Verbal Reasoning

LESSON 5

Keyword Approach

Technique: Keyword Approach

You will not have the luxury of being able to read the passage. The biggest mistake students make is trying to read too much, and therefore falling heavily short of time.

We teach our students to follow the Keyword Approach:

1) **Read <u>only</u> the first two lines of the passage.**

By reading the first part of the passage you can gauge the topic of the passage, which will help you when choosing a relevant keyword. You will see the value in this later.

2) **Read the question and pick a keyword**

Pick a keyword from the statement or question. This keyword will help you find the information you are looking for in the passage.

3) **Search for the keyword in the passage**

Look for the keyword in the passage. When you find it, read from the sentence before the keyword, to the sentence after. This small section of the passage should contain your answer.

4) **Eliminate the wrong answers**

Knock out the wrong answers, and select the correct one.

Choosing a Good Keyword

- **Key words should not appear all over the passage.** You should pick keywords that match the question stem but also do not appear too much as if they appear 4-5 times it will leave you having to read the entire passage.

- **Keywords should be easy to find.** Dates, numbers and nouns (with capitalised letters) make very good keywords because they are easy to find by visual inspection

- **Keywords must be relevant to the question.** You should pick keywords that match the question stem otherwise you will end up finding information that you may not necessarily need. if the question statement includes a date, don't just pick it blindly. See what the question is asking!

- **The keyword does not necessarily have to be a 'word'.** It can instead be a 'phrase', or a selection of two words.

Examples of Keywords

"Disruptions have led to increased traffic around the streets of Calais"
Names of places are good keywords

"Financial Fair Play (FFP) has had some impact on football transfers"
Acronyms are good keywords

"Current guidelines recommend men consume 2,500 calories a day"
Look out for numbers (of calories) and also for a reference to men. It may also reference an antonym - e.g. "females should eat 2000 calories, 500 less than men"

"Revenue growth slowed in face of heavy competition, leading to the company posting its largest quarterly loss."
Here, you would look for a financial figure, and reference to a quarter.

Importance of Step 1 of the Keyword Approach

Imagine you had a passage about the growing popularity magazines. Each paragraph discussed different types of publication, such as sport magazines, travel magazines, or cooking magazines.

Your question is:

"Magazines relating to football are becoming increasingly popular"

- *True*
- *False*
- *Can't Tell*

From the passage topic, we know that 'magazine' will not be a good keyword as it appears in most paragraphs. Whereas 'football' would be a brilliant key word.

Now reverse the situation.…

Imagine the passage was all about football. Each paragraph explored different elements of the sport, such as football on TV, local academies, football literature and magazines. In this scenario, a good keyword is 'magazine', and a weak keyword is 'football'.

This shows you the value of reading the first 2 lines of the passage to gauge the general topic and help you pick the right keyword.

Keywords appearing multiple times

When you find the keyword, look for the answer in the sentences around it, as per the Keyword Approach:

- If you *find* a reference to the question information, then you can be generally satisfied that you have found the right section of text. Choose the answer and move on.

- If you *do not find* a reference to the question information, then you may be inclined to choose 'Can't Tell' and move on. But the keyword may appear again later on in the passage, so do a quick scan to see if there are multiple references

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Keywords that do not appear in the passage

Sometimes the keyword will not appear in the passage. In this situation you have to assess the passage and decide on your approach appropriately.

If you believe that the answer is 'Can't Tell', choose this and move on.

If you feel that the answer is still hidden somewhere, try a different approach to find it:

- **Check again**- if you have rushed your search, it is sometimes worth scanning the passage again for the keyword.

- **Synonyms-** you should search for synonyms or rephrasing of the keyword. For example, the keyword 'holiday' may instead appear as 'vacation' or 'trip'.

- **Alternative keyword**- you can choose a different keyword if you are confident the passage will have a reference to the information in the question.

Summary of Keyword Strategy

If you find a reference to the question information, then you can be generally satisfied that you have found the right section of text. Choose the answer and move on.

If you do not find a reference to the question information, either:

1. Choose Can't Tell and move on
2. Look again incase you missed it or it appears as a synonym
3. Use an alternative keyword

V R — KEYWORD APPROACH

Did you find the keyword?

Search for keyword → Find keyword → Choose answer

Search for keyword → Cannot find keyword →
- Choose 'Can't Tell' — **CAN'T TELL** is a good option if you are short on time
- Search for an alternative keyword — This is ideal if there is a good alternative keyword
- Look for synonyms — e.g. holiday could appear as vacation
- Search again! — You may have missed it, so look again!