

## Reading Strategy 4

### Skim the passage for an overview

To *skim* means to look for general information in a passage. You will see each reading passage on the right side of the first screen without any questions on the left side. In order to progress to the questions, you must scroll through the entire passage. While you are scrolling, you can skim quickly for general information instead of reading for details. Pay special attention to titles, headings, and the first and last sentences of each paragraph. The passage will reappear with each question, and you can spend time reading each paragraph for details at that point.

### EXAMPLE PASSAGE

#### **The Function of Bones**

The human skeleton has 206 bones, some large and others quite small, but regardless of the size, bones share a similar structure and composition. They provide protection, support movement, store mineral reserves, maintain the oxygenation of blood, and nurture cell production.

The most obvious function of bones is to provide the body with strength and protection. Bones protect the internal organs and provide shape to the body. They can absorb a huge amount of force, and they facilitate motion by connecting with other bones at joints and serving as points of connection for muscles that pull on bones to move the body.

Bones are also a repository for minerals and a place where they are constantly being renewed. Approximately every nine months, the mineral content of bone is depleted and replaced. Several minerals are of special importance. Calcium and phosphorus in particular are stored in bones and must be maintained in the blood at a stable level. What happens when the diet is depleted of these minerals is that they are removed from the bones to keep the necessary levels constant in the bloodstream. Moreover, when physical exercise is reduced, as in the case of injury or illness, then minerals are passed into the bloodstream from the bones, elevating the mineral content to levels that can cause kidney stones or other calcium deposits to occur in the organs.

Bones are also significant in the functioning of the circulatory system. Red blood cells, called erythrocytes, grow and mature in the bone marrow where they attract hemoglobin, which serves to carry oxygen in the blood. Because they live for only about four months, bone marrow must constantly reproduce erythrocytes to maintain healthy blood oxygen levels.

Finally, bone marrow serves as the site where lymphocyte precursor cells are produced. These cells are essential to the immune system. Furthermore, it is from these precursor cells, also called stem cells, that specialized cells such as skin or blood are regenerated in normal cycles of repair. Moreover, stem cells from bone marrow can now be cultivated and are routinely used in a variety of medical treatments.



## Practice 4

Skim the title, headings, and passage to identify the topic, thesis, main ideas, and key words that repeat throughout. Do this as quickly as you can. Do not write them down. Just keep the information in your mind as a preview. Check your answers with those in the Answer Key on page 301.

### Stonehenge

Arguably, the most recognizable megalithic monument in Europe is Stonehenge on the Salisbury Plain in southern England. Like other henges, Stonehenge is a circular arrangement of large stones, surrounded by a ditch. Although it has not been determined exactly who was responsible for the construction of Stonehenge, it was probably built in stages over several hundred years, beginning about 3,000 B.C.E.

The last henge, completed about 1,500 B.C.E., was designed as a post and lintel structure in concentric circles. The outer ring, which is almost 100 feet in diameter, is constructed of huge sandstone or sarsen megaliths with smaller volcanic bluestones from Wales forming the inner ring. Inside the bluestones, a semicircle opens to a long avenue marked by uprights on an axis to the east identified by the Heel Stone, a large stone with a pointed top. A person standing at the center can view at the Heel Stone the exact spot where the sun rises at the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. It is assumed that Stonehenge must have been some kind of solar calendar or an early observatory.

Clearly, the most intriguing question involves the engineering methods that allowed early man to build such a remarkable structure. The gigantic stones in the outer ring are 22 feet high and weigh as much as 50 tons each. They have been traced to Marlborough Downs, 20 miles north of Stonehenge. Although most of the land is flat, at Redhorn Hill, the steepest part of the road, modern estimates suggest that more than 600 men would have been required to transport one of the stones uphill. The raising of each lintel, a stone beam that rests on top of two vertical stone posts, would also have required heroic effort. Based on the use of sledges, rafts, pulleys, and other machines available to Neolithic humans, work studies calculate that 30 million hours of labor would be the minimum to quarry the stone, transport it to the site, and complete the arrangement of the posts and lintels for the monument. The positioning of the stones to place the rising sun exactly over the Heel Stone during the solstice is also impressive.

