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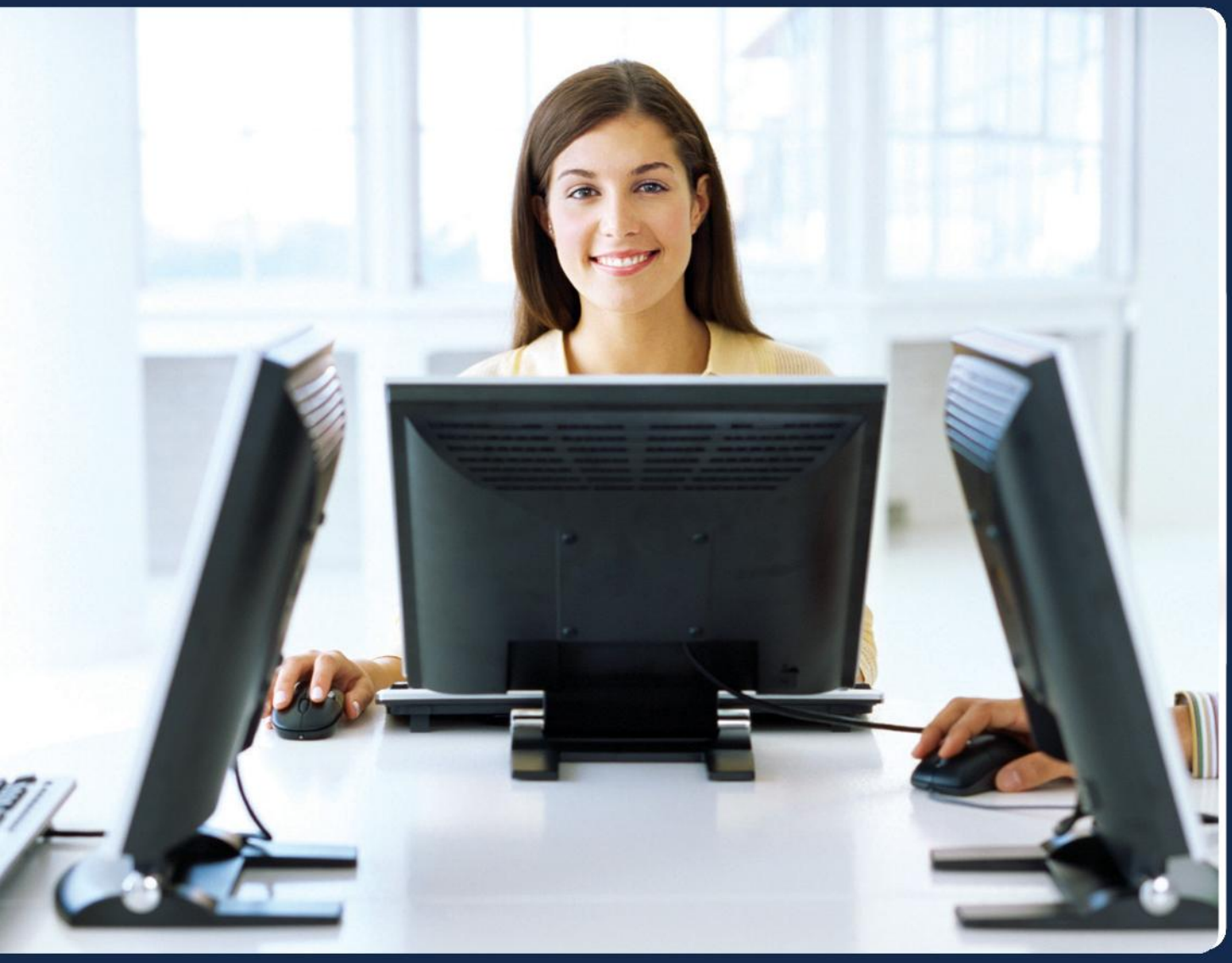
EPSO Assistant Exam Workbook

• VOLUME I •



THE EPSO ASSISTANT EXAM
TEST TYPES

The table below summarizes the test types found in the pre-selection phase of EPSO AST3 exams. This workbook contains explanations, useful tips and tricks for three of these, as indicated in the table. We will deal with other test types in future editions!

