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EPSO Administrator Exam Workbook



THE EPSO ADMINISTRATOR EXAM TEST TYPES

The table below summarises the test types found in the pre-selection phase of EPSO AD exams. This workbook contains explanations, useful tips and tricks for the test types indicated in the table below.

The tests listed below, question quantities stated and allocated time limits are based on the EPSO Administrator Generalist (AD5) competition. Since this is the largest annual EPSO competition released we have used this as our basis. Please note that other EPSO Administrator competitions may not include the Situational Judgment Test, plus the question quantities and time limits may vary depending on the specifics of the competition. Always, refer to the competition's official Notice of Competition for correct details.

TEST TYPE	LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	TIME LIMIT
ABSTRACT REASONING	LANGUAGE 1	20	20 MINUTES
NUMERICAL REASONING	LANGUAGE 1	10	20 MINUTES
VERBAL REASONING	LANGUAGE 1	10	18 MINUTES
SITUATIONAL JUDGMENT TEST	LANGUAGE 2	20	30 MINUTES



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REASONING**

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REASONING**

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**VERBAL
REASONING**

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**SITUATIONAL
JUDGEMENT
TESTS**

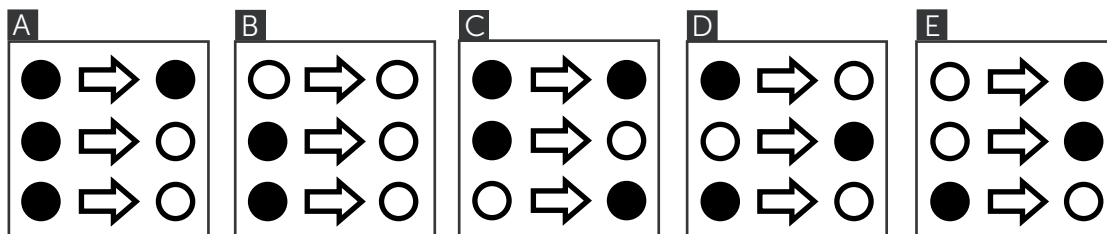
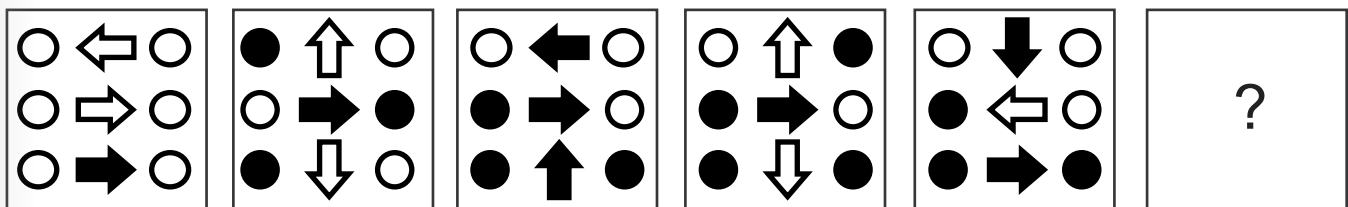
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ABSTRACT REASONING



In the Administrator (AD) edition of our methodology workbooks we will take a look at a typical “old school” abstract reasoning item, in the sense that it only uses very simple shapes and - on their own - very straightforward rules, but in a way that is designed to confuse you.

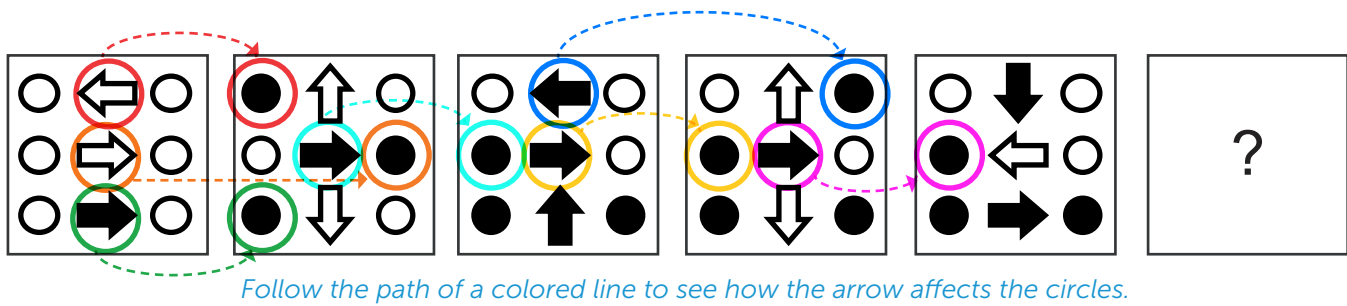
Let's start!



