

# GRE Verbal (Reading)

## *Three types of question*

Reading comprehension (lengthy passages)

- Letters in ovals = Only one answer
- Letters in squares = One or more answers

Text completion (fill in multiple blanks)

Sentence equivalence (fill in one blank with two equivalent words)

## *Four levels of comprehension*

(See p. 44)

Words

Sentences

Development

Context

## *Easy / Medium / Hard*

	<b>Focus on if your score is ...</b>	<b>P+ (Ch. 8)</b>
<b>Easy</b>	Below 145	55+
<b>Medium</b>	140 – 155	35 – 54
<b>Hard</b>	Above 150	0 - 34

## *Principles of Good Test-Taking*

- **Careful reading.** Understand everything you read 100% / Simplify as you read
  - Highlight all proper nouns or unique nouns. Understand the roles they play.
  - When practicing, look up words you don't know before you answer the question.
  - Double negatives: Cancel them out; replace with an appropriate positive or neutral.
  - When practicing, parse / diagram sentences that lose you.
- Use your mind's eye (visualize; we'll see an example soon)
- Answer questions based on the information presented, rather than your own assumptions / inferences. (There is no such thing as "overthinking" ... only "under-reading" ! :P )
- Transition words / phrases like "as a result" or "however" identify the logical turns of a passage
- Consider all the choices before you make your final decision
- Have the right attitude: This is a "test", not a "trick". If it feels like a trick, you're probably missing something. It's a good learning opportunity.

### ***Simplify as you read!***

1. Double negatives: Two negatives make a positive. Identify the negatives and make them cancel each other out. Replace them with a positive or neutral summary.

“Proposition 8 was a California constitutional amendment created by opponents of same-sex marriage. Proposition 8 was ruled unconstitutional.”

2. Identifying the main flow of the argument versus asides. Here is the actual paragraph from which the passage above was taken.

“Proposition 8 was a California constitutional amendment passed in the November 2008 California state elections. The proposition was created by opponents of same-sex marriage in advance of the California Supreme Court's May 2008 appeal ruling, *In re Marriage Cases*, which followed the short-lived 2004 same-sex weddings controversy and found the previous ban on same-sex marriage (Proposition 22, 2000) unconstitutional. Proposition 8 was also ultimately ruled unconstitutional by a federal court (on different grounds) in 2010, although the court decision did not go into effect until June 26, 2013, following the conclusion of proponents' appeals.”

### ***Parsing or diagramming a sentence***

To “parse” a sentence is to break it down into smaller parts, usually delineated by punctuation. To “diagram” it is to streamline the main flow of the argument and how asides relate to it.

Look for phrases or clauses within commas, dashes, or parentheses, which can be momentarily omitted while maintaining meaning.

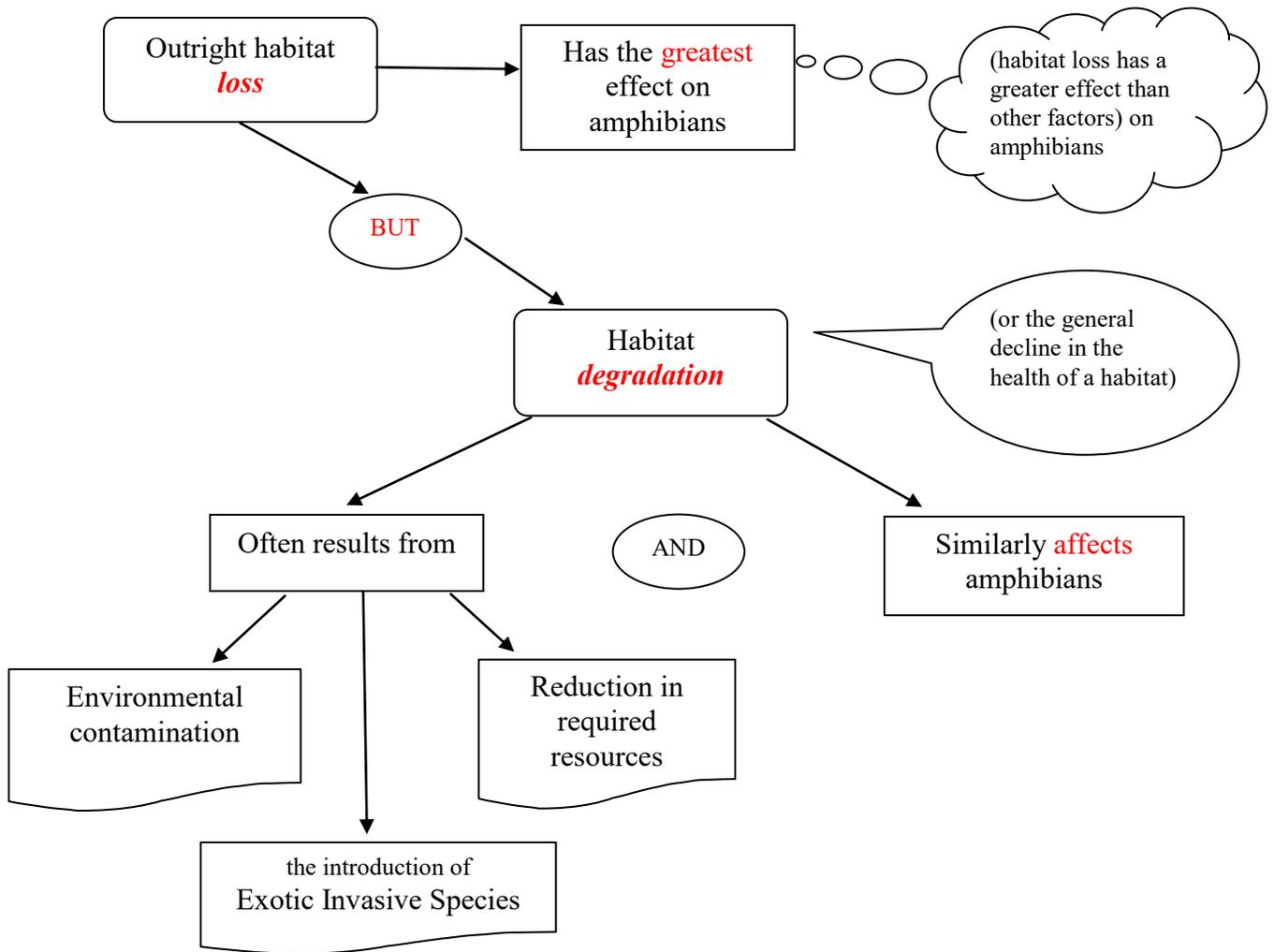
“A reduction in cholesterol, a lipid that results from high intake of saturated fats, helps control blood pressure.”

Reading a sentence “backward” can often help piece it together.

“The will is in the back of the top drawer of the desk in the middle of the room on the east end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the guest room behind the house.”

Diagramming: Always understand which words modify which other words.

“Outright habitat loss probably has the greatest effect on amphibians, but habitat degradation, or the general decline in the health of a habitat, often results from environmental contamination, the introduction of exotic invasive species, or a reduction in required resources within a habitat, and similarly affects amphibians.”



***Using your mind's eye***

The more you visualize or animate a passage in your mind, the better you will grasp it. Can you draw a map of the phenomenon described here?

“Likewise, habitat fragmentation (the disruption or fragmentation of habitat into discontinuous or isolated remnants of viable habitat) emerges from isolated patches of habitat loss and can often have delayed effects on animal populations.”