



Learning Project **5** Reading a Long Passage: Science

Inquiry Activity 5-3: Reaching a Conclusion

(Note: Italicized portions should be directed to the students.)

1. Identifying the Problem (Item 6 Science PA)

In this Inquiry Activity, learners will read an additional commentary that adds to the longer passage addressed in 5-1 and 5-2.

In this instance, the additional quotation adds some sense of importance to the longer passage. However, the passage does not provide information for the answer to the question that is posed in Item 6. The information comes from the long passage.

This is one instance where the test taker can skim the additional information and answer the question without using it.



Good test takers get a sense of where they need to spend time and where they can move on without wasting time.

Skimming this quotation quickly and reading the question will show many learners right away that the new passage does not need to have a lot of time spent on it.

Look over the passage. What are you being asked to read?

Have you seen passages like this before?

How does it appear? Is there anything in the text that will help you understand what it is about?

What will you have to do in order to be successful in this Activity?

6. H.H. Bennett, one-time chief of the Soil Conservation Service, is known as the father of soil conservation. He once said, “Productive soil is life, and the production of soil is vanishing with each passing year.”

Which solution would be MOST beneficial to help resolve this environmental problem?

- (1) Tax farmers for every acre of the land they use.
- (2) Convince farmers to use accepted methods to prevent erosion.
- (3) Do not let farmers use the land.
- (4) Encourage landowners to clear-cut all vegetation.
- (5) Lower the price of fertilizers to reduce the total cost to the farmer.

Where have you seen passages like this before?

Are there any words in this passage that you do not understand?

2. Becoming Familiar with the Problem

Ask yourself questions like the following. You should pay attention to those that were helpful, so you can use them again.

What information do you already have from your experience or reading that will help you understand this passage?

Does the passage make sense to you?



Do you have an interest in the topic of soil conservation?

Read the question. What is it asking you to find out?

Can you answer the question from this passage alone?


3. Planning, Assigning, and Performing Tasks

Planning: *You may decide to work alone, with a partner, or in a group to do this activity.*

Assigning: *Decide who will read the information and who will lead the discussion of what is in the passage.*

Doing the Work: *As you read the passage, consider these strategies:*

Clarify: *Find and mark any words you might not know. See if the passage gives enough information to clarify the meaning of the words. If not, use other resources to find the meaning.*

 **Analyze:** *Read the passage in question 6. Does it contain information about ways to conserve soil? If not, where will you find this information? Find the words and phrases that describe ways to conserve soil. Mark this information. Then, read the answer choices and decide whether the information for the answer is:*

- *Not in the passages*
- *The opposite of what is in the passages*
- *Not accurate*

What information do you have from the previous passage that clarifies the second passage?

The second passage establishes a context for the first passage. It does not really add knowledge. Learners may find that they do not need to read that passage in order to answer the question that, in fact, refers to information given clearly in the first passage.

Find your answer to the question.

The correct answer to question 6 is (2) convince farmers to use accepted methods to prevent erosion. Choices (1) and (3) have the same consequence, farmers will not farm, but that may not resolve the issue of erosion. Choice (4) is contradictory, and while (5) might reduce soil depletion, it is probably not the best way to go about it.

Be able to defend your answer and the way that you found it.

4. Sharing with Others

Telling people what you know helps you to understand the material better. Take this opportunity not only to share the knowledge, but also to learn it more completely.

Small groups: *Compare the answer you found with the others in the group. Explain the support for your answer from the passage.*



Whole class: *Share with the whole class the steps you used to answer the question. Take notes on any different ways of answering the question the other groups gave.*

5. Reflecting, Extending, Evaluating

Reflecting: *Think about what you have learned*

Here are some questions to start your thinking about the experiences you just had. Thinking about what you have learned and experienced is part of the learning process. When the focus is only on the answer, you don't get much time to think about what you learned.



1. *What did you learn from the first questions in this Learning Project that helped you with this one?*
-  2. *What information did the short passage provide for you to answer the question? What does that tell you?*
3. *Did the quotation from H. H. Bennett in this question make the long reading more interesting or important?*
-  4. *When reading multiple-choice questions, how do you eliminate choices?*

Extending: Extend what you learned to new situations.

In extending, you are being asked to transfer the information presented in this Inquiry Activity to other information or situations.

1. *With your group, try to find some reasons why people who are not farmers or gardeners should be interested in this topic. Share those reasons with the rest of the class.*
2. *Using a map of Virginia provided by your instructor, locate places where agriculture is a major business. How or where might you find this information if you do not know it?*
3. *Would you like to be a farmer? Write an essay that answers and explains your choice.*
4. *In your groups, discuss some ways that businesses and communities can help prevent soil erosion.*

Evaluating: Assess what you learned and how you learned it.

In this last step, you get a chance to review the content of what you learned and the methods used to learn. These questions have no right or wrong answers. This is your chance to look more closely at your learning style and the opportunity to state how you benefited or did not benefit from the content and/or the methods presented here.

1. *What parts of the activity worked best for you? Why?*
2. *What parts did not work well for you? Explain.*
3. *What ideas presented here will you use when taking the GED test? Why?*
4. *How does following this 5-step format make you feel?*