RULE 1: IF A HORIZONTAL UNSHADED ARROW POINTS TO A CIRCLE, IT WILL BE SHADED IN THE FOLLOWING STEP.

As you can see this rule is extremely simple. The difficulty comes from the fact that **the effects** of the arrows in the middle **CAN BE SEEN IN THE FOLLOWING TURN** – so if you are dead set on finding this rule by looking on a single square at a time, you will have a hard time here.

This rule illustrates why it's extremely important to look at **the series as a whole** and not individual, self-contained items after one another. Always keep this in mind: an abstract reasoning item **REPRESENTS A SERIES** – you always have to find rules **BETWEEN THE SQUARES** and not in them.



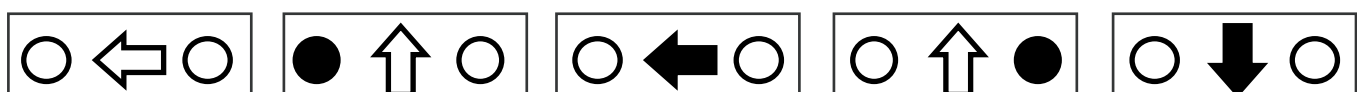
RULE 2: IF AN ARROW IS POINTING DOWNWARDS, BOTH CIRCLES WILL BE SHADED IN THE GIVEN ROW IN THE FOLLOWING TURN, WHILE IF IT'S POINTING UPWARDS, NEITHER OF THEM WILL BE.

The second rule adds another layer of difficulty to the question – but **ESSENTIALLY IS THE SAME AS THE PREVIOUS ONE**; the **arrow** shows which **circle** gets shaded the **following turn**.

What this rule tries to accomplish is to confuse you by adding a new ruleset to the **operators**. *Operators are elements which affect other items (or other operators) in the exercise some way or another.* You can only pay attention to so many operators at any given time, and these tests are designed to overload you with information. If you lose your cool, you won't be able to solve this item in time.

This is why it's crucial to only juggle a limited number of operators in your head at once. If you let the whole test wash over you, you won't be able to find rules, patterns or distil the necessary information required to get on top of things.

How can you stay on top of the test and govern what enters your head and what doesn't? Simple – by isolating **groups of shapes** (see the **SSSP RULE** from Volume #1 of the AST edition of our workbook series (link: http://www.eustraining.eu/e_books), finding the **operators** and comparing these two. The trick is to **only compare two** elements **at the same time** (that is, one operator and one group of shapes which the operator affects).



See how easier your task becomes by concentrating on a limited number of elements at once?

As you can see, I have chosen the circles at the top to be my group of shapes and decided to make the arrows in the top middle my operator. By concentrating only on these two elements through the series, my chances of finding the first two rules increase exponentially.

RULE 3: IF AN ARROW IS SHADED, ITS EFFECT IS THE OPPOSITE OF THE DEFAULT EFFECT DESCRIBED ABOVE. IN THE CASE OF HORIZONTAL ARROWS, THIS MEANS THAT THE CIRCLE 'BEHIND' THE ARROW WILL BECOME SHADED.

At this point, the item reaches its maximum difficulty by introducing a rule that's based on the previous ones. This is where the necessity of isolating shape groups (**SSSP rule**) and finding operators (**see rule 2 above**) comes really into play.

Without realising that the arrows affect the circles and that for each arrow there is a pair of circles – you would probably never find this rule. You *have* to understand what effects the arrows have on the circles before you can even think about reversing them!



As you can see, once you isolate the operators and understand how and when they affect the non-operator shapes in the series, your job is pretty much finished.

In the AST edition of the workbook, we've seen a method of finding the different elements of a test item. In this edition, we went further than that – we've learnt how to **find rules by looking at THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OPERATORS AND NON-OPERATORS.**

Needless to say, this is much easier said than done, but it can be learnt and with enough practice – it can become second nature.

