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Mastering Reading Comprehension: The Ultimate Cheat Sheet

1. Core Strategy Framework

Reading comprehension (RC) is not a test of memory; it is a test of **analytical reasoning** and **strategic navigation**.

The Three-Pass Approach:

- **Pass 1 (Skimming):** Read the first and last paragraphs completely, plus the first sentence of every intermediate paragraph. Identify the core theme.
- **Pass 2 (Active Reading):** Read the questions (without looking at options) to map out what you need to extract.
- **Pass 3 (Targeted Diving):** Return to the passage to locate specific markers and evaluate options.

2. Passage Mapping Techniques

Never read passively. Actively categorize sentences into functional roles:

- **Premise (P):** Evidence, data, or foundational claims.
- **Conclusion (C):** The author's primary thesis or argument.

- **Counter-Premise (CP):** Opposing viewpoints or alternative interpretations (often signaled by *however, although, conversely*).
- **Aside (A):** Anecdotes, historical context, or parenthetical explanations.

3. Question Types Blueprints

A. Main Idea / Primary Purpose

* Asks for the overarching theme or author's goal. * **Trap:** Options that are too narrow (focusing on a single paragraph) or too broad.

B. Detail / Specific Fact

* Directly stated in the text. * **Trap:** Half-right answers containing one false word or extreme modifier.

C. Inference / Implication

* Must be *strictly* true based on the passage, even if not explicitly stated. * **Trap:** Extrapolations that require logical leaps or personal assumptions.

D. Tone Attitude

* Identifies the author's emotional stance or objective posture. * **Common Tones:** Analytical, critical, neutral, ambivalent, sardonic, enthusiastic.

4. Common Traps Distractors

Be hyper-vigilant for these standard test-maker traps:

- **Extreme Modifiers:** Words like *always, never, all, none, must* are rarely correct unless explicitly supported.
- **Out of Scope:** Bringing in outside, real-world knowledge that contradicts or is unsupported by the passage text.
- **Half-Right/Half-Wrong:** A compelling option where the first half is true, but the second half distorts the author's intent.
- **Reversal:** Stating the exact opposite of what the passage claims.

5. Quick Vocabulary Transition Clues

Marker Type	Common Keywords
Addition	Furthermore, moreover, similarly, in addition
Contrast	However, conversely, yet, notwithstanding
Cause/Effect	Consequently, therefore, thus, yields, stems from
Emphasis	Indeed, crucially, significantly, above all