



Three-Step Method for Solving Analogies Problems

The best way to solve analogies problems is to attack them using this universal method. Each of the following steps outlined in our Five-Step Method will work with any analogy you may encounter, regardless of the relationship shared between the word pair.

Step 1:

Build a strong bridge sentence relating the words in the question pair. The bridge should be as short and clear as possible.

Function Bridge:

SHOVEL : DIG

- 1) bag : buy
- 2) baby : cry
- 3) cloud : rain
- 4) fork : eat
- 5) car : stop

In the question to the left, the question pair is SHOVEL : DIG. First, think about a necessary relationship shared between this pair:

A shovel is used to dig.

Remember, no proper analogies question will put words in the question pair that do not share a **direct and necessary** relationship. For example, you will never see the words **MAN : STRONG** used in the question pair, because they do not share a necessary relationship. A man may or may not be strong.

Step 2:

Now, use this bridge with each answer choice, inserting them in place of the words in the question pair.

1) A bag is used to buy. Perhaps, but this is not necessarily true. You may use a shopping cart to buy something. Or, you may use money to buy something. So this doesn't work.

2) A baby is used to cry. This doesn't work; a baby isn't used to do anything.

3) A cloud is used to rain. A cloud *produces* rain, but a cloud isn't used to rain. Again, a cloud isn't necessarily used to do anything.

4) A fork is used to eat. Here we have a strong relationship. A fork is definitely used to eat. This seems to be the correct answer, but let's try the last one just to make sure.

5) A car is used to stop. One of the operations of a car is to stop. However, a car is not necessarily *used* to stop. A car is *used* to travel, or to transport. So, this doesn't work. Therefore, answer choice #4 must be the correct answer.

Step 3:

If after completing steps 1 and 2 you still have not found an answer pair that works, then it may be necessary to adjust the bridge sentence. Let's look back at our original example:

Function Bridge:

SHOVEL : DIG

- 1) bag : buy
- 2) baby : cry
- 3) cloud : rain
- 4) fork : eat
- 5) car : stop

It may be that our original bridge was not strong enough. Imagine if our bridge was: **A shovel may be used to dig.**

Now, it is possible to come up with two correct answers:

1) A bag may be used to buy.

4) A fork may be used to eat.

Our original bridge wasn't strong enough. Therefore, we need to strengthen our bridge by making it more specific, and repeat steps 1 and 2.