Until next time, I wish you all the best with your practice!

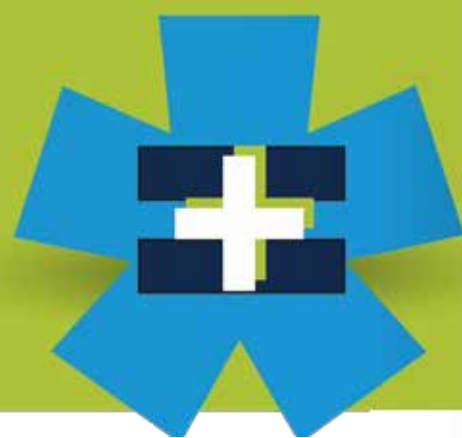
QUESTIONS,
COMMENTS?



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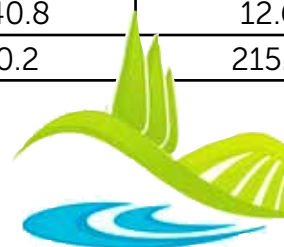


NUMERICAL REASONING



COUNTRY	TOTAL AREA (km ² X 1000)	PROTECTED WETLANDS (ha X 1000)	PROTECTED WOODLANDS (ha X 1000)	SPENDING ON PROTECTION (€ MILLIONS)
CROATIA	56.6	22.1	112.8	5.8
GERMANY	357.1	171.2	752.9	349.2
IRELAND	70.3	130.7	4.3	8.7
NORWAY	323.8	10.7	1940.8	12.6
UK	242.9	409.1	170.2	215.9

1 km² = 100 hectares



IN THE UK THE WETLANDS AND WOODLANDS FORM 12.6% OF ALL PROTECTED LAND. WHAT PROPORTION OF THE COUNTRY IS PROTECTED?

A. 12.6%

B. 18.9%

C. 7.2%

D. 25.1%

E. 14.9%

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 area of wetlands and woodlands in the UK and the information in the column headings that tell us that this data is in thousands of hectares. We also need the total area for the UK which is in thousands of square kilometres and the information in the question which tells us the proportion of all protected land that is wetland or woodland. Finally, we need the information in the footnote which tells us the relationship between hectares and square kilometres. All other data are irrelevant.

REASONING

We need to calculate the total area of wetland and woodland and hence the total protected land. We can then calculate the proportion of the country's total area that is protected.

CALCULATION

First, we need to calculate the amount of area that is either wetland or woodland which is simply the sum of the two:

$$409.1 + 170.2 = 579.3$$

This is 12.6% of the total protected area and so we divide by 12.6% to calculate the total:

$$579.3 / 0.126 = 4597.6$$

This is the total protected area in hectares (thousand) and we are told there are 100 hectares in a square kilometre so to convert we need to divide by 100:

$$4597.6 / 100 = 45.976$$

Finally we need to calculate the percentage of the area of the country by dividing by the total area and multiplying by 100 to make it a percentage:

$$45.976 / 242.9 = 18.9\%$$

POTENTIAL SHORTCUTS / PITFALLS

There are two main difficulties with this problem. The first is the data gathering and analysis. Having read the question you need to assess the data given and isolate those bits that you need. This is quite normal but having selected the three items of data in the data table that are relevant you must also notice the mismatch in data magnitudes (km² vs ha) which is in the column headings. You must also isolate the relationship between these in the table footnote and gather further information from the question itself.

The other problem here is one of mismatching data items. It doesn't matter when you convert or which data you convert to the other form provided you are consistent. Ironically, if you perform no conversions at all and omit the 'multiply by 100 to make it a percentage' at the end you will get the right answer as everything cancels out. It would be rather confusing though. Make sure you keep a close eye on the differing data magnitudes.

VERBAL REASONING



A team of researchers has already broken new engineering ground with the development of soft, silicone-based robots inspired by creatures like starfish and squid. Now, they're working to give those robots the ability to disguise themselves. Researchers have developed a system – again, inspired by nature – that allows the soft robots to either camouflage themselves against a background, or to make bold colour displays. Such a “dynamic colouration” system could one day have a host of uses, ranging from

helping doctors plan complex surgeries to acting as a visual marker to help search crews following a disaster. Just as with the soft robots, the “colour layers” used in the camouflage start as moulds created using 3D printers. Silicone is then poured into the moulds to create micro-channels, which are topped with another layer of silicone. The layers can be created as a separate sheet that sits atop the soft robots, or incorporated directly into their structure.

