

# RC Question Type Quick Reference

Master All 7 Question Categories

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*Recognize question type → Apply targeted strategy*

Question type	Typical format	Fast strategy	Common trap
<b>Main Idea</b>	"The primary purpose is to..." "Main idea is..."	Eliminate answers that are too narrow or too broad; pick the passage's overall point.	Wrong focus on a minor point or one paragraph.
<b>Detail</b>	"According to the passage..." "The author states..."	Go to the cited spot, reread 2-3 lines around it, and answer only what was asked.	True detail that does not answer the question.
<b>Inference</b>	"The passage suggests..." "It can be inferred..."	Choose what must be true from the text; keep it modest and directly supported.	Reasonable-sounding guess not actually supported.
<b>Function</b>	"The author mentions X in order to..."	Ask: Why did the author include that line/example? Identify the role it plays.	Confusing what was said with why it was included.
<b>Strengthen / Weaken</b>	"Which would most strengthen/weaken..."	Identify the claim + assumption; test each choice for direct impact on that link.	Relevant-sounding choice that doesn't change the reasoning.
<b>Tone / Attitude</b>	"The author's attitude is best described as..."	Look for opinion markers (adverbs/adjectives/verbs) in the relevant section; prefer mild tones.	Extreme emotion words (usually wrong).
<b>Vocabulary in Context</b>	"The word X most nearly means..."	Use nearby context to predict meaning; plug choices back into the sentence and re-check.	Picking the common meaning instead of the contextual meaning.

**Quick reminder:** Most RC mistakes come from answering a different question than the one asked. Re-read the stem before you choose.