

# ENGLISH

University Entrance Exam

کنکور زبان انگلیسی

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## Passage 4

### Hints for reading practice (part 2)

*Dictionaries slow you down!*

If you have chosen the right, fairly easy, sort of book for your general reading practice, you will not need to use a dictionary for such an exercise. If you really must know the dictionary meaning of all the words you meet (a doubtful necessity) jot them down on a piece of paper to look up later. Actually, the meanings of many words will be clear from the sentences around them - what we call the 'context'. Here is an example. Do you know the word 'sou'wester'? It has two meanings in English as the following sentences indicate:

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- a) In spite of the fact that the fishermen were wearing sou'westers, the storm was so heavy they were wet through.
- b) An east or north-east wind brings cold, dry weather to England, but a sou'wester usually brings rain.

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You should have guessed very easily that in sentence a) the word sou'wester refers to some kind of waterproof clothing, presumably quite thick and heavy since it is worn by fishermen in storms. In sentence b) it is clearly a kind of wind, coming from a *south*-westerly direction. Incidentally, you would have had the greatest difficulty in *finding* this word in most dictionaries since it often appears a long way down among the secondary meanings of *south*. If you did not know that sou' meant 'south' in the first place you could only have found the word by the merest chance.

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*Pay attention to paragraph structure*

Most paragraphs have a 'topic sentence' which expresses the central idea. The remaining sentences expand or support that idea. It has been estimated that between 60 and 90% of all expository\* paragraphs in English have the topic sentence first. Always pay special attention to the first sentence of a paragraph; it is most likely to give you the main idea.

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Sometimes, though, the first sentence in the paragraph does not have the *feel* of a 'main idea' sentence. It does not seem to give us enough new information to justify a paragraph. The next most likely place to look for the topic sentence is the last sentence of the paragraph.

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Take this paragraph for example:

\* *expository*: giving information.

'Some students prefer a strict teacher who tells them exactly what to do. Others prefer to be left to work on their own. Still others like a democratic discussion type of class. No one teaching method can be devised to satisfy all students at the same time.'

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Remember that the opening and closing paragraphs of a passage or chapter are particularly important. The opening paragraph suggests the general direction and content of the piece, while the closing paragraph often summarizes the very essence of what has been said.

### Ideas

Select the answer which is most accurate according to the information given in the passage.

- 1 The use of a dictionary is
  - a) advisable for speed reading practice.
  - b) unnecessary for speed reading practice.
  - c) essential for speed reading practice.
  - d) of no help in improving general reading ability.
  
- 2 You can avoid the need for reference books by
  - a) learning many vocabulary items in advance.
  - b) choosing a fairly easy book.
  - c) asking a friend.
  - d) simply ignoring unknown words.
  
- 3 If you really want to know what all the words mean
  - a) make a note and check later.
  - b) use a bigger dictionary.
  - c) ask your instructor.
  - d) read more slowly.
  
- 4 To understand a general reading book, a knowledge of the meaning of every single word in that book is
  - a) doubtfully necessary.
  - b) absolutely unnecessary.
  - c) absolutely necessary.
  - d) most advisable.
  
- 5 Even if you don't know a word you can often get the meaning by
  - a) wild guessing.
  - b) working it out mathematically.
  - c) working it out from the context.
  - d) comparing it with similar words.
  
- 6 Words like *sou'wester* are often difficult even to *find* in a dictionary. They may be
  - a) spelled wrongly.
  - b) listed under another word.

- c) only put in by chance.
  - d) taken from another language.
- 7 The topic sentence of an expository paragraph in English
- a) usually comes in the middle.
  - b) is most likely to be found at the end.
  - c) is most often at the beginning.
  - d) is usually omitted in expository writing.
- 8 Most expository paragraphs in English have a clearly defined topic sentence. In such paragraphs the topic sentence comes first
- a) in about 40% of cases.
  - b) in about 80% of cases.
  - c) in about 20% of cases.
  - d) very rarely.
- 9 Sometimes we know the first sentence is not the topic sentence because
- a) it does not seem to give us enough new information.
  - b) it is not long enough.
  - c) it does not come at the beginning.
  - d) it does not make complete sense.
- 10 The closing paragraph of a piece of writing
- a) is not really very important.
  - b) is often unnecessary repetition.
  - c) often comes at the end.
  - d) often summarizes the essence of the passage.

### **Vocabulary**

In the passage, you saw how it was possible to arrive at the two different meanings of 'sou'wester' without having recourse to a dictionary. Each of the words italicized in the following sentences is a word you will probably not know. Simple equivalents for these words will be found among the twelve words at the end of the exercise (you will not need two of them). Try to work out from the context which words in the list replace the italicized words in the sentences.

- 1 Many early types of human being were *trogloodytes* before they learned to build houses.
- 2 Mohammed Ali was not fighting seriously in the gymnasium - he was only *sparring* with a friend.
- 3 The Prince left most of the ordinary everyday decisions to his *satraps*.
- 4 The crowd obviously enjoyed the fat man's *risible* efforts to compete in the 100 metres dash.
- 5 Italian artists were more active in the *quattrocento* than in the sixteenth century which followed.

- 6 General de Gaulle always wore a *képi* with his uniform instead of a steel helmet.
- 7 The Japanese are investigating the possibility of using marine resources such as plankton and *kelp* for human food.
- 8 The soldiers did not have plates so they ate straight from the *dixie*.
- 9 The politician was embarrassed when his argument was proved to be *specious*.
- 10 The fortune-teller was unable to *prognosticate* the events of the following week.

- |              |               |                      |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|
| a) produce   | e) stewpot    | i) cave-dwellers     |
| b) foretell  | f) practising | j) amusing           |
| c) illogical | g) deputies   | k) fifteenth century |
| d) seaweed   | h) hunters    | l) peaked cap        |

### Spot the topic

Which of the following choices a), b) or c) most adequately sums up the ideas of the *whole* paragraph?

#### 1 *Para. 1* (lines 1-8)

- a) A dictionary is always a useful book to have at hand.
- b) Context is a more useful indicator of meaning than a dictionary when you are speed reading.
- c) If you jot down words on a slip of paper, you can look them up in a dictionary afterwards.

#### 2 *Para. 2* (lines 9-21)

- a) Sou'wester has *two* meanings.
- b) Sou'wester is not easy to find in the dictionary.
- c) An example of how contexts give meaning without recourse to the dictionary.

#### 3 *Para. 3* (lines 22-6)

- a) The function and usual place of the paragraph structure.
- b) The function and usual place of the topic sentence.
- c) What the topic sentence does.

#### 4 *Para. 4* (lines 31-35)

- a) The topic sentence is not always at the beginning of the paragraph.
- b) An example of a non-final topic sentence in a paragraph.
- c) An example of how a topic sentence can come at the end of a paragraph.

#### 5 *Para. 5* (lines 36-39)

- a) The importance of opening and closing sentences in a paragraph.
- b) The importance of first and final paragraphs in a passage.
- c) The importance of the general direction and content of a piece of writing.

**Answers:**

Passage 4: Practical hints for reading practice (2)

Ideas: 1b, 2b, 3a, 4a, 5c, 6b, 7c, 8b, 9a, 10d

Vocabulary: 1i, 2f, 3g, 4j, 5k, 6l, 7d, 8e, 9c, 10b

Spot the topic: 1b, 2c, 3b, 4c, 5b

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