

# PROSE FICTION

**Prose Fiction** passages are usually excerpts from novels or short stories. You should approach this passage as you would an assignment for your high school English class, not as you would a book you read in your spare time. When you read fiction for pleasure you may be tempted to read simply for the story. Yet while the plot is an important element of most fiction, and one on which the questions will test you, it is certainly not the only element.

In addition to the plot of the passage, pay attention to character development. Since plot and character are usually essential to a story, your ability to identify and comprehend them is probably pretty strong already. You should also pay attention to tone, style and the mood when reading the passage. Ask yourself questions like: “Who is the narrator?”; “Does the narrator exhibit any sympathies or biases?”; What are the relationships between the characters?” These questions will keep you on top of the passage as you read.

The subjects include the following:

- novel or
- short story

The types of questions you will encounter in **Prose Fiction** follow.

## **SPECIFIC DETAIL:**

They ask you to identify a specific detail or piece of evidence from the passage.

## **DRAW INFERENCES:**

The inference question asks for implied information. They want you to take a piece of information given in the passage and use it to figure out something else. Because these answers are not given explicitly within the passage, these questions are often significantly more difficult than specific detail questions. Inference questions frequently use verbs such as suggest, *infer*, *imply*, and *indicate*.

## **UNDERSTAND CHARACTER:**

Character generalization questions appear only with the **Prose Fiction** passage. They ask you to reduce a lot of information about a character into a simple, digestible statement. When answering inference and character generalization questions, you should remember that right answers are not necessarily perfect answers; they must simply be the best answer out of the four provided.

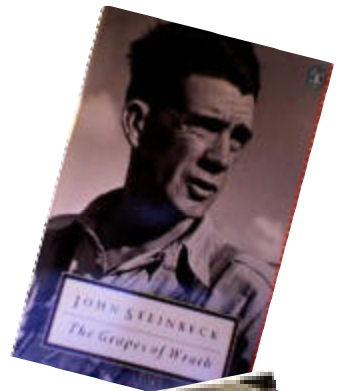
## **POINT OF VIEW:**

Point-of-view questions accompanying the **Prose Fiction** passage will generally ask you to describe the narrator’s point of view. Questions that deal with other character’s points of view usually fall under the heading of inference or character generalization. These questions are rare on the **Prose Fiction** passages.

## **CAUSE-EFFECT:**

These questions ask you to identify either the cause of the effect of a situation.

These questions are rare on the **Prose Fiction** passages.



# HUMANITIES

The **Humanities** passages cover cultural matters, particularly art and literature. These passages tend to be written analytically or journalistically. On rare occasions, you might encounter a Humanities passage that is an excerpted from a personal essay.

In some respects, the **Humanities** passage closely resembles the Social Science passage. They both deal with either historical or contemporary figures and events, so they are both full of specific information that you should underline as you read the passage. The difference between the two types of passages lies in their emphasis. Whereas the Social Science passage usually provides a political context for figures and events, the Humanities passage focuses on their artistic or literary significance.

As in the Social Science passage, the writer of the **Humanities** passage will often have a slant or bias, and your reading of the passage should be sensitive to that.

The subjects include: architecture, art, dance, ethics, film, language, literary criticism, music, philosophy, radio, television, and theater.

The types of questions you will encounter in Humanities follow.

## **SPECIFIC DETAIL:**

They ask you to identify a specific detail or piece of evidence from the passage.

## **INFERENCE:**

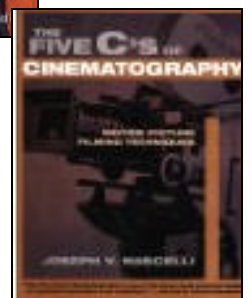
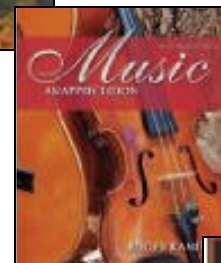
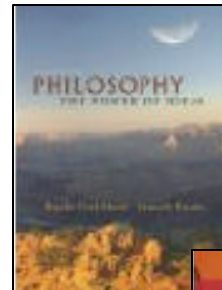
The inference question asks for implied information. The answers to inference questions will not be stated explicitly in the nonfiction passages, instead you must ferret out the answer from the evidence provided by the passage.

## **MAIN IDEA:**

On the nonfiction passages, you'll encounter quite a few main idea questions. Some of the questions will deal with the passage as a whole, while others will deal with sections of the passage. In both cases, these questions will ask you to identify the main ideas or arguments presented within the passage.

