



Reading Warm-Up Selection 3

“More in France Are Turning to Islam,
Challenging a Nation’s Idea of Itself”

By MAÏA de la BAUME

What we will learn and practice

Skills:

- *Objective summaries
- *Narrator's claim
- *Synonyms
- *Comparisons/Contrasts
- *Author's purpose
- *Meaning of phrases
- *Connotation of words
- *Making inferences from details
- *Vocabulary
- *Structure/organization of the selection
- *Use of quotations
- *Effects of dialogue use (Constructed Response)

“More in France Are Turning to Islam, Challenging a Nation’s Idea of Itself ”

#1 CRÉTEIL, France — The spacious and elegant modern building, in the heart of this middle-class suburb of Paris, is known as “the mosque of the converts.”

2 Every year about 150 Muslim conversion ceremonies are performed in the snow-white structure of the Sahaba mosque in Créteil, with its intricate mosaics and a stunning 81-foot minaret, built in 2008 and a symbol of Islam’s growing presence in France. Among those who come here for Friday Prayer are numerous young former Roman Catholics, wearing the traditional Muslim prayer cap and long robe.



3 While the number of converts remains relatively small in France, yearly conversions to Islam have doubled in the past 25 years, experts say, presenting a growing challenge for France, where government and public attitudes toward Islam are awkward and sometimes hostile.

4 French antiterrorism officials have been warning for years that converts represent a critical element of the terrorist threat in Europe, because they have Western passports and do not stand out.



5 In October, the French police conducted a series of antiterrorism raids across France, resulting in the arrests of 12 people, including at least three French citizens who had recently converted to Islam. Converts “often need to overdo it if they want to be accepted” as Muslims, and so veer into extremism more frequently than others, said Didier Leschi, who was in charge of religious issues at the Interior Ministry under former President Nicolas Sarkozy.

6 There are persistent concerns that French prisons are fertile ground for conversions and for Islamic **radicalism**; observant Muslims are thought to make up a least a third of the inmate population, according to French news reports.



7 Many Muslims counter that they regularly face prejudice, and consider a 2010 law banning the full-face veil from public spaces and the growing concern with conversions as reflections of French intolerance.

8 Whatever the impact, there is little doubt that conversions are growing more commonplace. “The conversion phenomenon is significant and impressive, particularly since 2000,” said Bernard Godard, who is in charge of religious issues at the Interior Ministry.



9 Of an estimated six million Muslims in France, about 100,000 are thought to be converts, compared with about 50,000 in 1986, according to Mr. Godard. Muslim associations say the number is as high as 200,000. But France, which has a population of about 65 million, defines itself as secular and has no official statistics broken down by race or creed. For Mr. Godard, a former intelligence officer, it is the “nature” of conversions that has changed.

10 Conversions to marry have long been common enough in France, but a growing number of young people are now seen as converting to be better socially integrated in neighborhoods where Islam is dominant.

11 “In poor districts, it has become a reverse integration,” said Gilles Kepel, an expert on Islam and the banlieues, the poor, predominantly Muslim neighborhoods that ring Paris and other major cities.



12 Many converts are men younger than 40, experts say, often born in France's former African colonies or overseas territories.

13 Charlie-Loup, 21, a student from nearby St.-Maur-des-Fossés, converted to Islam at 19, after a troubled adolescence and strained relations with his mother. He grew up Roman Catholic but had many Muslim friends at school. "Conversions have become a social phenomenon here," he said, asking that his surname not be used because he considered his conversion a private initiative and did not want to draw attention to himself. Some convert simply "out of curiosity," he said.

14 In some predominantly Muslim areas, even non-Muslims observe Ramadan, the Muslim holy month that requires fasting during the day, because they like "the group effect, the festive side of it," said Samir Amghar, a sociologist and an expert on radical Islam in Europe.



15 In many banlieues, Islam has come to represent not only a sort of social norm but also a refuge, an alternative to the **ambient** misery, researchers and converts say.

