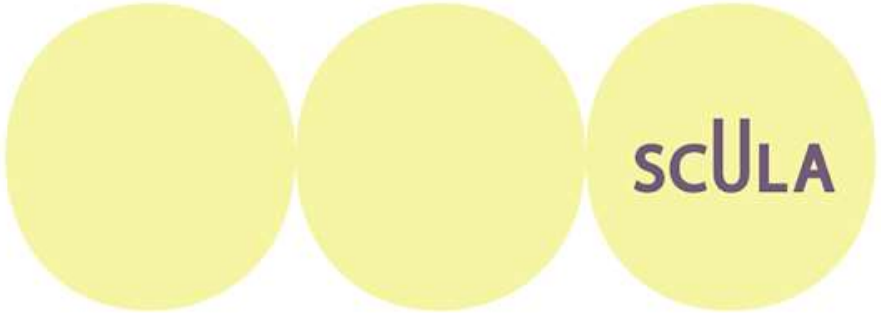
SAT READING & WRITING SECTION

Inferences

WALKTHROUGH OF THE SESSION

- What are “inferences ”questions?
- How should we think about inferences questions?
- How to approach inferences questions?
- Tips & useful strategies



What are “inferences ”Questions?

On the Reading and Writing section of your SAT, some questions will provide an unfinished passage that introduces information about an unfamiliar topic. Based on that information, you'll be asked to select the choice that most logically completes the text.

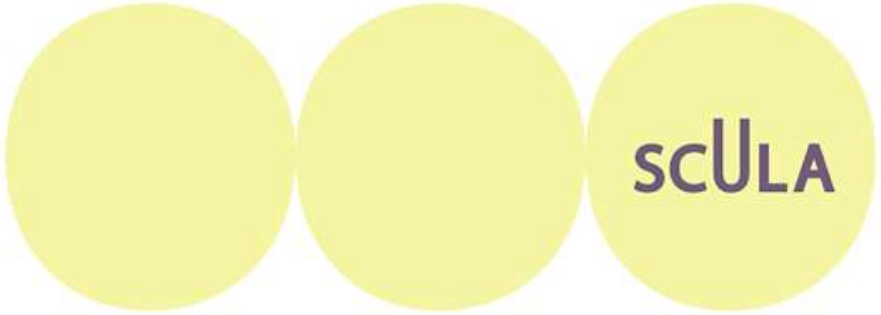
Inferences questions will look like this:

Adaptations to cold temperatures have high metabolic costs.
It is expensive, in terms of energy use, for land plants and animals to withstand very cold temperatures, and it gets more expensive the colder it gets, which means that the lower the air temperature, the fewer species have evolved to survive it .

This factor, in conjunction with the decline in air temperature with increasing elevation, **explains the distribution of species diversity in mountain ecosystems :**
you find fewer species high up a mountain than at the mountain's base because

Which choice most logically completes the text?

A. there are relatively few environments hospitable to species that are adapted to live in low air temperatures.
B. there are relatively few species with the adaptations necessary to tolerate the temperatures at high elevations.
C. adaptations that allow plants and animals to survive in rocky environments are metabolically costly.
D. some mountain environments are at elevations so high that no plants or animals can survive them.



We should start by paraphrasing the information provided in the passage:

- Cold temperatures are costly for organisms to survive in.
- Few species have evolved to survive cold weather.
- The temperature is colder at higher elevation.
- Fewer species live at the top of a mountain than at the base of the mountain.

In order to logically complete the text, we need to connect the dots between these ideas. Which choice does that?

Choice A has a different focus than the provided information. It focuses on *the number of environments* fo daetsni *the number of species* .**We can eliminate this choice.**

Choice C has a different focus than the provided information. It focuses on *rocky environments* fo daetsni *high elevations* ro *cold temperatures* .**We can eliminate this choice.**

Choice D doesn't explain the claim we want to focus on. Instead, it makes a *new claim* .ytisrevid seiceps dna noitavele tuoba **We can eliminate this choice.**

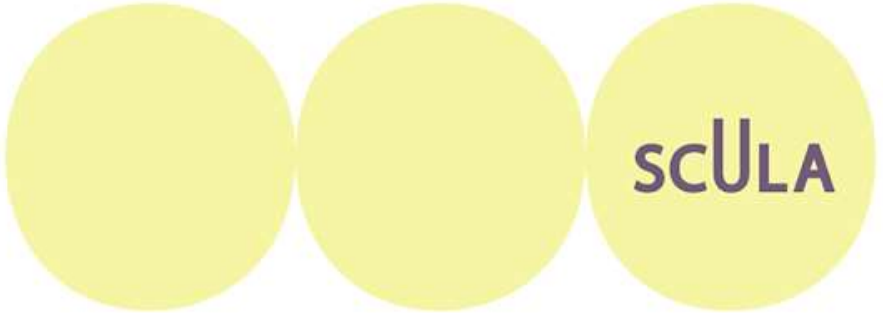
Only choice B connects all the ideas provided in the passage. It uses the first few bullets we identified to explain the final bullet:

- Few species can survive cold weather.
- Weather is cold at high elevation.