## **COMPARISON:**

Though some **Humanities** passages may be accompanied by more than one comparison question. Some comparisons are actually metaphors.



# NATURAL SCIENCE

**Natural Science** passages discuss science topics. These passages present scientific arguments or experiments and explain the reasoning behind them and their significance.

These passages are usually heavy on facts and scientific theories. Underline these theories so you can refer back to them later. You should keep an eye out for cause-effect relationships and comparisons when reading **Natural Science** passages.

The subjects include: anatomy, astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, ecology, geology, medicine, meteorology, microbiology, natural history, physiology, physics, technology, and zoology,

The types of questions you will encounter in **Natural Science** follow.

## **SPECIFIC DETAIL:**

They ask you to identify a specific detail or piece of evidence from the passage. This is a biggie on the **Natural Science** passage.

## **INFERENCE:**

The inference question asks for implied information. The answers to inference questions will not be stated explicitly in the nonfiction passages, instead you must ferret out the answer from the evidence provided by the passage.

## **CAUSE-EFFECT:**

Cause-effect questions appear pretty frequently on **Natural Science** passages because of the nature of their topics. Most **Natural Science** passages discuss cause-effect relationships that appear in nature.

## **COMPARISON:**

You will probably see one comparison question with the **Natural Science** passage. Comparison questions usually accompany passages that contain a lot of factual information.

## **MAIN IDEA:**

On the nonfiction passages, you'll encounter quite a few main idea questions. Some of the questions will deal with the passage as a whole, while others will deal with sections of the passage.

## **VOCABULARY:**

The vocabulary questions that do appear on **Natural Science** passages may ask you to identify an unfamiliar scientific word from its context.

## **POINT OF VIEW:**

These are questions are rare on **Natural Science**. If you see one, it will likely ask you to identify the point of view of the passage's author.



# SOCIAL STUDIES

The **Social Studies** passage can cover a variety of subjects ranging from anthropology to economics to politics. All of the subjects that appear in the **Social Studies** passage essentially deal with the ways societies and civilization work, and most of them have a political context.

When reading the passage, you should pay attention to the key names, dates, and concepts mentioned, and you want to underline this information as you read over the passage. Because the subject of this passage is often historical, you should also pay attention to cause-effect relationships and the chronology of events

**Social Studies** writing is often research-based and, as a result, relatively formal in tone. Despite the relative objectivity implied by words like research and science, the authors of **Social Studies** passages often express strong and controversial views on their subject. You should try to decipher the author's standpoint---if he or she has one---from the general argument of the passage, and individual statements.

The subjects include: anthropology, archaeology, business, economics, education, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology.

The types of questions you will encounter in **Social Studies** follow

## **SPECIFIC DETAIL:**

They ask you to identify a specific detail or piece of evidence from the passage.

## **INFERENCE:**

The inference question asks for implied information. The answers to inference questions will not be stated explicitly in the nonfiction passages, instead you must ferret out the answer from the evidence provided by the passage

## **MAIN IDEA AND ARGUMENT:**

On the nonfiction passages, you'll encounter quite a few main idea questions. Some of the questions will deal with the passage as a whole, while others will deal with sections of the passage. In both cases, these questions will ask you to identify the main ideas and arguments presented within the passage.

## **CAUSE-EFFECT:**

Cause-effect questions on nonfiction passages will ask you to identify either the cause or the effect of a particular situation. Cue words in the question will let you know whether you must identify the cause or the effect of the relationship. Words such as *because* warn you that the question seeks the cause of the event, while words such as *resulted in*, *led to*, and *caused* let you know you'll need to identify the effect of the situation.

## **POINT OF VIEW:**

The nonfiction point of view questions ask you to identify how the writer views his or her subject, pay close attention to the language the writer uses,. The writer's tone (is it angry? Is it sympathetic?) will be a good indication of his or her feelings about the subject.

## **COMPARISON:**

Comparison questions can ask you to make comparisons, usually between different viewpoints or data. Comparison questions can be tricky questions to handle because you need to assimilate information on both sides of the comparison and then see how the sides compare. The question will contain cue words or phrases that indicate it's a comparison question, *Compares* and *analogy* are two words that frequently appear in comparison questions.

## **VOCABULARY:**

The vocabulary questions ask you to decipher the meaning of a word given in context. Usually these words will have multiple meanings, so you have to decide the function of the word in the specific context.



**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**PROSE FICTION**

**NATURAL SCIENCE**

**HUMANITIES**