

THE VERBAL IQ MANUAL – SAMPLE SECTIONS

The Prefix and Suffix

Sometimes, the common property of the words that belong together is that a *specific prefix or a suffix can be added to the words to form legitimate new words*. Here is an example:

Find the word that does not belong in the group below:
LEASE NEST STANDARD CLASS TITLE

If you are not aware of the prefix/suffix solution principle, this problem will probably seem impenetrable to you! However, once you know what to be on the lookout for, it is not so hard!

In this IQ problem, there is no common property in the meaning or grammatical usage of the given words, so you try adding a prefix or suffix to the words. We see that all of the words except NEST **can be prefixed by SUB-**, because **SUBLEASE**, **SUBSTANDARD**, **SUBCLASS**, and **SUBTITLE** are all legitimate words. The Odd Man Out, NEST, cannot be prefixed by SUB-, since there is no such thing as a "**SUBNEST**". So NEST is the solution to this problem.

Here is another example:

Find the word that does not belong in the group below:
ICE GROUND DROP LASH FIRE

Meaning and grammar does not work on this problem. So we try a prefix or a suffix. It turns out that the words **can all be prefixed by BACK-**, except ICE. So ICE is the Odd Man Out.

The prefix/suffix principle also appears in verbal analogy problems, covered in the previous chapter. The list of prefixes and suffixes given in that chapter commonly appears in the solution key for Odd Man Out problems as well.

The same prefix or suffix may be added to the words to form legitimate new words.

Just When You Thought You Had It All Down

Sometimes, a verbal IQ letter series will throw you a curve ball, where the "alphabetical order" principle does not apply at all.

Take a look at this problem:

What is the missing letter in this series?
O T T F F S S E N ?

The corresponding series of alphabetical orders is here

15 20 20 6 6 19 19 5 14

And the series of differences between consecutive numbers is

5 0 (-14) 0 13 0 (-14) 9

There are no meaningful patterns here at all, so the "alphabetical order" approach must be abandoned.

In this problem, the letters in the series do *not* represent a numerical series of alphabetical orders, but instead represent *words that form a natural series*. Here are some common "natural" series of words that may appear on verbal IQ tests::

- Number series (ONE, TWO, THREE, etc.)
- The days of the week (MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, etc.)
- The months of the year (JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, etc.)
- The Greek alphabet (ALPHA, BETA, GAMMA, etc.)
- The series of military ranks (CAPTAIN, MAJOR, COLONEL, etc.)

Such series may also underlie the solution to verbal IQ letter series. Usually, a letter in such "natural" word series is the *first* letter of the word, but could also be the *last* letter of the word.

In the letter series problem above, the letters are the first letters of the words in the "natural" series

ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE SIX SEVEN EIGHT NINE

The next word in the series is TEN. So the missing letter in the series is "T".

If the "alphabetical order" approach just does not work out for a letter series, you should try the "natural word series" technique. A hint that points to a "natural word series" approach is that the given letter series is quite long. This is because a lot of letters need to be given in "natural" series problems in order to rule out any possibility that the series is based on alphabetical order.

Here is another example of a letter series problem that is based on a "natural word series":

What is the missing letter in this series?

O T F S N E T F S N T T ?

The "alphabetical order" approach to solving this problem yields no solution. Also, the letter series is unusually long. Therefore, you should try a "natural word series" approach to solving this problem.

Series of number-words are far the most common "natural word series". It turns out that the letters in the above series are the **initial letters of the odd numbers**:

ONE THREE FIVE SEVEN NINE ELEVEN THIRTEEN FIFTEEN
SEVENTEEN NINETEEN TWENTYONE TWENTYTHREE

The next word in this series is "TWENTYFIVE", so the solution is "T".

When the alphabetical order approach doesn't work, or when the series is very long, you should check whether the series represents a "natural word series".