16 For Mr. Amghar, Islam provides more structure and discipline than other religions. It is a way to “refuse modernism,” get back to a society with more family values and a clearer distinction between men and women. “Islam has a peaceful effect on the converts,” Mr. Amghar said. “The world looks clearer after they’ve converted.”

17 In Marseille, on the southern coast, “conversions have increased at an incredible pace in the last three years,” said Abderrahmane Ghoul, the imam of the major mosque of Marseille and the president of the local branch of the French Council of the Muslim Faith. Mr. Ghoul signed about 130 conversion certificates in 2012.



18 Hassen Chalghoumi, the moderate imam of Drancy, another suburb near Paris, says he thinks conversions have also been propelled by France's official secularism, which he says breeds spiritual emptiness.

19 "Secularism has become antireligious," Mr. Chalghoumi said. "Therefore, it has created an opposite phenomenon. It has allowed people to discover Islam."

20 Many experts note the influence of celebrity converts, particularly soccer players. Nicolas Anelka, who played on the French national team and whose parents came from Martinique, changed his name to Abdul-Salam Bilal Anelka when he converted to Islam in 2004. Franck Ribéry, a popular player from northern France, converted to Islam in 2006 to marry a Muslim woman, Wahiba, and took the name Bilal Yusuf Mohammed.



21 But there is rising anxiety here about the influence of Islam, especially conservative Salafist Islam, particularly among those on the center-right. Islam is regularly at the center of heated debates about the nature and future of France and its culture, and politicians can win attention and support by criticizing the expansion of Muslim customs into the wider public sphere: for example, the rise of women-only sessions in public swimming pools or the increasing availability of halal food.

22 In 2009, a photograph from the magazine Paris Match showing Diam, a popular female rapper, wearing a hijab, or head covering, on a Paris street set off a flood of angry comments from officials and commentators. Fadela Amara, a former secretary of state for urban affairs and founder of a feminist group, Neither Whores Nor Submissives, said that the hijab sent out a “negative image of women” and described it as “a real danger for young women in poor districts.”



23 But Diam's dismissed her critics, saying that having her hijab did not make her a radical Muslim, and that her conversion was a personal choice that had helped her with depression.

24 Recent arrests of radical Muslim converts have also increased concern among public officials and Muslim leaders, though radical Islam is by no means the norm among converts.



25 Raffaello Sillitti, the owner of the bookstore Averroès, which occupies a small space in the Créteil mosque, is convinced that converts like him can be the best advocates of Islam. He sells carpets equipped with compasses to help users orient themselves toward Mecca and a wide range of books written by Muslim scholars, with titles like “Be Master of Your Physical Desire” and “How to Use a Cellphone According to Islamic Law.”

26 “We must get rid of an imaginary Islamic culture,” Mr. Sillitti said, referring to the clichés and misapprehensions connected to Islam in France. “We must show that French culture and Islam can live together in peace.”

1 Determining what the **OBJECTIVE SUMMARY** is for a selection

Written Response: Read the news article. An objective summary does not express opinions or include the bias of the writer.

Multiple Choice: **Which of the following statements best expresses an objective summary for the selection?**

- A. Government officials in secular France plan to crack down on the rising number of Islamic converts to avoid any possible terrorist activities.
- B. Popular athletes and music stars are part of a growing trend in France to convert to the Islamic faith to provide order, structure, and tranquility to one's life.
- C. The rising number of Islamic converts in secular France concerns government officials, who see the rise as a possible source of conflict for the nation's safety.
- D. After seeing a rise in the number of Islamic conversions, officials are expressing concern about the danger to France's security.

2 Identifying SYMBOLS (practice # 1)

When you identify symbols, remember that a symbol is something that stands for or represents something more than itself. It has a meaning beyond its literal meaning.