TEST TYPE	LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	TIME LIMIT
ABSTRACT REASONING	YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE	10	10 MINUTES
NUMERICAL REASONING	YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE	10	20 MINUTES
VERBAL REASONING	YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE	20	35 MINUTES
ACCURACY AND PRECISION	ENGLISH / FRENCH / GERMAN	40	6 MINUTES
ORGANISING AND PRIORITISING	ENGLISH / FRENCH / GERMAN	24	30 MINUTES
SITUATIONAL JUDGEMENT (SJT)	ENGLISH / FRENCH / GERMAN	20	30 MINUTES

Covered in this workbook:

ABSTRACT REASONING
P. 2-5.

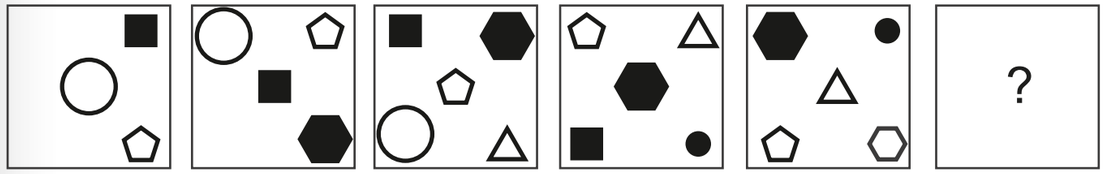
NUMERICAL REASONING
P. 8-9.

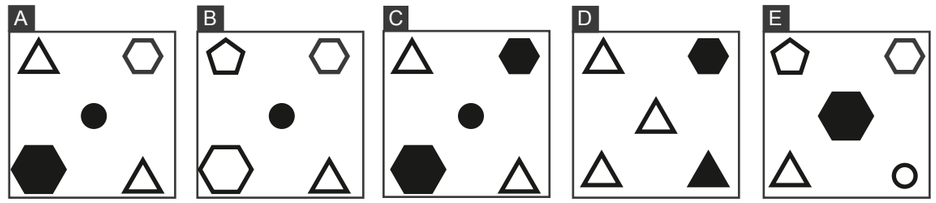
VERBAL REASONING
P. 10-11.

ABSTRACT REASONING

For this section, we've chosen this specific question because it demonstrates the most important concepts you need to master when dealing with abstract reasoning questions – how to find **BUILDING BLOCKS** and the **RULES** governing these.

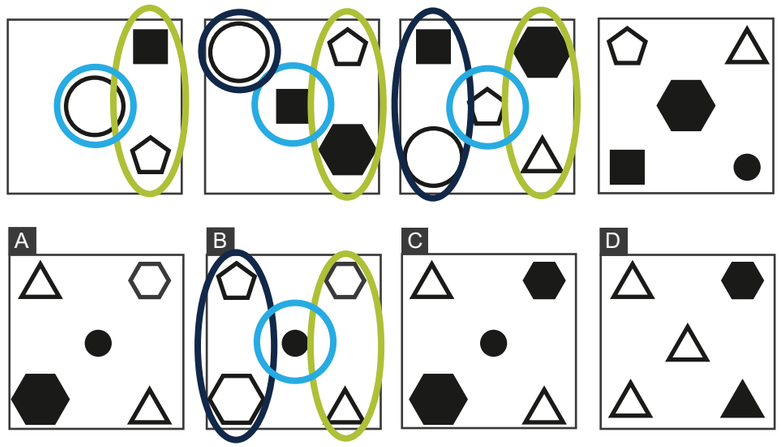
LEARN THE LINGO





When you first look at this test, you might think, "*oh my god, what IS going on here?*", and that's natural.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT EVERY QUESTION IS BUILT FROM BLOCKS - BLOCKS THAT, ONCE YOU FIND THEM, HELP YOU SOLVE THE ENTIRE TEST VERY QUICKLY.

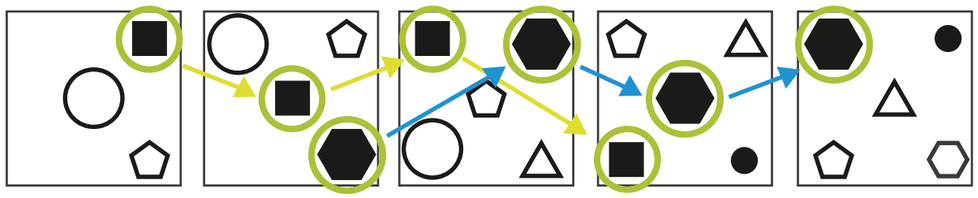


We've indicated some of these building blocks above. When trying to find them on your own, there is a good rule of thumb to keep in mind: **SHAPE-SHADING-SIZE-POSITION**. If you remember this golden **SSSP RULE**, and use it to analyse questions, soon you will be seeing building blocks connected by clear logic rather than a mess of shapes.

