Description of the Reading Comprehension Subtest:

The skills addressed in this subarea require demonstration of literal, inferential, and critical reading skills in a variety of written materials— including college-level tests and original source documents—in the areas of physical and life sciences, humanities and fine arts, and the social and behavioral science.

Comparison Basic Skills to TAP:

Reading: TAP400- 60 multiple choice online

Standards Involved in Reading Comprehension Subtest:

Standard 1: Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.

a. **Examples of what is meant by the standard:**
   - Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or words with multiple meanings.
   - Recognize the correct use of commonly misused pairs (e.g., affect/effect) in a passage. Determine the meaning of figurative or colloquial language in a passage.
   - Identify appropriate synonyms or antonyms for words in a passage.

**Context Clues**

http://www.longsdalepub.com/courses/gace_demo/reading/41.html

Using the “context” means finding clues that authors leave elsewhere in the sentence or passage to help readers determine meaning.

For example:

“I had the run of their library”

uses a familiar word in a context that is not so familiar. When you read the sentence, the phrase of their library is a clue that helps you choose the proper definition, “unrestricted freedom or use of.” Besides actual clue words, context hints can also come from punctuation marks like commas or dashes.

For example:

“The run of the leather, the direction of the grain, allows a buyer to tell how many pieces of leather were used.”

The two commas actually enclose the definition of run used in the sentence.

You can use the same context clues to discover the meaning of uncommon and unfamiliar words, but you may have to be even more of a detective if you do not recognize the word at all. Often, you will find examples before or after the word to give you hints.

For example:

“Planting a radio bomb on a crowded airplane, spraying a restaurant with bullets and holding hostages for years are typical of the heinous acts of terrorism today’s world fears.”

Even if you have never seen the word heinous, you could look at the examples and recognize the definition: “grossly wicked or vile.”

Still another contextual clue is the use of signal words indicating contrast. Look for words like but, however, despite, although, yet, instead, while, even though, and nevertheless to tell you that the word you want to define is the opposite of another word in the sentence or paragraph.

For example:
"David is normally loquacious, but yesterday he was almost silent."

In the sentence the word but tells you that loquacious means the opposite of silent.

Commonly misused pairs
http://labarker.com/WritingRelated/words.html
http://tlc.uoregon.edu/publications/studyskills/GrammarHandouts/CommonlyConfusedWordPairs.pdf
http://www.rinkworks.com/words/confused.shtml

Figurative language
http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0210124/figlandef.html

Metaphor
A metaphor compares two unlike things. "My baby sister's a doll," you might say, compares your sister's size and sweetness to that of the perfection of a doll. At another time you might say, "My brother is a rat." This compares your brother to the nastiest little creature you can think of. In both cases you would be making a metaphor - a form of comparison that directly compares two unlike things. A metaphor wastes no time in getting to the point.

Simile
If you said, "My sister is like a doll," or maybe, "My brother's good as gold," you would be making a simile - a form of comparison in which one thing is compared to another unlike thing by using specific words of comparison like like, as, and resembles. Poets try to find unusual metaphors and similes.

Personification
One of the most familiar kinds of comparison is personification---that is, speaking of something that is not human as if it had human abilities and human reactions.

Hyperbole
A great exaggeration used to emphasize a point, and is used for expressive or comic effect. A hyperbole is not to be taken literally. Example: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." We know that eating an apple every day will not keep you from ever getting sick and having to go to the doctor.

Idiom
Idioms are groups of words whose meaning is different from the ordinary meaning of the words. The context can help you understand what an idiom means. For example: "Put a lid on it." Our teacher tells us to put a lid on it. She's not really telling us to put a lid on something but to be quiet and pay attention.

Colloquial language
http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-colloquialism.htm
http://concordia.csp.edu/writingcenter/Writers/All_Handouts/Colloquial_Writing_.pdf
A colloquialism is an informal expression, that is, an expression not used in formal speech or writing.

For example, colloquialisms can be informal words such as “kid” instead of child and “y’all” versus “all of you,” phrases such as “more than one way to skin a cat,” or regional terms such as “pop” in the Midwest for a soft drink and “soda” in other geographical areas of the US.
**Standard 2: Understand the main idea and supporting details in written material.**

a. **Examples of what is meant by the standard:**
   - Identify the stated main idea of a paragraph or passage.
   - Establish the sequence of events or steps presented in a passage.
   - Recognize information that supports, illustrates, or elaborates the main idea of a paragraph or a passage.
   - Identify the meaning of a figurative expression in a passage.

**Main Idea**
http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/308.HTM

The main idea is the "key concept" being expressed. Details, major and minor, support the main idea by telling how, what, when, where, why, how much, or how many. Locating the topic, main idea, and supporting details helps you understand the point(s) the writer is attempting to express.

