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STUDY COMMUNITY

The book is organised in a progressive and focused manner, guiding you step by step through your preparation.

Chapter 1 – The EPSO Selection System and How to Use This Book

This chapter presents the main staff categories, the principal selection procedures, the tests that may form part of a competition, the relevant language and technical requirements, the fundamental principles of scoring, the operation of the Reserve List and the recommended way to use this book.

Chapters 2 and 3 – Verbal Reasoning

These chapters examine the core requirements of verbal reasoning, effective reading techniques and strategies for evaluating the possible answers. Particular emphasis is placed on avoiding common traps, distinguishing rigorously between information that is stated in the passage and conclusions that are not supported by it, and managing the available time effectively. The theory is accompanied by practical exercises and fully explained solutions.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 – Numerical Reasoning

These chapters cover the essential numerical skills and the methods required to interpret tables, charts and numerical data. They develop fast and reliable calculation strategies and include worked examples, topic-based exercises and complete mock tests.

Chapters 7 and 8 – Abstract Reasoning

These chapters examine the most common types of visual patterns and logical operations, including rotation, movement, reflection, changes in size, the addition or removal of elements and the alternation of features. They present a systematic method for identifying rules, eliminating misleading options and solving questions effectively under time pressure. The theory is reinforced through practice tests and fully explained solutions.

This book is not merely a collection of exercises, but a complete preparation system. It combines theory, methodology, solution strategies, targeted practice and realistic test simulation to help you understand the underlying logic of the assessments and achieve a meaningful improvement in your performance.

The objective is clear: to guide you methodically through your preparation for the reasoning tests and bring you one step closer to a career within the institutions and other bodies of the European Union.

Let's get started!

2.5 Common Traps and Misconceptions in Verbal Reasoning Questions

Distractors in the Verbal Reasoning Test are usually based on information that appears in the passage but is subtly altered. They may change one word, add an unsupported detail, broaden the scope of a statement or reverse the logical relationship between two pieces of information.

The correct method is not to look for the option that most resembles the passage, but to check whether every material element in an option is supported by it.

1. Almost equivalent wording

An option may use vocabulary similar to the passage but express a stronger or different meaning.

➡ Example

Passage: “The new system substantially reduced delays.”

Option: “The new system eliminated delays.”

“Reduced” means that delays became fewer, whereas “eliminated” means that they disappeared entirely. The option is incorrect even though it concerns the same topic and uses similar wording.

Likewise:

- “without significant changes” does not mean “without any changes”;
- “mainly” does not mean “exclusively”;
- “rarely” does not mean “never”;
- “to a large extent” does not mean “completely”.

Lexical similarity is not enough. The same logical force must be preserved.

2. Partly correct option

Some options contain one correct element and a second element that is incorrect or unsupported. The correct part acts as a lure and may prompt candidates to accept the whole statement too quickly.

➡ Example

Passage: “The programme increased public participation but did not reduce administrative costs.”

Option: “The programme increased public participation and reduced administrative costs.”

The first part is supported, but the second contradicts the passage. The option is therefore incorrect as a whole.

Every option must be checked to the final word. A single material inaccuracy is enough to reject it.

3. Unsupported addition

An option may repeat a correct fact and add a cause, purpose, method or result that the passage does not mention.

➡ Example

Passage: “The number of applications fell by 15% in 2025.”

Option: “The number of applications fell by 15% in 2025 because fees increased.”

The decrease is supported by the passage, but its cause is not stated. The option cannot be considered correct, even if the explanation appears plausible.

The additional information does not need to be demonstrably false. It is enough that it does not follow from the passage.

4. Omission of information that changes the meaning

Omitting a detail does not automatically make an option incorrect. An option may be less detailed and still remain fully consistent with the passage.

➡ Permissible omission

Passage: “In 2025, more than 80 theatres staged the author’s works in highly popular productions.”

Option: “Some theatres staged the author’s works in 2025.”

The option omits the precise number and the popularity of the productions, but it still follows from the passage.

An omission becomes problematic when it removes a critical limitation and thereby broadens the original meaning.

➡ Omission that changes the meaning

Passage: “The new system reduced delays only in services that had previously trained their staff.”

