




Learning Project 9 Recognizing the Types of Questions

Inquiry Activity 9-1: Identifying the Types of Questions

Before your learners look at types of questions in the social studies and science PA tests, they should have done Learning Project 1 in Volume 3, *Reading*, “Identifying the Kinds of Questions on the GED Reading Test.”

This is the second of the long passages in the Social Studies PA. Each of the questions is a different type: 17 is an application question, 18 asks for synthesizing the information throughout the passage, and 19 is one of the few questions in the PA that is answered directly in the passage.

 This grouping also shows very clearly the test-taking strategy that passages having more than one question will have the questions in sequential order relative to the passage. That is, the answer to the first question is found early in the passage, that for the second is found midway through the passage, and the answer to the last question is at the end of the passage.

This concept is mentioned in the Reading volume in the introduction (page 2) and in the introduction to Learning Project 3 (page 29). In the Reading Learning Projects, most of the attention is on the best strategy for particular types of passages and the types of questions. This would be a good place to focus on the reason for the PA’s order of the questions, rather than our re-ordering for the purpose of strategy or identification.

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

1. Identifying the Problem (Items 17 through 19 Social Studies PA)

Look over the questions.

What is each question asking you to do in order for you to answer it?

Where else have you seen questions like these?

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

Put down your thoughts, or share them with your partner.

17. Which of the following is a federal system of government?

- (1) In New Zealand, power is exercised by a popularly elected parliament.
- (2) In Saudi Arabia, the king holds all executive and legislative powers.
- (3) In France, the constitution provides that the National Assembly and Ministries in Paris exercise all major powers.
- (4) In England, all important powers are vested in the national parliament in London.
- (5) In Mexico, power is divided between the national government and the governments of thirty-one states.

18. Which of the following is a reason for adopting a federal system of government?

- (1) Power should be concentrated in the hands of a few people at the national level.



- (2) Governments would have very little influence in peoples' lives.
- (3) Governments would respond differently to national and local issues.
- (4) Fewer elected officials would be needed.
- (5) Local governments would give up all of their power.

19. Which of the following comparisons between the United States and Canada is supported by the information?

- (1) The national government in Canada is more powerful than the national government in the United States.
- (2) Both U. S. and Canadian national and subnational governments provide benefits to needy citizens.
- (3) States in the United States are larger than provinces in Canada.
- (4) A greater number of poor people live in Canada than in the United States.
- (5) Both the U. S. and Canadian national governments pay for unlimited amounts of health care for their citizens.

2. Becoming Familiar with the Problem

Scan the questions and ask yourself questions like the following as your first step to identifying the questions.

What do you already know about different kinds of questions?

Have you defined types of questions before?

Why should you be interested in the kinds of questions asked in the GED test?

Which of the questions seems interesting to you?

Which of the questions seems less interesting? Why might that be the case?

3. Planning, Assigning, and Performing Tasks

Planning: *You may decide to work by yourself, in a pair, or a small group to do this Activity.*

This IA is best done in pairs or small groups.

Assigning: *Your task is to identify the types of questions presented in Step 1. Decide in your group or pair how you will accomplish this.*

Doing the Work: *As you read the questions, consider the following:*

What do you notice about the kinds of information these questions are asking for?

The first question is asking test takers to take what they have read and apply that to similar situations. It requires a good understanding of the reading material.

The second question requires test takers to draw a conclusion. This requires not only good reading comprehension, but also higher order thinking skills.

The final question can be answered by finding supporting details from the text.

What words used in the questions themselves tell you what kind of question it is?

Question 18 asks for a reason; that indicates some thinking on the part of the test taker. Question 19 uses the words, “supported by the information,” showing that the answer will be found directly in the passage. Question 17 is more subtle; it requires a look at the potential answers to show that the test taker must take what the text provides and use it in another instance (apply it).



4. Sharing with Others

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

Small groups: *Compare the answers you found with others in the group. Discuss the methods you used to find the answers, the support for your answers in the passage, and the reasons each learner thinks his/her answers and support are correct.*

Agree on the correct answers and the strategy you would use for answering questions that ask you to draw conclusions from what you have read.

Whole class: *Share with the whole class the steps you used to answer the questions. Take notes on any different ways of answering the questions 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 was learned.

1. *When you looked at just the questions without the passage to refer to, what did you have to focus on?*
2. *How are the question types the same? How are they different?*
3. *Does recognizing different types of questions make answering the question easier for you? Explain.*

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. *How do you use questions in your every day life?*
2. *Are the questions you ask or answer at home different from those you ask or answer at work? Explain.*
3. *Do you ask the same question in different ways depending on who/where you are asking? Explain.*
4. *Under what circumstances might you ask an application question? When might you ask a question that requires drawing a conclusion?*

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 in this IA.

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