**Standard 3: Apply skills of inference and interpretation to a variety of written materials.**

a. **Examples of what is meant by the standard:**
   - Recognize a writer’s implied purpose for writing (e.g., to persuade, to describe).
   - Identify the statement that best expresses the implied main idea of a paragraph or passage.
   - Recognize implied cause-and-effect relationships in a passage.
   - Interpret the content, word choice and phrasing of a passage to determine a writer's opinions, point of view, or position on an issue.

**Main Idea/Topic Sentence**
http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/308.HTM

A writer will state his/her main idea explicitly somewhere in the paragraph. That main idea may be stated at the beginning of the paragraph, in the middle, or at the end. The sentence in which the main idea is stated is the topic sentence of that paragraph.

The topic sentence announces the general theme (or portion of the theme) to be dealt with in the paragraph. Although the topic sentence may appear anywhere in the paragraph, it is usually first - and for a very good reason. This sentence provides the focus for the writer while writing and for the reader while reading. When you find the topic sentence, be sure to underline it so that it will stand out not only now, but also later when you review.

**Inference**
http://www.criticalreading.com/inference_reading.htm
http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/309.HTM

Drawing conclusions refers to information that is implied or inferred. This means that the information is never clearly stated. Writers often tell you more than they say directly. They give you hints or clues that help you "read between the lines." Using these clues to give you a deeper understanding of your reading is called inferring.

When the meaning of the word is not implied by the general sense of its context, it may be implied by examples. For instance,

*Those who enjoy belonging to clubs, going to parties, and inviting friends often to their homes for dinner are gregarious.* You may infer the meaning of **gregarious** by answering the question
"What word or words describe people who belong to clubs, go to parties a lot, and often invite friends over to their homes for dinner?" If you wrote social or something like: "people who enjoy the company of others", you correctly inferred the meaning of gregarious. If you think social or something like: "people who enjoy the company of others", you correctly inferred the meaning of gregarious.

Interpretation
http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/310.HTM
http://www.criticalreading.com/interpretation.htm

Because writers don't always say things directly, sometimes it is difficult to figure out what a writer really means or what he or she is really trying to say. You need to learn to "read between the lines" - to take the information the writer gives you and figure things out for yourself.

You will also need to learn to distinguish between fact and opinion. Writers often tell us what they think or how they feel, but they don't always give us the facts. It's important to be able to interpret what the writer is saying so you can form opinions of your own. As you read an author's views, you should ask yourself if the author is presenting you with an established fact or with a personal opinion. Since the two may appear close together, even in the same sentence, you have to be able to distinguish between them.

The key difference between facts and opinions is that facts can be verified, or checked for accuracy, by anyone. In contrast, opinions cannot be checked for accuracy by some outside source. Opinions are what someone personally thinks or how he/she feel about an issue. Opinions by definition are subjective and relative.

Standard 4: Analyze relationships among ideas in written material.  

a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:
   Recognize similarities and differences among ideas in a passage.
   Analyze relationships between ideas in opposition (e.g., pro and con).
   Select solutions to problems based on information presented in written material.
   Draw conclusions from information stated or implied in a passage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Signal Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A word, phrase, sentence adds to the content of the preceding one.</td>
<td>also, and, besides, again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A word, phrase, sentence clarifies the content of the preceding one.</td>
<td>in fact, in other words, obviously, of course, too, evidently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A phrase/sentence indicates a comparison to the preceding one.</td>
<td>Also, likewise, similar, by the same token</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A phrase/sentence indicates contrast to the preceding one.</td>
<td>although, but, however, in contrast, nevertheless, yet, on the contrary, on the other hand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The topic sentences and organizational pattern of a passage provide an outline, but the author must connect the items of the outline by showing relationships between them. The flow of words, phrases, and sentences in a passage may be done explicitly by stating them or by using signal words to alert the reader to the relationships intended. Sometimes, the relationships are implied, and it is the responsibility of the reader to notice them without the assistance of signal words.

**Example**

What might be the relationship between two sentences if the second one begins with the following words?

"As a consequence . . ."