Option: “The new system reduced delays in all services.”

The option removes the limitation “only in services that had previously trained their staff” and extends the result to all services.

An omission is therefore not incorrect in itself. It becomes incorrect when it changes the scope or conditions of the original statement.

5. Change in scope, quantity or frequency

Information concerning part of a group may not be arbitrarily extended to the whole group. The same applies to quantities and frequency.

Key rule

It is not enough to record how many mistakes you made. You need to know what kinds of mistakes you made, why you made them and how much time you required.

2.11 A Systematic Method for Evaluating the Answer Options

Selecting the correct answer in the Verbal Reasoning Test should not be based on the general impression created by a sentence. It requires every option to be compared systematically with the information and logical relationships in the passage.

The most effective approach is to treat each option as a set of individual claims. An answer may contain correct elements alongside one small but material inaccuracy. It is therefore not enough to identify a word or phrase that agrees with the passage. The entire option must be checked.

1. Break the option down into individual claims

First, separate the main elements of the option:

- who acts or is being referred to;
- what exactly happened or is stated;
- when and under what conditions it applies;
- what cause, consequence or relationship is asserted;
- with what degree of certainty it is presented.

➡ Example option

“The Commission will implement the measure in 2027 because it reduces administrative costs.”

The option contains at least three distinct claims:

- the Commission will implement the measure;
- implementation will take place in 2027;
- the reason for implementation is the reduction in administrative costs.

For the option to be correct, all three claims must be supported.

2. Locate the corresponding point in the passage

For each claim, look for the particular sentence or combination of sentences that supports it. It is not enough for the option to concern the same topic or use similar words.

If no clear textual basis can be found for a material element, the option is not fully supported.

3. Check the critical characteristics

Chapter 3 – Verbal Reasoning Practice

Verbal Reasoning Test 1

QUESTION 1

Historical evidence shows that climatic changes have had a significant impact on the development of many societies. Prolonged droughts have been associated with crises in agrarian civilisations, while milder climatic periods have fostered economic growth in certain regions.

Today, climate change is attributed primarily to human activity. Its consequences affect not only the environment, but also migration, the economy and public health. However, not all societies are affected in the same way. Countries with strong infrastructure and advanced technology can adapt more easily, while other regions remain more vulnerable. Although technology can mitigate some effects, scientists believe that it is not sufficient on its own without international cooperation and emissions reductions.

Which of the following statements is supported by the passage?

- A. Technology can mitigate some effects of climate change, but scientists believe that international cooperation is also required if it is to be addressed effectively.
- B. Strong infrastructure and technology reduce the vulnerability of certain societies, suggesting that adaptive capacity can substantially limit the consequences even without a corresponding reduction in global emissions.
- C. The fact that societies are exposed differently to climatic changes shows that their effects depend more on adaptive capacity than on the intensity of the climatic change itself.
- D. Historical experience shows that technological progress has changed the way societies respond to climate, thereby reducing the present need for collective international action.

QUESTION 2

The transition to clean energy is now a central objective for advanced economies. Investment in solar and wind farms, together with rapid advances in battery technology, is creating new markets and jobs. However, this transition is not economically neutral. Traditional fossil-fuel industries, which employ millions of people, face losses of income and local economic decline.

Some countries are attempting to balance these effects through “just transition” programmes that retrain workers for new sectors. Nevertheless, inequalities between wealthy and poorer regions may widen, as investment tends to be concentrated in countries with already developed infrastructure.

