

# Reading Test Strategies

1. **Read the introduction to the passage.** The introduction will provide *context* to the passage. The introduction may provide contexts such as: the author, the title of the passage, and the year it was published.
2. **Identify the genre.** On the *Reading Test*, we are guaranteed to encounter four different passage types or genres. The four types are: *literary, history/ social studies, science, and U.S. founding document*. The *literary* passage will be an excerpt taken from a fiction novel. The *history/ social studies* passage may be either economics, sociology, or political science. The *science* passage may be either earth, biology, chemistry, or physics. The *U.S. founding document* passage may be either be a primary document from a U.S. democratic philosophy or a document inspired by a U.S. democratic philosophy.
3. **Contribute prior knowledge based on the introduction.** Given the introduction and the genre of the passage, we must be able to contribute some knowledge on the topic. Put the passage into *context*. If the genre is *literary*, then it will provide the year that it was published and maybe the setting and characters. If the genre is *history/ social studies, science, and U.S. founding document*, then they will provide the author, the title, the year it was published and maybe some further background information.
4. **Read the questions to the passage.** Passages, and texts in general, may be interpreted many different ways. By reading the questions prior to the passage, we limit our interpretation of the passage making us significantly more efficient readers. We know exactly what we need to know to answer the questions.
5. **Annotate the passage based on the questions.** Some questions will specify lines; with these, we can make annotations prior to reading the passage. This will help us pay particular attention to these lines and give us the option of answering the question after reading the lines. It is important that we take time to individualize our annotating style. We should be creative and come up with an annotation style that makes the most sense to us.
6. **Identify the dependent questions.** Questions that reference one another are considered dependent questions. This means that if a question asks for the “best *evidence* for the answer to the previous question,” then it is contingent upon the previous question. We must spend additional time on these because if we get the first answer incorrect, then it is probable that we will get the second answer incorrect as well.
7. **Annotate while reading the passage using SOAPStone.** We must remain active while we read and identify the components of the passage to guide our comprehension. Additionally, this will help us *empathize* with the *rhetoric* of the author. S: SPEAKER, “who is speaking?” O: OCCASION, “what is the occasion?” A: AUDIENCE, “who is the speaker’s intended audience?” P: PURPOSE, “what is the speaker’s purpose?” S: SUBJECT, “what is the subject?” TONE, “what is the speaker’s tone and the overall tone of the passage?” In order to identify the tone, we can look at the *diction* the author uses within the *context*. The author chooses to write with this *diction* to evoke a response from the audience.
8. **Apply OPTIC to any presented data or graphs.** Write an OVERVIEW of the notes of the graphic. Zoom in on PARTS of the graphic and describe the details. Make sure to look at the key and/or the x and y axis, for example. Highlight the words of the TITLE. Identify the INTERRELATIONSHIPS among the graphic elements. Draw CONCLUSIONS about the graphic as a whole.