Types of Comprehension Questions
Enhance your Comprehension Skills

“No content of this booklet should be published without author’s concern”
Types of Comprehension questions…..

Fact Gathering questions / Literal Questions:

- These basically depend upon our ability of reading the text
- Further it depends on how we identify the reasons in the passage
- For this type of questions, the answer lies in the text / passage
- Their identity is this they always carry [1] mark

Inferential Questions:

- These questions basically hang on our common sense (which is not common among everyone)
- These are very tricky in comparison with the rest type of questions
- For these we do not need to google the text, cause the answer does not lie in the text
- Their identity is this they always carry [2] marks

Own Word Questions:

- These always rely on our vocabulary (means we must have a strong vocabulary to answer such questions)
- The candidates are asked to answer these questions in their own words
- These questions carry [2-3] marks depending onto the situation
- In such questions we have to first find the answer in the text, then transform that into our own words
- We can easily change it with the help of finding two key words and just changing them only

Keywords:

“These words are always difficult from the rest of the words in the sentence / phrase”.

- In my opinion it is better to change the whole sentence if you are not able to find the keywords.

Following is a specimen for you on the comprehension taken from one of the papers of Cambridge. Try to identify each question, that it is which type of question and try to answer it. This will help you practice for comprehensions. Here is the specimen for you:
Passage 2 – The Hospital

1 The night before my baby’s operation I lay awake anxiously; in the morning I packed her pitifully small requirements and we went to the hospital. She cried when they took her away. The world had contracted to the small size of her face and her clenching, waving hands; the poignancy was intolerable. I went away, and walked around outside the hospital for hours. When I went back at the appointed time, the senior nurse told me that the operation had been successful and that Octavia was well. I could not believe that a mere recital of facts could thus change my fate; I stood there dumbly, wondering whether she had got the wrong name, the wrong data, the wrong message. When I got round to speaking, I asked if I could see her, and they said to come back in the morning, as she was still unconscious. Such was my nervousness that I did not ask again to see her. I went home and wept copiously.

2 It was only then that I began to be preoccupied with certain details about which I had not previously dared to think. Would there be a nurse with Octavia at all times? Would they feed her properly? Earlier these things had seemed trivial, but now their importance swelled in my mind. Because the threat of fatality had been removed, life seemed to have gone back to normal. It was the strangeness more than the pain, I thought, that would afflict her, for she liked nobody but me, and strangers she disliked with noisy vehemence.

3 When I went round in the morning, the senior nurse told me that Octavia was comfortable. Summoning some courage, I asked to see her, but was told that was impossible. ‘She will settle in more happily if she doesn’t see you,’ she said. I didn’t like the sound of that word ‘settle’; it suggested complete inactivity. ‘I’m afraid that for such small infants we don’t allow any visiting at all,’ she continued. Octavia had never been settled in her short life, and I pictured her lying there in a state of lethargy. Furthermore, it was now imperative to see her. Already, we had endured the longest separation of our lives, and I began to see it stretching away, indefinitely prolonged. Why would they not let me see the child? Had the operation not been a success?

4 The senior nurse showed me the surgeon’s report. Although it was nothing but a mass of technicalities to me, I felt better; for all the senior nurse knew, I might have had enough medical knowledge to understand the report and she would not have taken that silly risk. By this time I could tell that she considered my behaviour to be tedious, and I left.

5 But I had been outside the hospital for only a few moments when I thought of my baby’s possible distress, and I went back inside. Two junior nurses greeted me nervously, repeating the earlier message, but I told them I had no intention of not seeing my baby. Their voices hardened. They had that whole building behind them and I had nothing behind me except my intention. Just then, the senior nurse returned. ‘Well, well, you’re back again,’ she said. She took my arm and began to push me towards the door. At first I was unable to resist her physical propulsion, but then she took hold of my elbow and started to exert greater pressure, so I started to scream. I screamed very loudly, shutting my eyes to do it, and listened in amazement to the deafening noise. Once I had started, I could not stop. I stood there, motionless, screaming, whilst they shook me and yelled that I was upsetting everyone.

6 Through the noise I could hear things happening and I felt I had to keep doing this until they let me see her. Inside my head it was red and black and very hot. After a while I heard someone shouting above the din: ‘For goodness sake, tell her she can see her baby.’ I instantly stopped and opened my eyes. I looked at the breathless circle surrounding me: the surgeon himself looking white with anger; the senior nurse crying; the junior nurses looking stunned. It was as though I had opened my eyes on a whole new narrative in which I myself had taken no part. But I had no interest in their story; I wished to know only my own. ‘Of course you can see the baby,’ said the surgeon, kindly. ‘I will take you to see her myself’.

Types of Comprehension Questions
Section 2: Reading for Meaning

Read Passage 2 in the insert and answer all the questions below in the order set.

From paragraph 1

5  (a)  What was going to happen to the baby in the morning? ..............................................................[1]

(b)  Explain fully why the baby’s requirements are described as ‘pitifully small’. ..........................................................[2]

(c)  After the writer was told that Octavia was well, what two aspects of her behaviour showed her nervousness?

(i) ............................................................................................................[2]

(ii) ...............................................................................................................[2]

From paragraph 2

6  (a)  What two things worried the writer about the way in which Octavia might have been treated in hospital?

(i) ............................................................................................................[2]

(ii) ...............................................................................................................[2]

(b)  Why do you think that ‘earlier these things had seemed trivial’? ..............................................................[1]

(c)  Explain in your own words why ‘life seemed to have gone back to normal’. ..........................................................[2]
From paragraph 3

7  (a) The writer was worried about Octavia’s ‘inactivity’ in hospital. Pick out and write down the single word used in the paragraph which continues the idea of ‘inactivity’.

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(b) For what two reasons was it now ‘imperative’ for the writer to see her baby?

(i) ..................................................................................................................................................................................

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(ii) ..................................................................................................................................................................................

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From paragraph 4

8 Explain fully the ‘silly risk’ the senior nurse had taken.

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From paragraph 5

9  (a) Why do you think the nurses greeted the writer ‘nervously’?

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(b) The nurses had ‘that whole building behind them’ whereas the writer had nothing except her ‘intention’. Without copying from the passage, explain in your own words what this means.

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(c) How did the senior nurse show that she was annoyed with the writer?

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From paragraph 6

10  The surgeon was ‘white with anger’. Why do you think he was angry?

[1]