

Understanding texts - REFERENCING

When we read, that is in comprehension reading, we are often required to do referencing. **Referencing** is a reading skill which consists in finding out answers to questions that can be traced in the reading text. In two previous lessons, we have learned some referencing skills. For example, scanning also involves some referencing in which we try to locate certain pieces of information in the text. An important criterion for this skill is that the answers to the questions we are looking for are stated explicitly in the reading passage.

Identifying reference in the text.

Every text has a structure. It is not just a random collection of sentences. The parts that make up the text are related in a meaningful way to each other. Recognizing the way in which a text has been organized will help you to understand it better. In order to understand the text, it is necessary to understand how the sentences are related. Words like "it", "this", "that", "here", "there" etc. refer to other parts of the text. You need to understand these connections or links.

Certain items of language in English have the property of reference. That is, they do not have meaning themselves, but they refer to something else for their meaning.

The scientific study of memory began in the early 1870s when a German philosopher, Hermann Ebbinghaus, came up with the revolutionary idea that memory could be studied experimentally. In doing so he broke away from a 2000-year-old tradition that firmly assigned the study of memory to the philosopher rather than to the scientist. He argued that the philosophers had come up with a wide range of possible interpretations of memory but had produced no way of deciding which amongst these theories offered the best explanation of memory. He aimed to collect objective experimental evidence of the way in which memory worked in the hope that this would allow him to choose between the various theories.

In this text "he" and "him" refers to "Hermann Ebbinghaus". In order to understand the text, you need to know what these words refer to in the text.

Similarly,

These theories all stem from some underlying assumptions about people. To a large extent unproven, they tend to represent the dominant mood or climate of opinion at that time. Schein has classified them as follows, and it is interesting to note that the categories follow each other in a sort of historical procession, starting from the time of the industrial revolution.

Other words used in this way are "he", "him", "it", "this", "that", "these", "those", "here", "there" etc.

Some people equate referencing to finding explicit pieces of information in the text. Below is a list of some other referencing skills.

Finding the Specific Information

The median value often gives a better indication of the general size of a set containing extreme values. The set: {7, 5, 74, 10} has a mean value of 24, which is not really representative of any of the values of the members of the set. The median values is obtained by ranking the set in ascending order of magnitude and selecting the value of the middle member for sets containing an odd number of members, or finding the value of the mean of the two middle members if the members are even.

1. What is the measure of central tendency discussed here?
2. What must you do when the members is odd?

Finding the Factual Information

The trumpet player Louis Armstrong, or Satchmo as he was usually called, was among the first jazz musicians to achieve international fame. He is known for the beautiful, clear tone of his trumpet-playing and for his gruff, gravelly singing voice. He was one of the first musicians to sing in the scat style, using

1. According to the passage, Amstrong's nickname was ----
2. According to the author, Amstrong had a beautiful ----

Counting

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics concluded that the median yearly income statisticians were \$57.080 in 2002. The National Association of Colleges and Employers reported, in a 2003 survey, that the students who earn bachelor's degrees in mathematics and statistics are offered \$42.438 and students who earn a doctorate begin their careers earning an average of 55.485 per year. The median salary for teachers was \$44.340.

1. The difference offered salary between bachelor and doctorate degree in a 2003 survey ----
2. The average first salary of doctorate degrees per month ----

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Read the text and answer the questions.

MEASURES OF CENTRAL TENDENCY

There are three measures of central tendency that are usually used in statistics. First of all, the statistical term used for 'average' is the arithmetic mean or just the mean. It is found by adding together the values of the members of a set and dividing by the number of members in the set. In general, the mean of the set:

$$\{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\} \text{ is } \bar{x} = \frac{x_1 + x_2 + \dots + x_n}{n}.$$

Second, the median value often gives a better indication of the general size of a set containing extreme values. The set: {7, 5, 74, 10} has a mean value of 24, which is not really representative of any of the values of the members of the set. The median value is obtained by ranking the set in ascending order of magnitude then selecting the value of the middle member for sets containing an odd number of members, or finding the value of the mean of the two middle members for sets containing an even numbers of members.

Lastly, modal value or mode is the most commonly occurring value in a set. If two values occur with the same frequency, the set is 'bi-modal'. The set: {5, 6, 8, 2, 5, 4, 6, 5, 3} has a modal value of 5, since the member having a value of 5 occurs three times.

1. The word *it* in line 3 refers to
2. The term *ascending order* in line 9 refers to.....
3. The summary of the text is given in lines.....
4. The word *lastly* (line 13) is used to
5. The word *bi-modal* in line 12 means