Question # 2: Reread and highlight passage twenty. .“Franck Ribéry, a popular player from northern France, converted to Islam in 2006 to marry a Muslim woman, Wahiba, and took the name Bilal Yusuf Mohammed.”

Based on this passage, what would a new name be symbolic of?

- A. Converts to Islam adopt new names as a symbol of their new nature and beliefs.
- B. The new name is symbolic of their hatred of the old lifestyle.
- C. Muslim converts must reject their former families and lives. This new name represents a rejection.
- D. By adopting a new name, converts simultaneously embrace a new lifestyle and mindset while rejecting their former ways and beliefs.

3 Identifying SYMBOLS

When you identify symbols, remember that a symbol is something that stands for or represents something more than itself. It has a meaning beyond its literal meaning.

Question # 3: Reread and highlight passage twenty-two. What do critics of Diam believe the hijab is symbolic of?

- A. The hijab is a symbol of danger to men and women of the orthodox Islamic values
- B. The hijab symbolizes the potential for oppression of and dominance over by male Muslims
- C. The traditional hijab represents the modern Western values Islam tries to guard against
- D. This Muslim symbol, a hijab, stands for a woman's permissive side, her temptation toward sin and loose morality

4 Identifying SYMBOLS (constructed response)

When you identify symbols, remember that a symbol is something that stands for or represents something more than itself. It has a meaning beyond its literal meaning.

Question # 4: Reread and highlight passage twenty five. We are told of a bookstore owner who sells unique items. Write a **constructed response** to explain the **contrast** of the **symbols** mentioned in this passage: **a prayer rug** and a **cell phone**. Be sure to **explain** what each is **symbolic** of and how they represent **contrasting** ideas.

5 Determining the meaning of phrases

Determining the meaning of phrases requires a reader to consider the surrounding context of the phrase. Reread to discover what the phrase means in connection to the sentences around it.

Question: Reread and highlight passage sixteen. What is the meaning of the phrase “refuse modernism,” in this paragraph.

- A. Converts to the religion of Islam must adhere to the strict code of behavior the all Muslims are expected to follow, especially in the context of the modern world’s problems.
- B. New Muslims, according to Mr. Amghar a sociologist, should learn to embrace the traditional values of Islam, while using any modern technology that is necessary.
- C. Mr. Amghar is a sociologist and knows the dangers of modern life. He wants Muslims to approach today’s world with caution.
- D. Mr. Amghar wants new Muslims to avoid contact with modern technology.

6 Determining the meaning of unfamiliar words using context and stems clues

- Determining the meaning of unfamiliar words requires a reader to consider the surrounding context of that word. Reread to discover what the word means in connection to the sentences around it.

Question: Reread and highlight passage twenty-two. What is the meaning of the word *submissives*?

“Fadela Amara, a former secretary of state for urban affairs and founder of a feminist group, Neither Whores Nor **Submissives**, said that the hijab sent out a “negative image of women” and described it as “a real danger for young women in poor districts.”

- A. One who controls another person
- B. Someone who is equal in standing to those around him or her.
- C. A person who is under the authority of another person
- D. Someone who is of loose morals or values

7 Answering Constructed Response Items

Today, we will return to last week's constructed response answers and discuss how to answer this type of EOC question.

Reminders:

1. Figure out what the question is asking.
2. Make a checklist for each part of the question.
3. Answer the question completely.
4. Check the list to be sure you covered all parts.

8 Answering Constructed Response Items

Reminders:

1. Repeat key words from the question in your answer.
2. Example: If you are asked to contrast, use words, such as different, contrast, or unlike.
3. If you are asked to compare, use words, such as like, similar, compare, or comparison.

9 Determining the **ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN OR STRUCTURE** of a selection.

When a question asks you about the organizational pattern or structure of a selection, it is asking you to determine what content is in the text and what order it is presented in. There are different patterns to literature and non-fiction selections. Literature tends to be organized chronologically. Non-fiction can take any number of patterns, such as these below.

