Fitzgerald

The PSAT Reading Test - Description and Practice

The PSAT 8/9 Reading Test will have the following five passages:

* One literature passage - contemporary or class, American or world literature
* One passage or a pair of passages from either
  + an American founding document (Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, etc.)
  + a text "in the global conversation" (Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, etc.)
* One passage social science passage (economics, psychology, sociology, etc.)
* Two science passages or one passage and one pair of passages concerning foundational concepts and developments in earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics.

You will be asked to

* identify the main idea of the passage
* identify evidence used to support that main idea
* draw a conclusion based on the evidence
* understand the meaning of words using the context of the reading
* identify the type of logic the author is using in the reading and whether that logic is valid or faulty
  + conditional - if..., then ....
  + catagorical - (all, some, none)
  + causal - cause and effect
  + parallel - if one argument is valid, then another similar one must be, too
  + emotional
* compare two paired passages
* connect information in a text and an info graphic

So that you can get familiar with the types of questions you will see, we will look at passages that focus on the following

* **Argument** 
  + Identifying Main idea, Type of Reasoning, Structure, Purpose, Words in Context p. 15-16
* **Command of Evidence**
  + Identify the evidence, infer (draw a conclusion) based on the evidence pp. 21-22
* **Words in Context**
  + Why might the author have chosen a word, how does the use of that word affect the meaning of the passage, what is the meaning of the word in the context of the reading pp. 27-29
* **Information and Ideas**
  + Understanding ideas in a passage, best summary of a passage, reason an idea is included in a passage pp. 33-34
* **Informational Graphics**
  + Reading bar charts, line graphs, histograms, tables, pie charts, etc., correlating information in a short passage with information in an informational graphic pp. 39-40
* **Paired Passages**
  + Comparing two passages pp. 45-46, pp.47-48