GRADE 11 STUDY GUIDE | 2025

Comprehension and Language Skills

English Home Language

1. Approaching a Comprehension Passage

- Read the QUESTIONS first -- this tells you what to look for
- Read the passage once for gist (overall meaning)
- Read again more carefully, annotating key ideas
- Match your answer length to the mark allocation: 1 mark = 1 key point
- Use EVIDENCE from the text: quote directly or paraphrase with reference to the text

2. Types of Questions

Literal (factual)

Answer is directly stated in the text. "According to the passage..." or "State TWO reasons..."

Inferential

Answer is implied, not stated. "What does the writer suggest about..." or "Why does the writer..."

Critical / Evaluative

Your opinion, supported by evidence. "Do you agree with the writer's view? Give reasons from the text AND your own knowledge."

Language / Literary

Identify and explain language devices. Name the device, quote the example, explain its EFFECT.

3. Common Language Devices

- Simile: direct comparison using "like" or "as" -- "as brave as a lion" -- creates vivid image
- Metaphor: direct comparison WITHOUT "like" or "as" -- "He is a lion in battle" -- implies identity
- Personification: giving human qualities to non-human things -- "The wind whispered"
- Hyperbole: deliberate exaggeration for effect -- "I have told you a million times"
- Alliteration: repetition of initial consonant sounds -- "Peter Piper picked..." -- creates rhythm/emphasis
- Onomatopoeia: words that sound like what they describe -- "buzz", "crash", "sizzle"
- Irony: saying the opposite of what is meant; creates contrast between appearance and reality
- Oxymoron: contradictory terms placed together -- "deafening silence", "bittersweet"
- Rhetorical question: question asked for effect, not answer -- "How could anyone be so cruel?"

4. Summary Writing

- Read the passage carefully; identify the specific topic/aspect required
- Select ONLY points relevant to that aspect -- do not include everything
- Use your OWN WORDS as far as possible (rewording shows understanding)
- Write in full sentences; no bullet points in the answer
- Count your words and stay within the limit (usually 60-80 words)
- Do NOT add your own opinions or information not in the passage

5. Vocabulary in Context

When asked for meaning of a word or phrase IN CONTEXT: check how it is used in that specific sentence, not just its dictionary definition.

- Look for clues in surrounding text (context clues)
- Consider tone: is the sentence positive, negative, ironic?
- Give the meaning as it applies to THAT particular context