Charta | LESSON NOTES

Detail questions: go back and find it

Verbal Reasoning

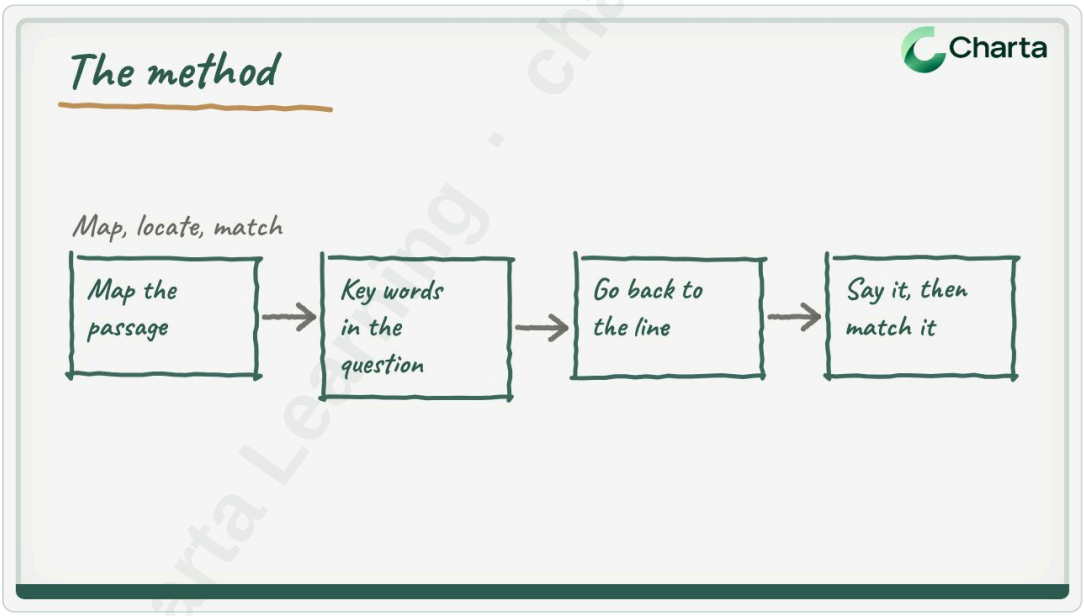
1 What the question asks

- According to the passage; the passage states
- The answer is written in the passage
- Often in different words
- Wrong choices borrow real phrases from the wrong place

IN THE LESSON

- Detail questions usually begin with, according to the passage, or, the passage states that.
- Some ask for a reason: the courts did this because.
- Those words are a promise.
- The answer is stated in the passage, usually in one or two sentences, though often in different words.
- So you never need to guess, and you never need outside knowledge.
- But there is a catch.
- The wrong choices are also built from the passage.
- They take a real phrase from the wrong paragraph, or attach a true statement to the wrong group of people, or give a reason that sounds sensible but is not the one the passage gives.
- Accuracy means going back to the exact place.

2 The method



IN THE LESSON

- Here is the method.
- Step one, read the passage once and make a passage map, a few words for each paragraph, so you know where things are.
- Step two, read the question and pick out its key words, such as the group, the time or the reason it asks about.
- Step three, use your map to go back to the exact paragraph and sentence, and read that sentence again, with the one before and after.
- Step four, put the answer in your own words, then find the choice that says the same thing.
- Why go back instead of trusting memory?
- Because the traps are written to match what you half remember.

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3 The traps in the wrong choices

- Wrong group: the other camp's view
- Wrong time or place in the passage
- True, but not the reason asked for
- Plausible but unstated, or already there before

IN THE LESSON

- Here are the traps, by name.
- The first is the wrong group: a view the passage gives to one group, attached to another.
- In a passage with two camps, this is the commonest trap of all.
- The second is the wrong time or place: something true of one period or one paragraph, offered as the answer about another.
- The third is true but not the reason: a fact the passage states, but not the reason the question asks for.
- The fourth is plausible but unstated: it sounds sensible, it may even be true in real life, but the passage never says it.
- And the fifth is already there: it credits a cause with something that existed before it.

