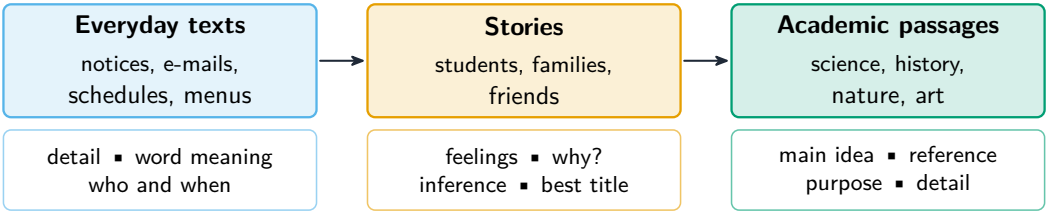
TOEFL Junior · Reading Comprehension

Original teaching notes and invented examples; not ETS test items.

Three kinds of text



42 questions ▪ 50 minutes ▪ you can look back at the text

> Question first, then the text

Scan, then read around the word

A notice

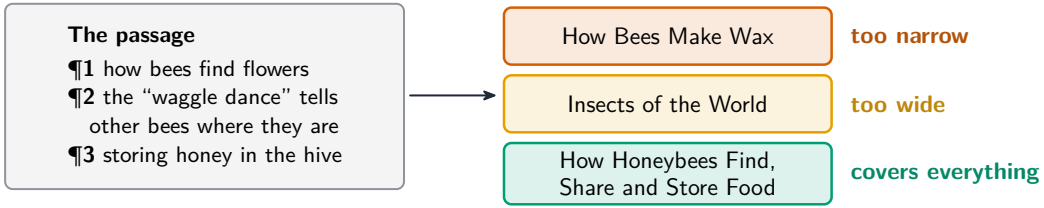
"The book sale opens at 10 a.m. Teachers may enter at 9:30 to choose books early."

When can students enter?

Notice

10 a.m. The 9:30 time belongs to the teachers, a real detail given to the wrong person.

Not too narrow, not too wide



> The main idea covers every paragraph, and nothing more

Four context clues

Definition

A **nocturnal** animal, one that is active at night, ...

the meaning follows

Example

... **predators** such as lions and eagles.

such as, for example

Contrast

Tom was **timid**, but his sister was brave.

but, unlike: the opposite

Cause and effect

The path was **slippery**, so many people fell.

so, because: the result

> The sentence almost always explains the word

Your turn: reference

Your turn

"Bees visit thousands of flowers a day. They carry pollen from one to the next." They refers to

A. flowers
B. bees
C. thousands
D. days

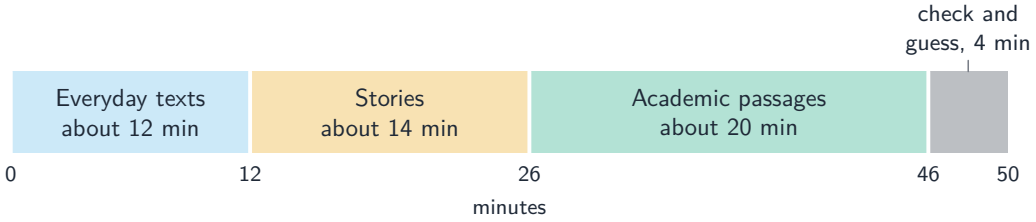
Feelings are shown, not named

The story shows	We infer
She checked her bag for the third time and looked at the clock again.	nervous
He pushed his lunch away and stared at the empty seat.	sad or lonely

Use the evidence

An inference comes from clues in the text, never from your own life.

Fifty minutes, planned



> Everyday texts are quick; give the saved minutes to the long passages

Reading habits to drop

The habit

Translating every sentence.

Answering from your own knowledge.

Choosing the option with the same words.

The fix

First and last sentences first, then read where the question sends you.

The passage wins, even when you disagree.

Correct options paraphrase; traps copy.

Try it: the library cat

The Library Cat

For eight years, a cat named Pepper has lived in the public library of a small town in Scotland. Nobody had the heart to send her away.

Children read to her after school; teachers say this helps shy readers, because a cat never laughs at a mistake.

Some visitors worried about allergies, so the library made one reading room cat-free. Since then, visitors have almost doubled.

Notice

Main idea, a cat that became an important part of a library. Inference, she probably helped bring in visitors.

Check yourself

- Read the question first, then find its key word.
- A title that covers one paragraph is too narrow.
- Check a reference by replacing the **pronoun** with the noun.
- EXCEPT: choose the one that is not true in the text.