COMMON TEXT STRUCTURES:

- Cause and effect
- Problem and solution
- Question and answer
- Compare and contrast
- Description/discussion + interview evidence (in quotation marks)
- Sequence or time order

9 con. Determining the **ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN OR STRUCTURE** of a selection.

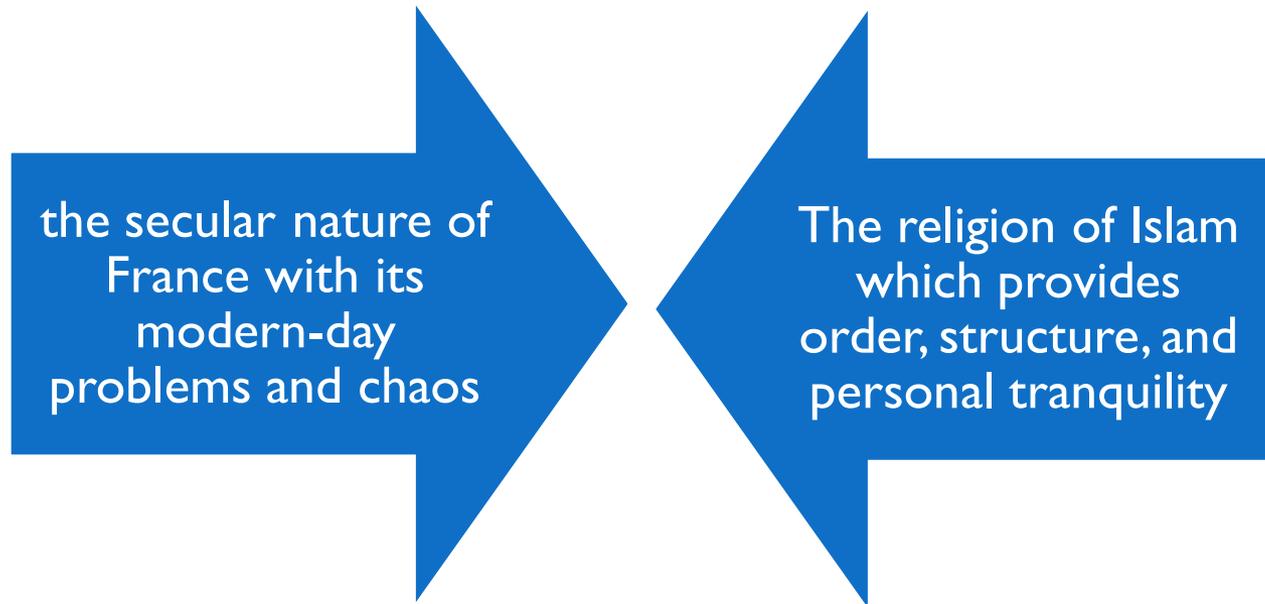
In order to find out important information when reading nonfiction, it helps to identify the text structure, i.e., how ideas have been developed and organized within the text.

Question: Which of the following organizational patterns best describes the non-fiction selection about the rise of conversions in France?

- A. Problem and solution (pattern may repeat with the text)
- B. Description/discussion + interview evidence (in quotation marks)
- C. Sequence or time order (as in a narrative sequence)
- D. Cause and Effect sequence

10 Determining the reason for an author's use of a **CONTRAST** or **COMPARISON**

In sections nine, fifteen, and sixteen, the author contrasts two ideas:



Reminder: secular = non-church

10 Determining the reason for an author's use of a **CONTRAST** or **COMPARISON**

In sections nine, fifteen, and sixteen, the author contrasts two ideas. What might the author's reason be for mentioning these two contrasting ideas several times?

- A. Contrasting the two ideas forces the reader to focus on the current problems in France
- B. Through mentioning the two different ideas, the author is able to include his own personal views on the topic
- C. By contrasting the two concepts, the author offers a reason behind the rising conversion rate
- D. The contrast offers a criticism of the rising conversions