4 Question 1: translating poetry, part one

- Translators of poetry have long been divided between two loyalties. One group holds that a translation's first duty is to the meaning of the original: the translator should render what the poem says as exactly as the second language allows, even if the result reads stiffly and abandons the original's rhyme and metre. The other holds that a poem is not separable from its sound, and that a version which preserves the sense but not the music has translated something other than the poem. Translators of this persuasion are willing to alter images, add words, or drop details in order to recreate in the new language an effect comparable to the one the original produced.

IN THE LESSON

- Our first passage is the easy one, about translating poems.
- It describes two camps, so keep track of who believes what.
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- One group holds that a translation's first duty is to the meaning of the original: the translator should render what the poem says as exactly as the second language allows, even if the result reads stiffly and abandons the original's rhyme and metre.
- The other holds that a poem is not separable from its sound, and that a version which preserves the sense but not the music has translated something other than the poem.
- Translators of this persuasion are willing to alter images, add words, or drop details in order to recreate in the new language an effect comparable to the one the original produced.

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5 Question 1: translating poetry, part two

- Each position has an obvious weakness. The literal translation can be faithful to every word and still give a reader no idea why the poem was admired. The free translation can delight the reader while misrepresenting what the poet actually wrote, and at its extreme becomes a new poem bearing the old one's title.
- Some translators have tried to escape the dilemma by publishing the two kinds of version together, or by printing a literal version alongside the original for readers who know a little of the source language. Such editions concede that no single text can do everything, but they shift a burden onto the reader, who must now assemble the poem from its parts. A more modest observation may be the most useful: the right balance depends on the poem. A lyric whose force lies chiefly in the music of its lines loses almost everything in a literal version, while a poem built from precise images or a complex argument may survive literal translation with much of its value intact.

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- A more modest observation may be the most useful: the right balance depends on the poem.
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6 Question 1: map the passage

Translating poetry: the map

Paragraph 1	two camps: meaning, sound	**map**
Paragraph 2	each has a weakness	**map**
Paragraph 3	it depends on the poem	**author**
The line	change details for the effect	**paragraph 1**

IN THE LESSON

- Here is the map.
- Paragraph one sets out two camps.
- One puts meaning first and accepts losing rhyme and metre.
- The other says a poem cannot be separated from its sound, and will alter images, add words or drop details to recreate a comparable effect.
- Paragraph two gives each camp's weakness.
- Paragraph three says the right balance depends on the poem.
- Now the question asks what the sound camp is willing to do.
- The key words are cannot be separated from its sound, so we go back to the end of paragraph one.
- The line says they will alter images, add words, or drop details, to recreate a comparable effect.
- In our own words: change details to get the same effect.
- Now match.

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7 Question 1: the question

- According to the passage, translators who hold that a poem cannot be separated from its sound are willing to:
- A. translate only poems built from precise images
- B. print a literal version alongside each of their own freer versions of a poem
- C. render each word as exactly as the second language allows
- D. abandon the original's rhyme and metre
- E. change details of the original in order to produce a comparable effect

IN THE LESSON

- Here is the question, and the five choices.
- According to the passage, translators who hold that a poem cannot be separated from its sound are willing to: Choice A.
- translate only poems built from precise images Choice B.
- print a literal version alongside each of their own freer versions of a poem Choice C.
- render each word as exactly as the second language allows Choice D.
- abandon the original's rhyme and metre Choice E.
- change details of the original in order to produce a comparable effect Check each choice against the right camp.

8 Question 1: test each choice

According to the passage, translators who hold that a poem cannot ...

A: only image-based poems	no such limit is given	**unstated**
B: print a literal version too	that is a third group	**wrong group**
C: render each word exactly	the meaning camp's aim	**wrong group**
D: abandon rhyme and metre	the meaning camp again	**wrong group**
E: change details for an effect	the line, in other words	**the answer**

IN THE LESSON

- Choice A says they translate only poems built from precise images.
- The passage gives no such limit, and image-based poems come up only as suited to literal versions.
- Choice B, printing a literal version alongside, belongs to a third group, the translators in paragraph three who try to escape the dilemma.
- Wrong group.
- Choice C, rendering each word as exactly as possible, is the aim of the meaning camp.
- Wrong group again.
- Choice D, abandoning rhyme and metre, is also what the meaning camp accepts.
- Three choices take real words from the passage and give them to the wrong people.
- Choice E says the line in different words: change details of the original to produce a comparable effect.
- The answer is E.

