

read once for the gist, once for the marks

Factual passage: what it actually asks

- reports facts, events, processes or a real situation, no argument to weigh
- answers sit **directly in the text**, usually in the same order the questions come
- on a factual piece the questions-first shortcut can replace the slow first read: scan them, then hunt each answer
- underline names, numbers, dates and causes as you go, these are what get quoted back

Discursive passage: what it actually asks

- argues a position: opinion, reasoning, examples building toward a viewpoint
- track the writer's stand in the opening, then note where tone shifts (however, but, yet)
- questions test **inference and attitude**, not just location, the answer is rarely one sentence
- the conclusion usually restates the stand, read it even if short on time

Factual vs discursive, side by side

Factual



two points joined twice, by a wandering path and by a straight dashed line, the straight line is the direct route a factual answer takes

- reports, describes, informs
- answers are **findable**, quote or paraphrase closely
- questions: what, when, where, how many

Discursive



four stops in order along a dashed path, the stand, the reasons, the tone shift, and the stand restated

- argues, persuades, reflects
- answers need **joining two ideas** from different lines
- questions: why, what does the writer imply, what is the tone

spot the type in the first two lines, it decides how you read the rest

The two-pass method *

- first pass: read the whole passage once for the gist, don't stop at unfamiliar words
- second pass: read each question, go back to the exact lines, then answer in your own words
- never answer from memory of the first pass alone, marks are lost to small misreads
- time budget: about 15 minutes for the passage and its questions, the passage runs around 400 to 450 words