THE PASSAGE | READING COMPREHENSION

> In our schools, we teach our children all that is there to know about physics, maths and history and what-have-you. But do we teach them about the bitter caste divide that plagues the country, about the spectre of famine that stalks large parts of our land, about gender sensitivity, about the possibility of atheism as a choice, etc.? Equally important, do we teach them to ask questions, or do we teach them only to passively receive our wisdom? From the cocooned world of school, suddenly, the adolescent finds himself/herself in the unfettered world of university. Here he/she is swept up in a turmoil of ideas, influences and ideologies. For someone who has been discouraged from asking questions and forming an opinion, this transition can be painful.

Which one of the following statements best reflects the central idea of the passage given above?

Central Idea | Question-Led Passage | Hidden Trap: choosing the option about who is responsible

(a) School curriculum is not compatible with the expectations of children and parents.
Expectations of children and parents are never discussed.

(b) Emphasis on academic achievements does give time for development of personality and skills.
The passage says the opposite: academics crowd out these things.

(c) Preparing the children to be better citizens should be the responsibility of the education system.
Assigns responsibility. The passage asks what schools teach, not who is responsible.

(d) To be a better citizen, the present world order demands societal and life-coping skills in addition to academic content. ✓
Matches the questions about caste, famine, gender and questioning, and the painful transition.

CRACK THE HIDDEN RULE

When a passage is built from questions, turn them into statements. Each question here hides a complaint: schools teach subjects but not social awareness or questioning.

The central idea is what those complaints add up to.

Questions → statements → one idea.

COMPLAINT 1	COMPLAINT 2	COST
Caste, famine, gender not taught	**Questioning not encouraged**	**Painful shift to university**

WORKED IN 3 CLEAN STEPS

1 Turn questions into statements
Schools do not teach social realities. They do not teach students to question. Students struggle later.

2 Join them
Academics alone do not prepare a young person for life. Social and life-coping skills are also needed.

3 Match the option
(d) says academic content is not enough and societal and life-coping skills are needed. Option (b) says the reverse. (a) and (c) bring in parents and responsibility.

ANSWER: (d) societal and life-coping skills in addition to academic content

THE 3-SECOND SHORTCUT

Rewrite each rhetorical question as a plain statement. Then ask which option says what all the statements say together. Reject options about parents or about who is responsible.

question → statement | join the complaints | reject who-is-responsible

→ Option (b) is the exact opposite of the passage, so it goes first.
→ The word 'in addition to' in (d) is the key: the passage does not reject academics.

WHY ASPIRANTS LOSE MARKS HERE

1. **Choosing (c) because it sounds like a recommendation.** The passage describes a gap, it does not assign duty.
2. **Choosing (a) because the curriculum is criticised.** Parents and children's expectations never appear.
3. **Reading the passage as anti-academic.** It asks for more, not less.

ATTEMPT	FLAG	SKIP
~50 sec	if (c) and (d) both look right	rarely
Convert the questions and the idea falls out.	Pick the one that describes rather than assigns duty.	Very scoreable.

THE ONE-LINE TAKEAWAY

Turn rhetorical questions into statements. The central idea is what they say together.

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