

## Problems in Comprehension

You have just looked at the right approach for Comprehension; but this does not take into account the following factors that may make following the hints hard:

### a) The difficulty of the Passage

You may have a very tricky, and possibly old fashioned or technical, Passage.

If the Passage is more difficult than what you have been used to, or on an unfamiliar topic, **check to find if it is suitable to your requirements**. After all, if you are not a doctor or training to be a doctor, it is not at all right you should be asked medical questions...

**But in general, this problem of relevance is unlikely to come up.** If for example you are doing a GCSE or Cambridge Certificate paper, the Passages chosen will be **very much on a general everyday level of language**, (i.e. not too difficult) and on topics you can be expected to have met. If not, there has been certainly something wrong with the setting of the paper, **which is very unlikely indeed**.

### b) Language Textbooks

And in language text books which include Passages for comprehension, these will also have been chosen very carefully for general use, otherwise, let us face it, no one would use the material! So in practice, don't worry, topics outside your field, are unlikely to bother you.

### c) Normal Difficulties

But in answering questions in any Comprehension Paper, especially those at or aiming for GCSE standard, it would be very unrealistic to expect no difficulties at all; the Paper is intended to assess candidates and find out or train the quickest as well as the average. So what are the 'normal difficulties' likely to be?

- i) Vocabulary: while the Passage you are looking at may not be particularly specialist, it can still have what seems quite difficult vocabulary. The answer to the problem of dealing with this has **to reached** well before you are looking at this Passage; in fact if you are looking at a normal piece of English and are wondering what it is about, (and I am sure this is very unlikely as you have reached this far in your Course), it implies you simply have not had enough practical experience of reading! Direct contact with your own language through reading, listening, and of course speaking, (it is amazing how many people do not really speak to each other!) is absolutely essential for good and clear understanding of anything beyond the basics of English...

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