SHAPE

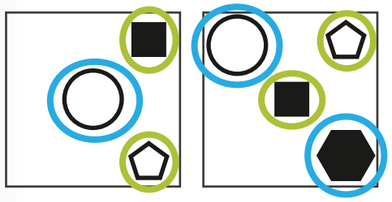
Let's start with the most important element, the **SHAPE**. *Is it a square? A circle? Does it have sides? If yes, is it an odd or even number?* Try not seeing a shape as an individual element but as a member of a larger group within the given question. Try separating it from the rest of the shapes!

SHADING



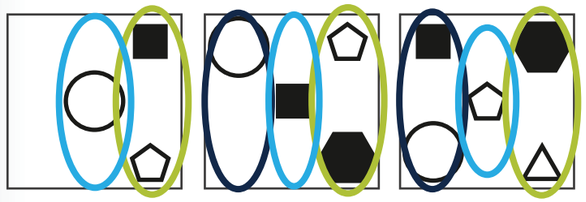
SHADING might be your biggest ally. For some, looking just once at a question is enough to see patterns and to find building blocks. For others, this comes harder – and this is why shading, an extremely powerful visual distinguisher tool is invaluable to you. As you can see above, the shading helps a great deal to show connections between building blocks you would have a hard time noticing otherwise.

SIZE



SIZE is also a great (and easy) way to distinguish between building blocks. Be careful though, sometimes they are used as distractors, that is, they have no role in identifying the rules, but in this case, we can use it to easily separate two classes of building blocks based only on their size.

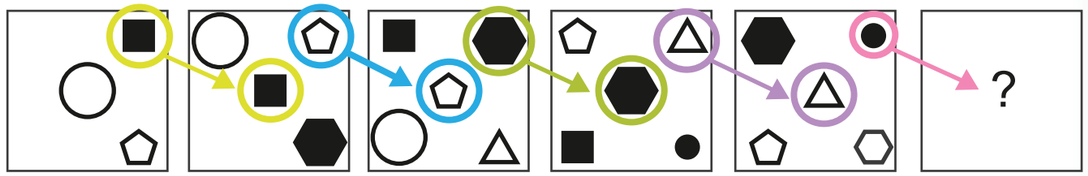
POSITION



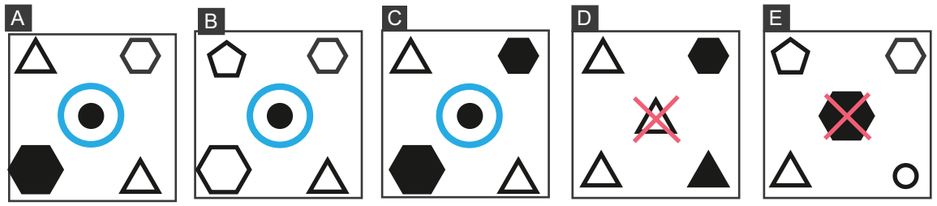
Finally, the trickiest one is **POSITION**. You have to be careful with this one, as there are quite a few "free-form" questions where there is absolutely no spatial rule and trying to find a pattern there will cost you precious time. However, it *can* come in handy in certain situations, as in our current example. As you can see above, we can easily distinguish between three very different positions.

The next essential step in solving the question is finding the rules governing the movement and change of these building blocks. Now you can see why identifying the blocks is so important – now we will have a much easier time finding the patterns.

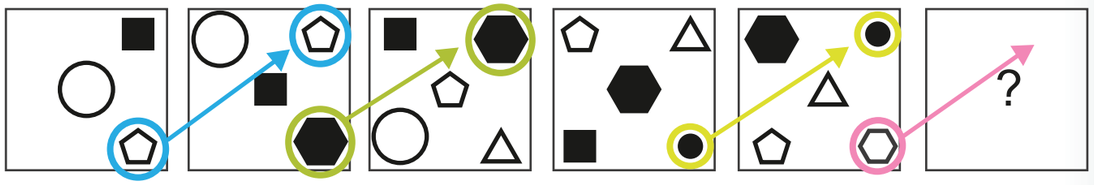
RULE 1: THE MIDDLE SHAPE TAKES THE FORM OF THE TOP RIGHT SHAPE FROM THE PREVIOUS TURN.