9 Question 2: the mailbox rule, part one

- Under the rule that English and American courts adopted in the nineteenth century, an acceptance of a contract offer sent by post took effect the moment the letter was posted, not when it arrived. The mailbox rule, as it came to be called, settled a practical difficulty. Letters took days to travel, and someone had to bear the risk that the offer would be withdrawn, or the letter lost, while the acceptance was in transit. Judges reasoned that the person who made the offer had chosen to invite a reply by post and could protect himself by stating that he would be bound only on receipt.

IN THE LESSON

- Our second passage is a medium one, about when an acceptance of a contract offer takes effect.
- It moves through three kinds of message, so map each one.
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- The mailbox rule, as it came to be called, settled a practical difficulty.
- Letters took days to travel, and someone had to bear the risk that the offer would be withdrawn, or the letter lost, while the acceptance was in transit.
- Judges reasoned that the person who made the offer had chosen to invite a reply by post and could protect himself by stating that he would be bound only on receipt.

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10 Question 2: the mailbox rule, part two

- The spread of the telephone and of other instantaneous means of communication unsettled the rule's foundations. For acceptances spoken over the telephone, courts held that acceptance took effect only when it was heard by the offeror, since the speaker could tell at once whether the line had failed and repeat himself. Instantaneous communication, the courts reasoned, removes the period of uncertainty that justified the postal rule, and it places the risk of a failed message on the party best able to notice it.

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11 Question 2: the mailbox rule, part three

- Electronic mail poses a harder case than either. A message is usually delivered within seconds, which suggests treating it like a telephone call, yet the sender typically has no immediate confirmation that it was received or read, which suggests treating it like a letter. Courts and legislatures have not answered uniformly. Some statutes now provide that an electronic message is received when it enters a system that the recipient has designated, regardless of whether it is opened, an approach that borrows from both traditions without following either entirely.

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- Some statutes now provide that an electronic message is received when it enters a system that the recipient has designated, regardless of whether it is opened, an approach that borrows from both traditions without following either entirely.

12 Question 2: map the passage

The mailbox rule: the map

Paragraph 1	post: binds when posted	**letters**
Paragraph 2	telephone: when heard	**calls**
Paragraph 3	email: no single answer	**email**
The line	chose post; could ask receipt	**paragraph 1**

IN THE LESSON

- Here is the map.
- Paragraph one, letters: under the mailbox rule an acceptance took effect when posted, and the paragraph gives the judges' reason.
- Paragraph two, the telephone: acceptance took effect only when heard, because the speaker could tell at once if the line failed.
- Paragraph three, email: a harder case, with no single answer.
- The question asks why the courts that adopted the mailbox rule put the risk on the offeror.
- Key words: adopted the mailbox rule.
- That is paragraph one, not paragraph two.
- Go back to its last sentence.
- Judges reasoned that the offeror had chosen to invite a reply by post and could protect himself by saying he would be bound only on receipt.
- In our own words: he chose the post, and he could have asked for receipt.

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13 Question 2: the question

- According to the passage, the courts that adopted the mailbox rule placed the risk of a delayed or lost acceptance on the offeror because:
- A. the offeror had chosen to invite a reply by post and could have required receipt
- B. the offeror was the party best able to notice whether the message had failed and to repeat it
- C. the acceptor could not control whether the postal service would deliver the letter
- D. the acceptor could not know whether the offer had been withdrawn while the acceptance was in transit
- E. the offeror stood to gain from the contract and so ought to carry the risks of forming it

IN THE LESSON

- Here is the question, and the five choices.
- According to the passage, the courts that adopted the mailbox rule placed the risk of a delayed or lost acceptance on the offeror because: Choice A.
- the offeror had chosen to invite a reply by post and could have required receipt Choice B.
- the offeror was the party best able to notice whether the message had failed and to repeat it Choice C.
- the acceptor could not control whether the postal service would deliver the letter Choice D.
- the acceptor could not know whether the offer had been withdrawn while the acceptance was in transit Choice E.
- the offeror stood to gain from the contract and so ought to carry the risks of forming it Several choices give sensible reasons.
- Only one is the reason in the passage.

14 Question 2: test each choice

According to the passage, the courts that adopted the mailbox ...

