to save the Union
 - (D) to highlight the dangers the nation had faced during the war
 - (E) to restate that war was not an option
- 8** In line 16, "deprecated" most nearly means
- (A) denounced
 - (B) predicted
 - (C) desired
 - (D) desisted
 - (E) predicated
- 9** Based on the first paragraph of the speech (lines 1–10), you can infer that
- (A) Lincoln will show how the country has changed.
 - (B) Lincoln will not talk long because the country is at peace.
 - (C) Lincoln will summarize the war's past and outline its future.
 - (D) Lincoln's address will be shorter than his first address.
 - (E) Lincoln's address will be less hopeful than his first address.