

ACT Reading Study Pack

Quick Review · Focused Practice · Flashcards

10 questions · suggested time: 11 minutes

How to use this pack. Start with the review, complete the practice before reading the key, then cut out or cover the flashcard answers for self-testing. These are original, unofficial practice materials. ACT is a registered trademark of ACT Education Corp.; no endorsement is implied.

Quick Review

Key Ideas and Details. Identify the central idea, then locate the sentence or detail that supports an answer. Make inferences that stay close to the text.

Craft and Structure. Use nearby context to infer word meaning. Ask why the author included a detail and how the paragraph contributes to the whole passage.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. Separate a claim from its evidence. For paired texts, summarize each writer's view before comparing agreement or disagreement.

Pacing. Mark difficult questions and move on. Return to the passage for evidence; do not rely on outside facts or memory alone.

Original Paired-Passage Practice

Passage A: The Quiet Roof

When the East Branch Library replaced part of its dark roof with a small garden, the project began as a practical experiment. The building absorbed heat through its old surface, and nearby rooms grew warm on summer afternoons. A layer of soil and low native plants was expected to slow that heating. The library also hoped the roof would hold rainwater before it reached the street drains.

The first season brought mixed results. Staff recorded cooler temperatures beneath the planted section on sunny days, although the difference varied with cloud cover and wind. The garden retained some rainfall, but a storm that filled the shallow channels still sent water to the drains. The library did not treat this as failure. Instead, the maintenance team compared measurements from the planted and unplanted areas and adjusted the soil depth.

By the next summer, the roof had become a small outdoor classroom. Students visited to identify plants and observe insects. The library kept the temperature records, but staff said the most lasting change was that visitors began asking how design choices could affect an entire neighborhood.

Passage B: A Neighbor's Note

The library's roof garden is an appealing sight, and I enjoy seeing students learn there. Still, I would hesitate to call the project a solution to neighborhood flooding. The garden holds a modest amount of rain, while our largest storms overwhelm the street drains. If officials present the roof as a complete answer, they risk delaying the larger repairs the area needs. The project is most useful when its limits are discussed along with its benefits.

Focused Practice

Answer from the paired passages above. Each question has one best answer.

1. What problem helped prompt the roof project?
 - A. Warm rooms on summer afternoons
 - B. A shortage of library books
 - C. Too many insects indoors
 - D. A lack of outdoor classrooms
2. What can be inferred about the first season's rainfall results?
 - A. The garden stopped all runoff.
 - B. The garden retained some water but not all stormwater.
 - C. The drains were removed.
 - D. Staff stopped measuring rainfall.
3. Why did the team compare planted and unplanted sections?
 - A. To estimate how the roof garden affected conditions
 - B. To decide which students could visit
 - C. To measure the height of the library
 - D. To prove that wind never matters
4. In Passage A, "mixed results" most nearly means results that were
 - A. entirely negative
 - B. uniform across all conditions
 - C. partly positive and partly limited
 - D. impossible to measure
5. Which statement best describes the library staff's response to the first season?
 - A. They abandoned the project.
 - B. They adjusted the soil after comparing measurements.
 - C. They claimed the garden prevented every flood.
 - D. They removed the planted section.
6. What concern does the writer of Passage B emphasize?
 - A. The garden attracts too many students.
 - B. A small roof garden could be mistaken for a complete flood solution.
 - C. The roof cannot support any plants.
 - D. The temperature records are unreliable.
7. How do the two passages differ in emphasis?
 - A. Passage A describes the project's measured and educational benefits; Passage B stresses its limits as flood control.
 - B. Passage A opposes gardens; Passage B supports removing drains.
 - C. Both argue that the project failed.
 - D. Both focus mainly on choosing native plants.
8. Which evidence from Passage A best supports the idea that the project encouraged learning?
 - A. Rooms grew warm on summer afternoons.
 - B. A storm filled the shallow channels.
 - C. Students visited to identify plants and observe insects.
 - D. The team adjusted soil depth.
9. The writer of Passage B would most likely agree that the roof garden
 - A. should replace all drainage repairs
 - B. has value if its limits are stated clearly
 - C. should no longer be used as a classroom
 - D. works equally well during every storm
10. Which title best fits both passages?
 - A. A Library Project and Its Promise
 - B. Why Libraries Should Close
 - C. The End of City Rain
 - D. A Guide to Insect Classification

Answer Key and Explanations

1. **A.** The first paragraph says the old roof absorbed heat and nearby rooms became warm.
2. **B.** The passage says the garden retained some rainfall, while a large storm still sent water to the drains.
3. **A.** A comparison provides evidence about the garden's effects while other conditions may vary.
4. **C.** The garden cooled rooms and retained some rain, but effects varied and large storms exceeded its capacity.
5. **B.** The team used the comparison to adjust soil depth for the next season.
6. **B.** Passage B cautions that the garden holds only a modest amount of rain and must not delay larger repairs.
7. **A.** Passage A reports varied benefits and learning; Passage B focuses on the danger of overstating flood protection.
8. **C.** The visits and observation are direct evidence of an educational use.
9. **B.** The writer calls it appealing and useful, while insisting its limitations be discussed.
10. **A.** Both passages discuss a library roof project and consider its benefits and limits.

Flashcards

Cover the right column, answer aloud, and then check. For print-and-cut use, trim along the rules.

Front / term	Back / meaning
Central idea	The main point a passage develops.
Supporting detail	A specific fact or example that supports an idea.
Inference	A conclusion supported by passage evidence.
Context clue	Nearby wording that helps explain an unfamiliar word.
Author's purpose	What the author is trying to accomplish.
Tone	The author's attitude as conveyed by word choice.
Paragraph function	The job a paragraph performs in the passage.
Claim	A statement that can be supported or challenged with reasons or evidence.
Evidence	Information used to support a claim.
Paired passages	Texts on a related issue that may agree, disagree, or differ in emphasis.
Reliable inference	A conclusion that follows from the text without adding unsupported assumptions.
Best evidence strategy	Return to the relevant lines and match them to the answer choice.