Detailed Answers and EPSO Tips

Q.	Correct Answer	Why the Other Options Are Rejected	💡 EPSO Tip
1	A	B begins with a correct observation—strong infrastructure and technology facilitate adaptation—but goes beyond the passage by claiming that this can substantially limit the consequences even without a corresponding reduction in global emissions. The passage stresses that technology is not sufficient on its own without international cooperation and emissions reductions. C introduces an unsupported ranking by claiming that the effects depend <i>more</i> on adaptive capacity than on the intensity of climate change. D reverses the conclusion by diminishing the need for international action.	Beware of a small addition that changes the conclusion. A difficult distractor may begin with a true detail and add an unsupported relationship or comparison.
2	D	A is true but partial : it focuses on access to critical raw materials and does not capture the broader issue of social, economic and geopolitical dependencies. B makes an unjustified leap: just-transition programmes seek to limit losses, but the passage warns that regional inequalities may widen , not that they are merely temporary. C is also a true observation about inequality, but is narrower than D. D best captures the central reservation: the green transition may reduce emissions while creating new dependencies.	A true detail is not necessarily the best answer. When asked for the <i>central reservation</i> , select the option that incorporates the greatest part of the argument.
3	B	A links investment to the spread of benefits to rural areas, whereas the passage states that those areas continued to face economic difficulties and population decline. C is misleading: the agreements were intended to reduce dependence on the Chinese market, but competition for critical raw materials increased ; that dependency was not reduced. D is a plausible general synthesis, but does not answer the specific question, which asks which action was presented explicitly as an attempt to reduce dependence on a particular market .	Answer the precise question. A generally correct summary may be a distractor when the task asks for a specific purpose, cause or action.

Q.	Correct Answer	Why the Other Options Are Rejected	💡 EPSO Tip
4	C	A correctly describes one mechanism of cognitive overload—continuous shifts of attention—but not the overall conclusion. B captures a genuine point about algorithms and misinformation, but remains partial. D is also plausible: a digital detox may reduce exposure without guaranteeing better evaluation. However, the passage states explicitly that the key challenge is selecting and evaluating information , which C expresses most fully.	A “most complete conclusion” question may contain several true options. Look for the one that captures the central position rather than merely one mechanism or solution.
5	D	A begins with a genuine issue—the risk of discrimination—but adds that this may slow the introduction of treatments , which is not stated. B is a close distractor: the passage contrasts wealthy countries with developing regions, but does not establish that differences in access are primarily linked to economic level. C goes beyond the passage by predicting that personalised medicine may become more important than conventional approaches, whereas the passage says it complements them. D correctly combines the therapeutic benefits with the challenges of access and data protection.	Watch words such as “primarily”, “more” and “gradually”. They are not absolute, but may introduce an unsupported ranking or prediction.
6	A	B is a plausible inference consistent with the reconstructive nature of memory, but adds the claim that not all memories are equally unreliable, which is not the central conclusion. C is factually correct , since repeated exposure to a narrative can strengthen belief in an inaccurate memory, but it is only one specific phenomenon. D is a reasonable methodological inference concerning MRI and PET, but likewise does not summarise the passage. A captures the central mechanism: memory is dynamic and reconstructive and is influenced by later experiences, emotions and stress.	An option may be entirely true and still not be correct. In a question about overall meaning, choose the most comprehensive synthesis.

First, check the title and units. Are the values expressed in units, thousands, or millions? Do they represent euros, percentages, tonnes, or numbers of people? Next, identify the categories and time period referred to in the question. A table may contain several countries, years, and variables, although only two specific figures are needed to answer the question.

Then determine exactly what is being compared and which quantity is required. If a chart shows exports for five countries, the question may ask for the highest absolute value, the largest absolute increase, the largest percentage increase, or the change in one country's share. These are different requirements and may therefore call for different data and different mathematical relationships.

Once the relevant figures have been identified, perform only the calculation required. Where the answer options allow it, a reliable estimate can save time. Finally, check whether the result is consistent with the data: does it have the correct unit, is it of a reasonable order of magnitude, and does the direction of change agree with the table or chart?

EPSO Pitfall: The most common problem is not a difficult arithmetic operation, but applying the correct operation to the wrong data.

◆ Examples and Interpretations

Consider the following table:

Country	GDP (€ billions)
Greece	190
Italy	1,700
Spain	1,200
Portugal	250

The table shows the economies of four countries: Greece, 190; Italy, 1,700; Spain, 1,200; and Portugal, 250 billion euros. If the question asks, "What percentage of total GDP does Greece represent?", first calculate the total:

$$190 + 1,700 + 1,200 + 250 = 3,340$$

Then calculate Greece's share:

$$(190 \div 3,340) \times 100 \approx 5.7\%$$

The required relationship is part to whole, and the phrase *of total GDP* points to the correct calculation.