A: chose post; could ask receipt	the judges' stated reason	**the answer**
B: best able to notice a failure	the later telephone reason	**wrong time**
C: acceptor cannot control post	sounds fair, not stated	**unstated**
D: acceptor unsure of withdrawal	the problem, not the reason	**not the reason**
E: offeror gains, so bears risk	plausible, never said	**unstated**

IN THE LESSON

- Choice A says the line in different words: the offeror had chosen to invite a reply by post and could have required receipt.
- Choice B, the party best able to notice whether the message failed, is real reasoning from the passage, but from paragraph two, about the telephone.
- Wrong time.
- Choice C, the acceptor cannot control the post, sounds fair, but the passage never gives it as the judges' reason.
- Choice D is the subtle one.
- The acceptor not knowing whether the offer was withdrawn is a real difficulty the rule solved, but it is the problem, not the reason the risk fell on the offeror.
- Choice E, the offeror stands to gain, is plausible legal thinking that the passage never states.
- The answer is A.

15 Question 3: the first indexes, part one

- Readers today take for granted that a serious work of scholarship will end with an index, but the device was slow to emerge and owed less to the invention of printing than is often supposed. Its origins lie in the universities and preaching orders of the thirteenth century. Friars preparing sermons needed to find, quickly, every passage in Scripture or in the Church Fathers bearing on a theme such as charity or pride, and scholars working through large compilations faced similar needs. The response included concordances, which listed every occurrence of a word, and subject indexes arranged in alphabetical order.

IN THE LESSON

- Our third passage is a hard one, about the history of the book index.
- Its first sentence tells you that printing mattered less than people think, so read for exactly what printing did.
- Readers today take for granted that a serious work of scholarship will end with an index, but the device was slow to emerge and owed less to the invention of printing than is often supposed.
- Its origins lie in the universities and preaching orders of the thirteenth century.
- Friars preparing sermons needed to find, quickly, every passage in Scripture or in the Church Fathers bearing on a theme such as charity or pride, and scholars working through large compilations faced similar needs.
- The response included concordances, which listed every occurrence of a word, and subject indexes arranged in alphabetical order.

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16 Question 3: the first indexes, part two

- Alphabetical order was then a novelty in this use. Earlier compilers had generally arranged material by importance or by what they took to be the natural order of things, placing God before angels and angels before human beings. Ordering entries by the accident of their first letters struck some writers as arbitrary, and a few prefaced their indexes with apologies explaining the system to readers. Its advantage was that a user needed no prior understanding of an author's scheme to find what he sought.

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- Ordering entries by the accident of their first letters struck some writers as arbitrary, and a few prefaced their indexes with apologies explaining the system to readers.
- Its advantage was that a user needed no prior understanding of an author's scheme to find what he sought.

17 Question 3: the first indexes, part three

- There was, however, a difficulty that only printing would resolve. A manuscript index could direct a reader to a book and chapter but not to a page, because each hand-copied manuscript divided its text differently. Some indexers therefore numbered the leaves of a particular copy, which made the index useful only for that copy. Printing produced many identical copies, so that one index with page numbers served them all. The printed index was thus less an invention than the completion of a tool that scholars had been refining for two centuries.

IN THE LESSON

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18 Question 3: map the passage

The first indexes: the map

Paragraph 1	indexes began before printing	**origins**
Paragraph 2	alphabetical order was new	**novelty**
Paragraph 3	printing gave page numbers	**printing**
The line	one index for every copy	**paragraph 3**

IN THE LESSON

- Here is the map.
- Paragraph one: the index began in the thirteenth century, long before printing, so friars and scholars could find passages on a theme.
- Paragraph two: alphabetical order was a novelty, which some writers felt they had to explain.
- Paragraph three: one problem only printing solved.
- A manuscript index could point to a book and chapter, but not a page, because every hand copy divided its text differently.
- Printing made identical copies, so one index with page numbers served them all.
- The question asks what printing made possible.
- Key word: printing, which takes us to paragraph three.
- In our own words: page references that work in every copy.
- Notice the trap the passage sets up: several things on the list existed before printing.

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19 Question 3: the question

- According to the passage, printing contributed to the development of the index by making it possible to:
- A. help friars find every passage bearing on a theme such as charity or pride
- B. persuade writers that arranging entries alphabetically was not arbitrary
- C. give page references that held good for every copy of a book
- D. number the leaves of an individual copy so that readers could find passages
- E. bring the index within the reach of readers outside the universities and preaching orders

IN THE LESSON

- Here is the question, and the five choices.
- According to the passage, printing contributed to the development of the index by making it possible to: Choice A.
- help friars find every passage bearing on a theme such as charity or pride Choice B.
- persuade writers that arranging entries alphabetically was not arbitrary Choice C.
- give page references that held good for every copy of a book Choice D.
- number the leaves of an individual copy so that readers could find passages Choice E.
- bring the index within the reach of readers outside the universities and preaching orders Ask of each choice: did printing make this possible, or was it there already?