(Source: Science Daily)

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS CORRECT?

- A** Researchers have already tested the soft robot camouflage as a way to help doctors plan complicated surgeries.
- B** Soft robots with dynamic colouration could help with disaster cleanup by indicating where toxic chemicals are located.
- C** Researchers create the robot camouflage using 3D printers, moulds, micro-channels, and layers of silicone.
- C** The robot camouflage is created using colour layers that must be integrated into the structure of the robots.

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 correct, 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 CANNOT BE DEDUCED OR DISPROVED from the information contained in the passage. While the passage states that "Such a "dynamic colouration" system could one day have a host of uses, [including] helping doctors plan complex surgeries," whether researchers have already tested the soft robot camouflage for this use can be neither deduced nor disproved from the information provided.

OPTION B CANNOT BE DEDUCED OR DISPROVED from the information contained in the passage. While the passage states that the dynamic colouration system of the soft robots could one day function "as a visual marker to help search crews following a disaster," whether soft robots with dynamic colouration could help with disaster clean-up by indicating where toxic chemicals are located can be neither deduced nor disproved from the information provided.

OPTION C is patently TRUE. The passage clearly states that "the "colour layers" used in the camouflage start as moulds created using 3D printers. Silicone is then poured into the moulds to create micro-channels, which are topped with another layer of silicone. The layers can be created as a separate sheet that sits atop the soft robots, or incorporated directly into their structure."

OPTION D is patently FALSE. While the passage states that the camouflage layers can be incorporated directly into the structure of the robots, it also states that they can be created as a separate sheet that sits on top of the robots.







SITUATIONAL JUDGEMENT TESTS



You are working on a fairly mechanic task involving dozens of Excel sheets with very tight deadlines and high workloads. However, you feel that through putting in extra effort you have managed to get on top of the work and believe it is now just possible to deliver the objectives asked for. Then unexpectedly, your Superior makes an urgent request that, whilst not impossible to fulfil, will mean your previous hard efforts on the project will have been negated.

PICK THE MOST AND LEAST EFFECTIVE ANSWER.

- A Explain the situation to your superior and ask if they could delegate the task to someone else.** 
- B Complete the request from your superior and then return to working on the original project, putting in extra effort as required.**  **MOST** effective
- C Explain the situation to your Superior and ask them which should take priority for being fulfilled on time: the project or the urgent request.** 
- D Explain to your Superior how frustrating this would be for you and therefore on this occasion you will need to decline getting involved.**  **LEAST** effective

SITUATIONAL JUDGEMENT TESTS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHER TESTS YOU WILL ENCOUNTER AT AN EPSO ADMINISTRATOR PRE-SELECTION EXAM.

First of all, THERE IS NO SINGLE CORRECT ANSWER –the four courses of action described in the answer represent different degrees of effectiveness in the given situation. Moreover, you don't simply have to mark the best option – you must think about the worst option as well.

Second, THE OPTION INTENDED AS BEST BY EPSO IS NOT THE OBJECTIVELY BEST OPTION – in a different organisation with different values and priorities, another option might have been best.

Third, IT MEASURES SO-CALLED BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES: basically, your compatibility with the tasks and responsibilities at an EU institution – see the competencies measured on the next page.



COMPETENCIES MEASURED



IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT to note that **EPSO IS CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD DO** in the given situation.

So, **IS THERE A WAY** to **IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES** of giving the expected answers in this test?

Let me give you a couple of pointers.

1. First of all, think about what you would do in the given situation – that's the basis of the entire exercise.

2. Next, consider what the test might actually be 'testing': is it organising skills, an ability to manage stress, or perhaps analysis and problem solving skills? This is a crucial step and involves reading the answer options as well, because the same situation might measure different things, depending on what the options offered are.

3. Also try to think about the EU as an institution and as an employer when evaluating the answers. The thing that would earn you respect and admiration at Google might not work at all in the public sector.

4. DIRTY TRICK: let me give you a tip that works many times. **Try to imagine the worst thing that could happen when following each course of action. The one that results in the least catastrophic outcome is often the intended most effective option.**

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QUESTIONS

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PRICES

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