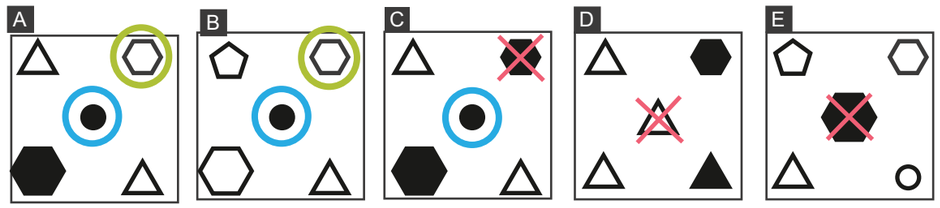
It's very important to only concentrate on a few building blocks at a time – don't try to understand the whole series at once. Now that we've found this rule, try following it through the whole series up until the answer options. Find all that satisfy this rule and try to remember them!



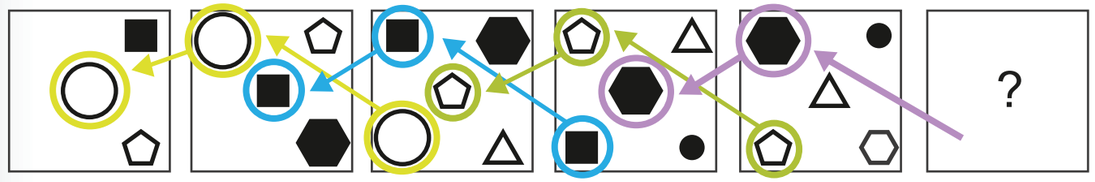
RULE 2: THE BOTTOM RIGHT SHAPE SHOWS WHAT THE MIDDLE SHAPE WILL LOOK LIKE TWO TURNS FROM NOW.



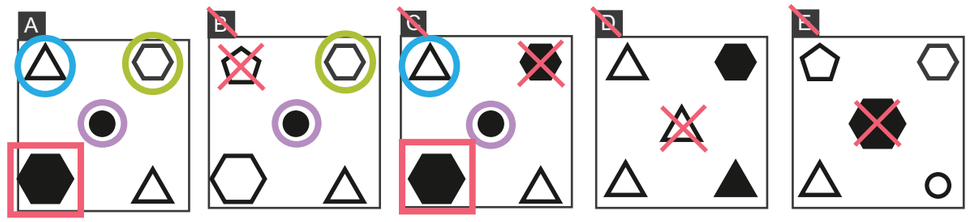
As you can see we are showing a different pattern here. The reason is this: if you simply figure out that the bottom right shape indicates what the middle shape will look like in two turns' time, based only on the last image you won't be able to rule out any of the remaining answer options and so finding this rule – in its current form – would take you no closer to the correct answer. You have to realize that this rule also means that the bottom right shape will become the **TOP RIGHT** shape in the following turn (and then the middle one) – this way you can rule out answer option C, leaving you with two possible options.



RULE 3: THE TOP AND BOTTOM SHAPES ON THE LEFT DO THE SAME BUT WITH PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE MIDDLE SHAPE.



This final rule mirrors the previous one – but it's going backwards. Sometimes you will see rules such as this – which try to trick you by changing the direction of the whole rule. In this case, the shapes on the left show you elements from previous stages of the series. Though tricky these rules may be, **IF YOU KNOW THAT THEY EXIST**, and you concentrate on this rule (and its related building blocks) alone it shouldn't be a problem. Create the correct answer in your head and choose the one correct answer from among the remaining candidates!



As you can see, these questions are difficult because they overload you with a lot of visual information. You can, however, easily see through this haze by practicing smart – finding the building blocks first with the help of the **SSSP RULE** (*shape-shading-size-position*). Once you have a clear idea about the blocks the series uses, you will have no problem finding the rules – one by one.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS?

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NUMERICAL REASONING

COUNTRY	SHARE OF IMPORT IN 1995 (IN %)	SHARE OF IMPORT IN 2002 (IN %)
UINTED STATES OF AMERICA	19.0	17.7
SWITZERLAND	7.9	5.9
JAPAN	10.0	6.9
CHINA	4.8	8.2
RUSSIA	3.9	4.8

BASED ON THE TABLE, BY WHAT PERCENTAGE DID JAPAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE TOTAL NON-EU IMPORT INTO THE EU DECREASE FROM 1995 TO 2002?

A - 6,9%	B - 69%	C - 3,1%	D - 31%

In numerical reasoning tests, there are always three distinct stages to successfully solving a test: interpret the data given, figure out how to calculate the answer to the question (reasoning) and then perform the calculations. Let's see how these three stages come into play in this test.