When asked for one category's share of a total, first identify the relevant total and then divide the category value by that total.

Chapter 5 – Numerical Reasoning Practice Sets

EXERCISE SET 1: Basic Exercises in Estimating Partial and Total Amounts

Data (2020)

(amounts in millions of euros)

Country	Exports	GDP	Intra-EU exports	Population (million)
A	4,125	48,256	25%	5
B	988	7,585	75.8%	3.9
C	31,025	252,000	9.7%	38.25
D	12,400	98,750	49%	15.4

✓ 1. What is the value of Country A's intra-EU exports (in thousands of euros)?

- A. 931,250
- B. 1,000,000
- C. 1,031,250
- D. 1,125,000
- E. 1,250,000

Analysis

- Country A exports: **4,125 million euros**
- Intra-EU percentage: **25%**

Calculate **25%** of 4,125:

$$4,125 \times 0.25 = 1,031.25 \text{ million euros}$$

This is expressed in **millions**.

To express it in **thousands**:

$$1.03125 \text{ billion euros} = 1,031.25 \text{ million euros} = 1,031,250 \text{ thousand euros}$$

Therefore:

✓ **Correct answer: C. 1,031,250 (in thousands of euros)**

For example, an object may:

- move to a different position;
- rotate through a specific angle;
- change colour or shading;
- increase or decrease in size;
- be replaced by a different shape;
- be added or removed;
- be affected when it touches or passes through another object.

To identify a combined rule, examine each characteristic separately:

- Position: Where does each object move?
- Orientation: Does it rotate or undergo reflection?
- Form: Does it remain the same shape or is it replaced?
- Colour and shading: Does it become black, white, grey or hatched?
- Size: Does it increase, decrease or alternate?
- Number: Are objects added or removed?
- Interaction: Does contact with, or passage through, another area cause a change?

Do not look for a rule that explains only part of the image. The correct solution must consistently account for all the changes observed throughout the sequence.

Basic principle:

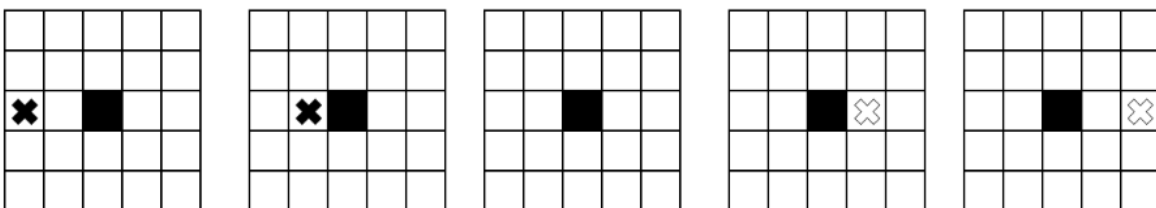
A MOVEMENT may trigger one or more CHANGES.

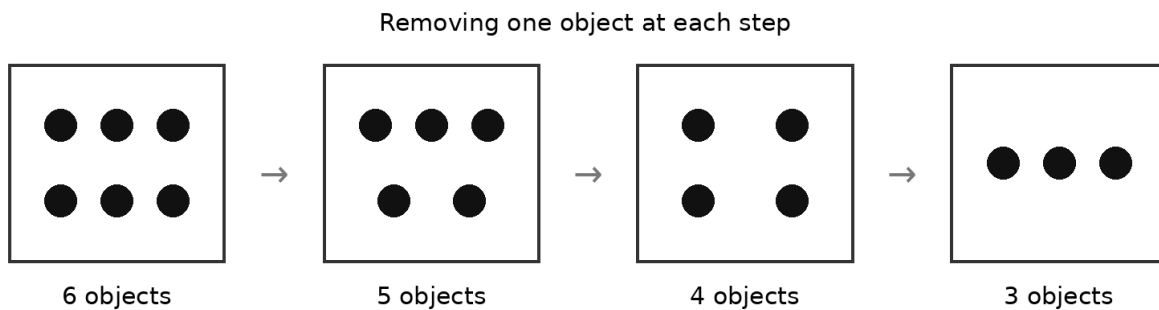
For example, an object may move to the right and change colour when it enters a shaded area. In this case, two rules are operating:

- one rule determines the movement;
- a second rule determines the effect of entering that particular area.

