

Hints for Improving your Reading Comprehension Score

- Read each passage carefully.
- Pay attention to words you don't understand. Look at the sentences before and after the word. Sometimes they can help you understand the word.
Example: The dog's loud *barking* woke all the neighbors.
If you don't know what *barking* is, think about the word that describes it in the sentence, *loud*. So, you know it must be a sound. You can figure out that *barking* is the sound a dog makes.
- On a multiple choice test, read **all** the possible answers before you decide which one is correct.
- Don't think you will remember exactly what is in the passage when you are answering questions. Go back and look at the part of the reading that the question is asking about to make sure you remember exactly what the passage says.

Example:

The earthquake in Mexico City struck at midnight. Some areas of the city were almost completely destroyed. By 5:00 a.m. international aid workers started to arrive at the airport to help. Many people who lived in the historic area of the city had been killed by the violent quake, but others were trapped inside severely damaged buildings and desperately needed help to survive...

Where were the aid workers from?

- a. Mexico City
- b. Other cities in Mexico
- c. The historic area of the city
- d. Many countries

The best answer is **d** because *international* refers to more than one country.

When did help start to arrive?

- a. At 5:00 p.m.
- b. Aid workers were going to help people trapped in buildings
- c. In the early hours of the morning
- d. At midnight

The best answer is **c** because 5:00 a.m. is early in the morning.

- Many times on a multiple choice test, all the answers may be true, but only **one** answers the question, so make sure you choose the one that answers the question.
- **Don't change your answer** unless you are sure you made the wrong choice. Usually your first answer is correct. However, if you are sure that you made the wrong choice, go ahead and make the change.
- **Take your time!** Many students think that reading tests are easy and they don't take enough time to read carefully.

To see sample questions for the **ESL reading placement test**, go directly to <http://www.act.org/compass/tests/esl.html> or to the Testing Center page at www.reynolds.edu.