\+ DATA INTERPRETATION
\- REASONING
= CALCULATION

DATA INTERPRETATION

From the table provided, we will need to use data regarding the percentage of EU imports from Japan in 1995 and 2002. All other data are irrelevant.

REASONING

We need to calculate the percentage change in Japan's share of the European imports. This is the difference in shares divided by the starting point and multiplied by 100.

CALCULATION

In 1995 the share of imports was 10% and in 2002 it was 6.9%.
This is a difference of:

6.9 - 10 = -31%

The negative sign indicates a decrease. The percentage decrease is then:

(-3.1 / 10) * 100 = -31%

POTENTIAL SHORTCUTS / PITFALLS

This is a relatively straightforward question but has a few pitfalls. Because the data items are themselves percentages there is a temptation to think that going from 10% to 6.9% is a 3.1% drop (and this is indeed one of the incorrect answer options) but it isn't. It is a drop of 3.1 **PERCENTAGE POINTS**.

This is then made more confusing because the 1995 value was exactly 10% and so we end up dividing by 10 and multiplying by 100 and end up with something that looks remarkably similar (31%). The other two answer options (6.9% and 69%) play on the fact that they are visually similar to Japan's actual share in 2002, therefore attempting to add another layer of confusion.

VERBAL REASONING

Gardens held a central place in the history of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European art and architecture. Two distinct types of gardens developed during this period. In the seventeenth century, geometric layouts- defined as formal or Baroque gardens—were designed according to exact mathematical rules and strict symmetry and planted with artificially trimmed plants and trees. Typical is the Baroque garden's enormous scale, complexity of composition, richness and sweeping vistas. the early eighteenth century, the desire to make gardens more "natural" resulted in the development of the landscape garden, based on irregular, undulating forms. Each garden type was the result of a different set of aesthetic values and philosophical ideas. The gardens of this era also became ideal meeting places, functioning as centres for a host of social activities, from open-air dining with musical and theatrical performances, to sports and games.

Source: metmuseum.org

"WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS CORRECT?"

A In Europe, the landscape gardens of the eighteenth century reflect different aesthetic values than the formal gardens of the previous century.

B During the eighteenth century in Europe, social gatherings, games, and performances were held equally in both formal and landscape gardens.

C The majority of Europe's Baroque gardens were designed to express the philosophical idea that nature should be tamed by scientific order.

D One would most likely find linear forms in a landscape garden in Europe while uneven, rolling forms are more typical of Baroque gardens.

In verbal reasoning, the four statements that you need to evaluate after having read the text passage always, always fall into one of three categories.

TRUE FALSE CANNOT SAY

True, or corret, statements are statements that you can *prove* to be correct based on information gathered from the text passage. This is the statement that you need to find and pick as the correct answer.

False, or incorrect statements are statements that you can *prove* to be false based on information gathered from the text passage. In other words, the statement is in contradiction with the passage.

What else is there, you might ask? Well, the third category is the so called *insufficient information* statement, or a statement about which you cannot say if it is true or false. From a scoring perspective, these are of course also incorrect answers, but they are very important to be aware of. This is because they are sometimes very easy to confuse with true statements in that they often feel true or you even know them to be true – but remember: you have to prove a statement to be correct based on information in the text only.

LET'S SEE HOW WE CAN EVALUATE THE STATEMENTS IN THIS TEST.

OPTION A is *patently* **TRUE**. The passage states that formal gardens developed in the seventeenth century and landscape gardens developed in the eighteenth century and that "Each garden type was the result of a different set of aesthetic values..."

OPTION B CANNOT BE DEDUCED OR DISPROVED from the information contained in the passage. While the passage states that in Europe Baroque gardens developed during the 17th century and landscape gardens in the 18th century and that "The gardens of this era also became ideal meeting places, functioning as centres for a host of social activities, from open-air dining with musical and theatrical performances, to sports and games", whether during the 18th century, social gatherings and performances were held *equally in both Baroque and landscape gardens* can be neither deduced nor disproved from the information provided.

OPTION C CANNOT BE DEDUCED OR DISPROVED from the information contained in the passage. While the passage states that "Each garden type was the result of a different set of aesthetic values and philosophical ideas" and that "Baroque gardens—were designed according to exact mathematical rules and strict symmetry and planted with artificially trimmed plants and trees", whether the majority of Europe's Baroque gardens were designed to express the philosophical idea that nature should be tamed by scientific order can be neither deduced nor disproved from the information provided.

OPTION D is *patently* **FALSE**. The passage states that the Baroque garden employed "exact mathematical rules and strict symmetry" and the landscape garden was "based on irregular, undulating forms."

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