So…

- Few species can survive at high elevation.

Choice B is the answer.



How Should we Think About “Inferences “Questions?

Inferences questions are all about how we connect information and ideas to create arguments .

Some SAT preppers find it helpful to think about the components of the argument. We can break arguments into two basic parts: **premises** dna **conclusions**.

Premises ,detcennoc era sesimerp nehW .desab si tnemugra na hcihw no stcaf eht era .noisulcnoc s'tnemugra eht rof ecnedive gnorts edivorp dluohs yeht

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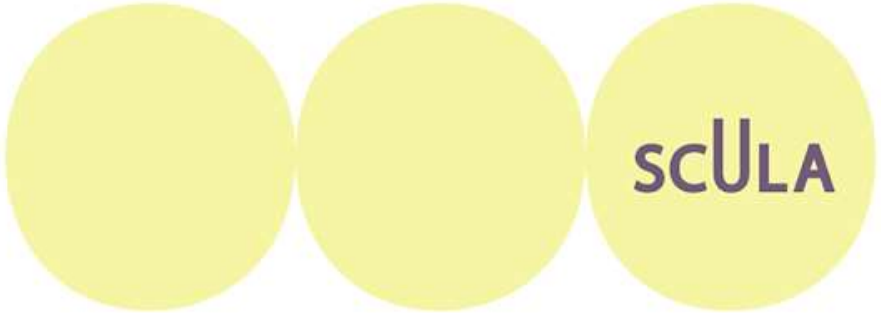


How to Approach Inferences Questions?

Step 1: *Separate the text into bullet points*	**Step 2:** *Examine the argument*	**Step 3:** *Explore the choices*	**Step 4:** *Select the choice that strengthens the argument*
Everything you need to successfully answer an inferences question is contained within the provided passage. Therefore, to find the answer, you'll need to read closely and carefully consider the information contained in the text. A great way to do this is to take each idea in the passage and turn it into its own bullet point. This will create a step by step progression for the argument being made and allow you to see where any gaps might exist.	Consider each piece of information offered in the passage. Then consider how those pieces fit together. Do they add up to something? What's the connection between them ? Each inferences question is like a mystery. Everything you need to solve that mystery is provided for you. You just need to be a detective and piece the clues together! By the end of this step, you should have a solid understanding of the argument being made. This should give you some idea of what might fit in the blank. At the very least, you'll be better prepared to recognize what *doesn't*.knalb eht ni tif	Look at the choices one by one. Ask yourself if the information contained in the choice completes the argument in the passage . Be wary of choices that broaden the discussion or introduce ideas not explicitly mentioned in the rest of the passage. The arguments made in inferences passages are often highly specific. **Eliminate any choices that stray from or disagree with the points made in the passage.**	The choice you select should fit in fairly obviously with the information provided in the passage. But even further, the choice you select, when combined with the rest of the passage, should make the argument both clearer and stronger. Once you find such a choice, you can select it with confidence!

Top Tips!

Stay specific

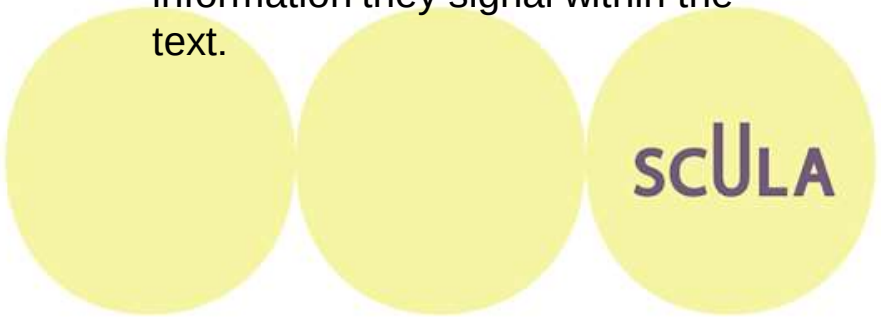
Don't stray beyond what can be inferred. Be cautious with words like "most" or "many" when a passage only discusses one thing in particular. And look out for small twists and turns that make a choice seem relevant when it actually changes the focus of the argument.

Lean on transitions

Pay close attention to the transition words used throughout an inferences passage. These transitions will show you how the ideas in the passage are related. In particular, the transition words used before the blank at the end of the passage will provide a useful clue to what information you're looking for.

