

# How to Answer Comprehension Questions

Reading questions carefully and using the text properly will help you succeed in comprehension tasks.

## 1. Read the Question First

Before you look at the text, read the question carefully.

**Underline the key words.**

These tell you what the question is really asking.

**Examples:**

- **How many...** → your answer must include a **number**
- **Who...** → you must give a **person or character**
- **Where...** → your answer must include a **place**
- **Why...** → you must **explain a reason**
- **Which...** → you may need to choose from more than one option

## 2. Identify the Type of Question

Most comprehension questions fall into three main types:

### A. Retrieval – “Find it in the text”

The answer is **directly in the text**.

**Example:**

*How many brothers did the character have?*

→ Look for a number in the text.

**What to do:**

- ✓ Find the sentence
- ✓ Copy the information (in your own words if needed)

## B. Vocabulary – “Meaning of words”

You are asked what a word means.

**Examples:**

- *What does the word “ancient” mean in this paragraph?*
- *Find a word that means “angry”.*

**What to do:**

- ✓ Look at the **sentence around the word**
- ✓ Use the context to work out the meaning
- ✓ If asked to “find a word”, **copy it exactly from the text**

## C. Inference – “Read between the lines”

The answer is **not written directly**. You must use clues from the text.

**Examples:**

- *What impression do you get of the character?*
- *How does the author show that the setting is dangerous?*

**What to do:**

- ✓ Look for clues in actions, descriptions or word choices
- ✓ Explain your thinking
- ✓ Use evidence: “**This shows that...**” or “**We know this because...**”

## 3. Look at the Text

Read through the text and attempt to answer the questions

- Scan for **key words** from the question
- **Highlight or underline** the sentence that contains the answer

#### **4. Just write the answer down**

You do not need to waste time with sentence starters. Instantly write the correct answer down in as few words as possible.

##### **Example:**

Question: *Why did the character run away?*

Unnecessary opening: **The character ran away because.....**

More efficient answer: **He was scared of the noise in the forest.**