

The Dose: **check your reading.**

Six questions on one real news article. Each uses a different reading skill, from finding a fact to judging what to trust.

READ THIS FIRST

Supreme Court rules against Trump's emergency tariffs, but leaves key questions unanswered

Kent Jones, Babson College · The Conversation · February 20, 2026

<https://theconversation.com/supreme-court-rules-against-trumps-emergency-tariffs-but-leaves-key-questions-unanswered-276561>



How to use it. Read the whole article first. Keep it open while you answer, the way you would at the kitchen table. The questions go roughly from easier to harder. The levels are a guide to how hard each kind of task is on the international adult literacy test, not a score. The answer key is on the last page.

DECODE LEVEL 1

1. Paragraph 10 says the majority treated tariff revenue as part of Congress's "taxing power." What does that mean here?

LOCATE LEVEL 1 TO 2

2. What was the vote in the case, and on what date was it decided?

RESTATE LEVEL 2

3. In one or two sentences of your own, what did the Court decide, and what did it leave open?

INFER LEVEL 3

4. Paragraphs 12, 15 and 17 say the ruling does not reach Section 232 or Section 301, and that Section 232 needs a separate action for each industry. What would you expect to happen next?

COMPARE LEVEL 3

5. According to paragraphs 7 and 8, how is the emergency powers law different from other tariff laws?

EVALUATE LEVEL 4 AND UP

6. Paragraph 5 says the fentanyl tariffs included 25% on some goods from China, and paragraph 2 says the use of the law was “unconstitutional.” Check both against the sources the article links. What do you find?

Answer key

1. Decode. The Constitution gives the power to tax to Congress. The Court treated tariffs as a kind of tax, so a president needs authority from Congress to impose them.

Where to look: Paragraphs 9 and 10

2. Locate. 6 to 3, on February 20, 2026.

Where to look: Paragraph 2

3. Restate. The Court ruled that the 1977 emergency powers law does not let the president impose tariffs, which removes many of his broadest tariffs. It left open other tariff laws, what happens to deals built on the old tariffs, and whether companies get refunds.

Where to look: Paragraphs 1, 2, 12 and 19

4. Infer. Tariffs coming back piece by piece under other laws, one industry or one country at a time: a new series of steps rather than one big one. The article does not predict this; you have to put the paragraphs together. It is the move on this part's cards.

Where to look: Paragraphs 12, 15 and 17

5. Compare. The emergency law allows things like embargoes and asset freezes but does not mention tariffs. Other tariff laws spell out how tariffs may be imposed.

Where to look: Paragraphs 7 and 8

6. Evaluate. The White House fact sheet the article links says 25% on Canada and Mexico but 10% on China, later raised to 20%. And the Court's holding was that the law "does not authorize the President to impose tariffs," a ruling about what the law allows, not a finding that anything was unconstitutional. That difference matters: Congress could pass a law that allows such tariffs. Even a careful explainer by an expert can get details wrong, which is why you check the source.

Where to look: Paragraphs 2 and 5, with the White House fact sheet and the Court's opinion