Example

When the black cross leaves the central black square, it changes colour and becomes white. This is a simple example of interaction. You may also see an object pass through or touch another object and then change shape or size.





We observe that:

- one circle is removed from the first frame to the second;
- another circle is removed from the second frame to the third;
- one circle is again removed from the third frame to the fourth.

The rule is therefore:

Number of objects in the next frame = Number of objects in the previous frame - 1

Since the final frame contains three objects, the next frame must contain:

$$3 - 1 = 2 \text{ objects.}$$

Counting alone, however, is not always sufficient. You must also examine the position from which the object is removed. Removal may proceed:

- from left to right;
- from right to left;
- from the outside towards the centre;
- clockwise;
- or alternately from the two sides.

The correct answer must therefore contain both the correct number of objects and the correct arrangement.

Example 2 - Two Simultaneous Changes

In more complex sequences, two different addition and removal rules may be applied at the same time.

At the top of the following frames, the number of black circles increases by one:

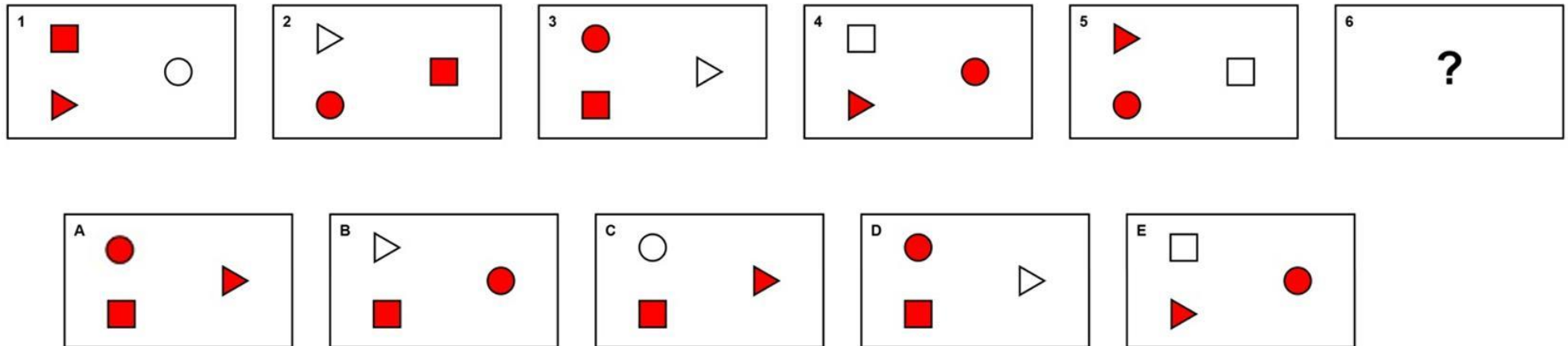
$$1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 5$$

At the bottom, the number of sides of the polygon decreases by one:

$$7 \rightarrow 6 \rightarrow 5 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 3$$

In the example below, the number of black circles increases by one each time. The number of lower objects, however, does not change; only the number of sides of the object changes. The object begins as a heptagon, with seven sides, and then loses one side at each step.

Question 1



Each frame contains 3 shapes: ■ Square — ▲ Triangle — ● Circle.

Each shape:

✓ changes position

✓ changes or retains its colour (red or white)

No new shape ever appears and none is missing. All three are always present.

The correct answer is C. The rules governing the sequence are as follows:

First rule – cyclical movement of the shapes

The three shapes—the square, circle and triangle—move cyclically clockwise within the frame each time. In other words, each shape moves to the next position on the same circular path. The position occupied by one shape in one frame is occupied in the next frame by the shape that preceded it along the path.

Second rule – constant number and form of the shapes

The same three shapes always appear in every frame: one circle, one square and one triangle. The number of shapes never changes, nor does their type.

Third rule

The colours white and red alternate successively in positions 1 and 2.

Applying these rules to the fifth frame, the next frame must show the new cyclical positions of the shapes together with the correct colour pattern. The only option that satisfies both the correct movement and the correct colour rule is C.