Either a Generalization/Example or a Cause/Effect relationship might be expected from these signal words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A phrase/sentence provides an example of a preceding generalization.</th>
<th>for example, to illustrate, for instance, thus, that is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A phrase/sentence shows location or spatial order.</td>
<td>below, above, near, next to, opposite, elsewhere, within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A phrase/sentence shows cause and effect.</td>
<td>because, as a result of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A phrase/sentence summarizes.</td>
<td>to conclude, in short to summarize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A phrase/sentence shows time order.</td>
<td>after, at that time, before, during, while, at last, now, first, second, immediately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Standard 5: Use critical reasoning skills to evaluate written material.**

   **a. Examples of what is meant by the standard:**
   Recognize stated or implied assumptions on which the validity of an argument depends.
   Determine the relevance of specific facts, examples, or graphic data to a writer’s argument.
   Recognize fallacies in the logic of a writer’s argument.
   Recognized qualifying language and distinguish between fact and opinion in written material.
   Assess the credibility, objectivity, or bias of the author of a passage or the author’s sources.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/553/01/

**Evaluating Validity of an Argument**

**Relevance of Facts, Examples, or Graphic Data**

**Distinguish Between Fact of Opinion**

   **Fact** – Something you can prove
   **Opinion** - Something that can’t be proved or disproved; a belief or judgement

**Credibility, Objectivity, and Bias**

   What type of support does the author present? Is it an objective argument?
Standard 6: Apply skills for outlining and summarizing written materials and interpreting information presented in graphs or tables.

a. **Examples of what is meant by the standard:**
   - Organize the main ideas in a passage into an outline or another form of graphic or tabular organization.
   - Identify an accurate summary of a passage.
   - Interpret information presented in charts, graphs, or tables.

**Summarizing**
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/

A good summary notes the key points and main ideas in one’s own words or in a paraphrased manner.

**Reading Test Taking Strategies**
http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/304.HTM

The consensus of reading comprehension research points to the study of what good readers do when confronted with new text. A recommended curriculum for comprehension may focus on understanding the behavior of these good readers and translating that behavior into strategies that can be taught to struggling readers.

Expert, thoughtful readers are believed to do the following:

- Use existing knowledge to make sense of new text
- Monitor their comprehension throughout the reading process
- Repair their comprehension once they realize it has gone awry
- Determine what is important in the texts they read
- Synthesize information when they read
- Constantly draw inferences during and after reading
- Ask questions

(P. David Pearson, Laura R. Roehler, Janice A. Dole, & Gerald G. Duffy)

To support students who are preparing to take or retake this test, the teaching of reading comprehension strategies may provide an adaptable, conscious plan for grappling with complex texts and questions. These strategies complement the types of questions that were posed on the diagnostic test and if practiced frequently, should provide our students with tools to perform competently. Our aim is for most of these activities to become part of a pattern of thinking that can be accessed when needed.

**Think Alouds:** use this to showcase how an expert reader is engaging the text; what connections are being made, how is confusion dealt with; recognize a purpose for reading, make predictions as one reads, “think while reading” and show what you are thinking about and if problematic, how will things be resolved; often this is the only way a novice reader of difficult text can understand what should be done as one reads

**Informational Text Structure:** display expository text structure and present cues used by writers when “building” text; helpful with identification and retention of information; when teaching, combine use of graphic organizers with text structure; see example below
**Graphic Organizers/Visual Representation:** demonstrate how to display one’s thinking during reading; can be helpful with recall and clarification of information; encourage struggling readers to visualize descriptions, create mental timelines, etc., as they read lengthy text; semantic mapping and feature analysis are very appropriate for strengthening vocabulary competence with test synonym and “in context” questions

**Example**

5 types of nonfiction organizational patterns and suggested graphic organizers

- Description (use “sunburst” or semantic web)
- Sequence (use staircase or ladder to show progression)
- Comparison (use Venn Diagram)
- Cause/Effect (use fishbone diagram)
- Problem/Solution (use side by side boxes connected by arrows to show continuity)

**Summarization:** show how to synthesize information as it is read with a specific strategy; some summary activities may be engaging and enjoyable while helping students to “shrink” text yet leave the essence there e.g., students are asked to write a classified ad whereby each word has a price attached so cost of what is to be said becomes a factor; another standard example is listed below

**Example**

5 step process for creating a summary

1. Delete irrelevant information.
2. Delete redundant information.
3. Create a superordinate label for a list of things or actions (e.g., fruit for apples, bananas, pears, oranges and strawberries).
4. Try to locate topic sentences for paragraphs and use them in your summary when appropriate.
5. Invent topic sentences when you are unable to locate them.

Outlining can be taught as an extension of a strong summarizing process.

(based on work by P. David Pearson, Laura R. Roehler, Janice A. Dole, & Gerald G. Duffy)

**Questioning:** help students to understand that the strategy, Question - Answer Relationship (QAR) is a valuable tool for students to identify types of questions and then, know what to do to best answer them; ReQuest is a strategy that offers good practice asking original questions of new text; the thinking being that if text is read with the purpose of asking questions, comprehension may be stronger; see QAR example below

**Example**

The Four Types of QARs
- Right There Questions
- Think and Search Questions
- Author and Me Questions
- On My Own Questions

Based on the work of Taffy E. Raphael (1982. 1986)