20 Question 3: test each choice

According to the passage, printing contributed to the development ...

A: help friars find passages	already done before printing	**already there**
B: alphabetical order accepted	never credited to printing	**unstated**
C: page references for every copy	identical copies, one index	**the answer**
D: number the leaves of one copy	manuscript indexers did this	**already there**
E: indexes for readers beyond	plausible, not in the passage	**unstated**

IN THE LESSON

- Choice A, helping friars find every passage on a theme, was already done by thirteenth century indexes before printing.
- Already there.
- Choice B says printing persuaded writers that alphabetical order was not arbitrary.
- The passage mentions their doubts, but never says printing changed their minds.
- Choice C says the line in different words: page references that held good for every copy of a book.
- Choice D, numbering the leaves of one copy, is what some manuscript indexers did, and it worked only for that copy.
- That is the problem printing solved, not what printing made possible.
- Choice E, reaching readers outside the universities, sounds like something printing might do, but the passage never says it.
- The answer is C.

21 Accurate and quick

- Map as you read
- Key words: the group, the time, the because
- Go back: the sentence and one each side
- Say it in your own words first
- Who says it, and where?

IN THE LESSON

- Some habits that keep you accurate and quick.
- First, make the passage map as you read, because a map is what lets you go back to the right place in seconds.
- Second, underline in your head the key words of the question: the group, the period, the word because.
- Third, go back and read the exact sentence, plus one on each side.
- Most detail questions are lost by answering from memory.
- Fourth, say the answer in your own words before you read the choices.
- Fifth, for each tempting choice, ask: who says this in the passage, and where?
- If the answer is a different group or a different paragraph, cross it out.

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22 What the three questions taught

- Check who holds each view
- Check which paragraph: post, not telephone
- Check what came before the cause
- The answer is a line, said again

IN THE LESSON

- Look back at the three passages.
- In the translators passage, three choices took real phrases and gave them to the wrong camp, so checking who held each view decided the question.
- In the mailbox passage, the reason we needed was in paragraph one, while a tempting reason came from paragraph two, about the telephone, and another was the problem the rule solved rather than the reason behind it.
- In the index passage, two choices described things that existed before printing.
- In all three, the right answer was a sentence of the passage, said again in different words, and we found it by going back, not by remembering.

23 Quick check

1. A choice copies words from the passage. Does that make it right?
   Answer: No: real phrases are often from the wrong place.
2. A sensible reason the passage never gives. Is it the answer?
   Answer: No: plausible but unstated.
3. What do you do before reading the choices?
   Answer: Go back to the line; say the answer yourself.

IN THE LESSON

- A quick check.
- Pause after each question.
- Question one.
- A choice uses words that appear in the passage, word for word.
- Does that make it right?
- The answer is no.
- Wrong choices often borrow real phrases from the wrong paragraph or the wrong group.
- Question two.
- A question asks why a court made a ruling, and a choice gives a sensible reason the passage never mentions.
- Is it the answer?
- The answer is no.
- It is plausible but unstated.
- The reason must be the one the passage gives.
- Question three.
- What should you do before reading the choices of a detail question?
- The answer: go back to the exact sentence, and say the answer in your own words.

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24 Recap: the detail method

- Map; key words; go back to the line
- Say it in your own words
- Find the same idea in a choice
- Name the trap in each wrong choice

IN THE LESSON

- Let us recap.
- Read the passage once and map it, so you know where each point is.
- Pick out the key words of the question: the group, the time, the reason.
- Go back to the exact sentence, read it with its neighbours, and say the answer in your own words.
- Then find the choice that says the same thing in different words.
- Name the trap in every wrong choice: wrong group, wrong time or place, true but not the reason, plausible but unstated, or already there before.
- The answer is always in the passage; your job is to find it, not to remember it.
- Practise going back on every detail question.

Summary notes for the Charta whiteboard lesson. Figures are from the lesson's made-up examples.

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