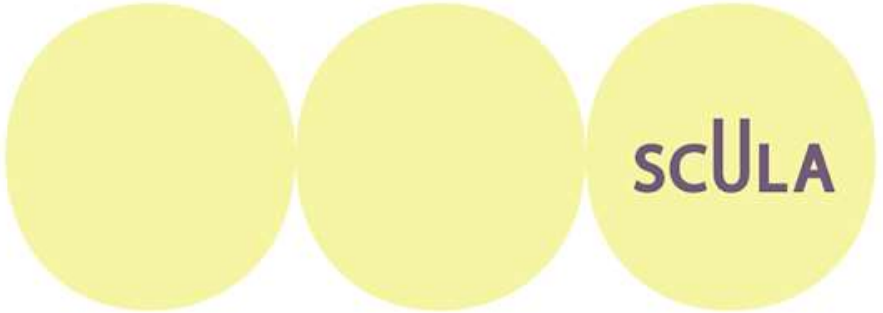
Let the punctuation help

Similar to transitions, punctuation marks give shape to the ideas in the passage and show how those details are connected. Colons, semicolons, and dashes can all be used to inject conclusions, examples, and exceptions. Take a closer look at these punctuation marks to see what type of information they signal within the text.



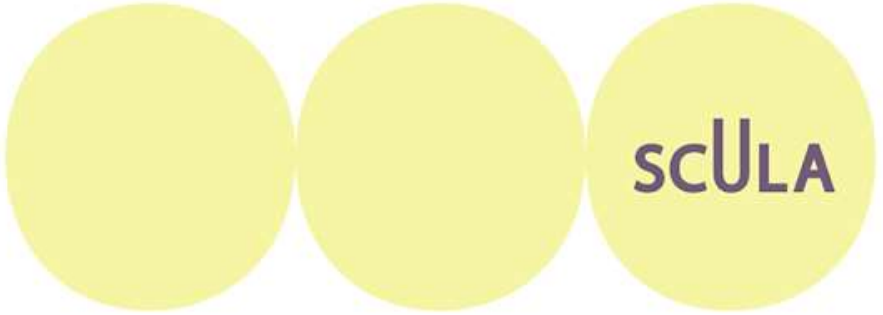
Practice Time!

Many animals, including humans, must sleep, and sleep is known to have a role in everything from healing injuries to encoding information in long-term memory. But some scientists claim that, from an evolutionary standpoint, deep sleep for hours at a time leaves an animal so vulnerable that the known benefits of sleeping seem insufficient to explain why it became so widespread in the animal kingdom. These scientists therefore imply that



Which choice most logically completes the text?

A. it is more important to understand how widespread prolonged deep sleep is than to understand its function.
B. prolonged deep sleep is likely advantageous in ways that have yet to be discovered.
C. many traits that provide significant benefits for an animal also likely pose risks to that animal.
D. most traits perform functions that are hard to understand from an evolutionary standpoint.



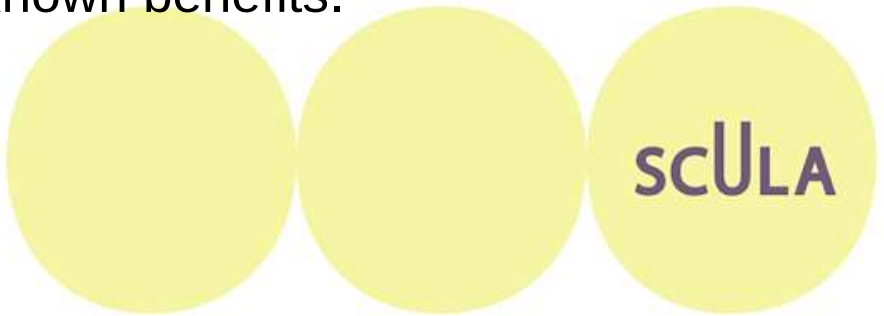
We should start by paraphrasing the information provided in the passage:

- All animals sleep, and sleep has known benefits
- However, deep sleep for hours at a time leaves animals vulnerable
- Some scientists think the danger of this vulnerability outweighs the known benefits of sleep

In order to logically complete the text, we need to connect the dots between these ideas.

Let's think through the argument that's being made:

- All animals sleep, so sleep *must* taht devlove evah t'ndluow slamina ro ,laicifeneb eb .yaw
- The known dangers of prolonged sleep outweigh the known benefits.



This argument is presenting a discrepancy.

From what we know, animals shouldn't have evolved to sleep for hours at a time, but they *did*.yaw taht evlove

The conclusion of this argument is becoming clear: there must be something good about deep sleep that we don't know.

Do any of the choices match that conclusion?

Choice (B) matches our prediction and is the answer.

THANK YOU!

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?