**Basic Strategy:** Internet iBT Reading and Institutional ITP Reading



**Reading Strategy 5****Answer vocabulary questions quickly**

You do not have to read the passage to answer most of the vocabulary questions on the iBT and the ITP TOEFL. First read the shaded vocabulary word in the passage, and then read the four answer choices in the question. You can probably identify the synonym without referring to the reading passage. This will save time. There are usually three or more vocabulary questions for each passage. By using this strategy, you will have more time to answer the other questions.

**EXAMPLE QUESTIONS**

The word **accumulation** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ decrease
- collection
- Ⓒ pattern
- Ⓓ change

The word **ordinary** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- common
- Ⓑ old
- Ⓒ large
- Ⓓ heavy

**EXAMPLE PASSAGE****Sedimentary Rocks**

Sedimentary rocks, which are formed by the **accumulation** of sediments, have traditionally been classified into three basic types. The first type, *Clastic* sedimentary rocks, includes breccias, conglomerate, sandstone, and shale, which are formed from mechanical weathering, a process that breaks down rock into smaller particles during periods of freezing and thawing, landmass uplift, expansion and contraction from the sun or fire, the action of animals, or other means that do not have a direct effect on the rock's chemistry. They are composed mostly of quartz and other **ordinary** minerals and have usually been transported and deposited at a distance from their formation.

The second type, *Chemical* sedimentary rocks such as rock salt and some limestone form when dissolved materials precipitate from a solution . . .



**Practice 5**

First, find the vocabulary word in the question. Then read the four possible answers and choose the synonym. Although the context is helpful for some vocabulary questions, you won't need to refer to the reading passage for most vocabulary questions. Check your answer in the Answer Key on page 302.

**QUESTIONS**

1. The word **reliably** in the passage is closest in meaning to

Ⓐ generally  
Ⓑ partially  
Ⓒ finally  
Ⓓ dependably

2. The word **precise** in the passage is closest in meaning to

Ⓐ correct  
Ⓑ useful  
Ⓒ ready  
Ⓓ short

**Selective Breeding**

For centuries farmers have been experimenting with crops and animals to change their genetic makeup with a view to improving their traits. By selective breeding, they have been able to achieve results in offspring. Among the most successful achievements in selective breeding is corn. Hybrid varieties **reliably** produce full, sweet kernels compared with the original wild corn that yielded only a few kernels per stalk.

The problem with selective breeding is that it requires a long time to accomplish the results and they are not always **precise**. Recently, the scientific community has discovered how to accelerate and improve the process through biotechnology . . .



In order to answer vocabulary items quickly, you will need to recognize synonyms for academic vocabulary. One of the best resources for an academic vocabulary list is the Academic Word List (AWL) developed by Averil Coxhead at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The list contains 570 word families that appear with greatest frequency in a broad range of academic texts. Therefore, they are the words that you need to know both for the TOEFL and for your studies at English-language colleges and universities.

The 570 words are divided into 10 sublists, ordered so that those in the first sublist include the most frequent words and those in the last sublist the least frequent.

Test yourself with the most frequent list. As quickly as you can, write a synonym beside the word. Then check your answers with those in the Answer Key on pages 302–303.

analyze	_____	define	_____
approach	_____	derive	_____
area	_____	distribute	_____
assess	_____	economy	_____
assume	_____	environment	_____
authority	_____	establish	_____
available	_____	estimate	_____
benefit	_____	evident	_____
concept	_____	factor	_____
consist	_____	finance	_____
constitute	_____	formula	_____
context	_____	function	_____
contract	_____	income	_____
data	_____	indicate	_____



individual	_____	process	_____
interpret	_____	require	_____
involve	_____	research	_____
issue	_____	respond	_____
labor	_____	role	_____
legal	_____	section	_____
legislate	_____	sector	_____
major	_____	significant	_____
method	_____	similar	_____
occur	_____	source	_____
percent	_____	specific	_____
period	_____	structure	_____
policy	_____	theory	_____
principle	_____	vary	_____
proceed	_____		

To study all of the lists, I recommend the following site:

[http://simple.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Academic\\_word\\_list](http://simple.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Academic_word_list).



**Basic Strategy:** Internet iBT Reading and Institutional ITP Reading

★★★**Bonus:** iBT Listening, Speaking, Writing

Academic vocabulary is found in all sections of the iBT as well as in the Reading sections of the iBT and the ITP.