



Levels of Reading Comprehension

Levels of Comprehension

The three levels of comprehension, or sophistication of thinking, are presented in the following hierarchy from the **least** to the **most** sophisticated level of reading.

- Least = surface, simple reading
- Most = in-depth, complex reading

Level One

LITERAL - what is actually **stated**.

- Facts and details
- Rote learning and memorization
- Surface understanding only

Tests in this category are **objective** tests dealing with true / false, multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. Common questions used to illicit this type of thinking are **who, what, when, and where** questions.

Level Two

INTERPRETIVE - what is **implied** or meant, rather than what is actually stated.

- Drawing inferences
- Tapping into prior knowledge / experience
- Attaching new learning to old information
- Making logical leaps and educated guesses
- Reading between the lines to determine what is **meant** by what is **stated**.

Tests in this category are **subjective**, and the types of questions asked are open-ended, thought-provoking questions like **why, what if, and how**.

Level Three

APPLIED - taking what was **said** (literal) and what was **meant** by what was said (interpretive) and then extend (apply) the concepts or ideas beyond the situation.

- Analyzing
- Synthesizing
- Applying

In this level we are **analyzing** or **synthesizing** information and **applying** it to other information.