Reading: arguments, paired texts and graphic evidence

Original skill preparation; versioned source scope

ACT Reading: Arguments, Paired Texts and Graphic Evidence

- Identify each text's **claim** 主张 and its supporting **argument** 论证.
- Compare two texts: where they agree, and where they differ.
- Show **integration** 综合 of text and data, judging the **relevance** 相关性 of a table to a claim.
- Decide whether the **evidence** 证据 supports, weakens or does not address a claim.

Reading an argument

- Find the claim (what the writer wants you to accept), the reasons, and any limits the writer admits.
- Notice what the writer permits as well as what they reject.
- Note signal words: "should", "must", "also", "however".

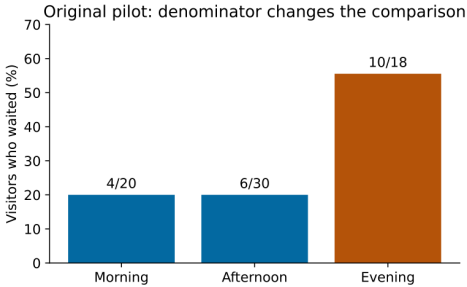
Comparing two texts

- Summarise each text in one sentence before comparing.
- Texts may share a goal but differ in priorities.
- Ask how each author would respond to a third claim: often both would reject an extreme version.

Reading a graphic

- Read the title, labels, units and notes. Notes often say what the data do not cover.
- Compare rates when groups differ in size, not counts.
- Check the exact claim: "every" or "all" needs every row to agree.

Figure: Reading a graphic



- Morning and afternoon both show 20% waiting despite different counts: compare rates, not counts
- Read the axes and units first.

Practice texts and table

- Frequent combinations: size index 8; task-based trays 5.
- Rare combinations: size index 10; task-based trays 11.
- Each average summarises twelve trials; no uncertainty estimates are supplied.

Worked example: two texts, one arrangement

- Text A's main concern: keeping evidence of how earlier keepers named and grouped their tools. It allows a new index if old labels and changes are recorded.
- Text B's main concern: helping beginners gather parts quickly. It keeps a size index for rare parts.
- A system that satisfies both: keep a dated record of old labels and changes, use task-based trays for frequent combinations, and keep the size index for rare ones.
- Both would reject "all old labels should be discarded" (A for history, B because the size index still helps rare searches); B would also reject "no category should ever change".

Worked example: does the table support the claim?

- Frequent kits: $8 \to 5$ minutes, 3 minutes faster ($\frac{3}{8} = 37.5\%$).
- Rare kits: $10 \to 11$ minutes, 1 minute slower (10%).
- The table contradicts "every search". It also gives averages of twelve trials with no uncertainty, and says nothing about repair quality or safety, so it cannot support claims about those.

Common errors

- Merging two authors' views.
- Treating a writer's permitted exception as a rejection.
- Comparing counts for groups of different sizes.

Common errors (2)

- Ignoring the notes beneath a table.
- Accepting "every" when one row disagrees.

Key terms

- **claim**: A statement the writer wants the reader to accept.
- **argument**: A claim with the reasons that support it.
- **integration**: Combining information from texts and graphics.
- **relevance**: Whether a piece of information bears on the claim.

Check yourself

- Which text would agree that an index can change if old labels are recorded?
- Does the table show that trays improve repair quality?
- Group X: 6 of 12 waited. Group Y: 9 of 30 waited. Which had the higher rate?