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| Chapter 2 | Test-taking Techniques |

The Verbal Reasoning section of the MCAT not only tests your comprehension and reasoning abilities, it also tests how fast you can read. Most candidates will have little or no time to go back and check their answers; and many will not even be able to finish all the passages.

If your reading rate is less than 300 words a minute you may have difficulty completing the section. You can compute your reading rate by reading for a minute and counting the number of words read (approximate average line length x number of lines). If you are a slow reader you should try to improve your reading speed. There are various books and courses that teach how to read faster – try consulting a library.

Your task during the MCAT exam is to correctly answer the questions – not to understand perfectly the passages. The purpose of the techniques described below is to enable you to answer the questions with the minimum amount of time.

You may want to select one of these techniques or develop one of your own. You are encouraged to try different techniques under “test conditions” (i.e. 8 to 9 minutes per passage, including questions) to determine which technique you prefer, then you should practice using it.

Technique 1

Read the entire passage  answer the questions.

This requires the most ability to understand complex relationships and retain details while you are reading at a fast rate.

Technique 2

Read the first two paragraphs  read all the questions and answer those you can  read the remainder of the passage, answering the questions as you go along.

Technique 3

Read the first sentence of each paragraph  read the question stems  read the entire passage, answering the questions as you go along.

Technique 4

Read the question stems  read the entire passage, answering the questions as you go along.