

Verbal Reasoning Tips

True/False/Cannot Say

This concise and efficient study guide lays the foundations for the most popular type of verbal reasoning tests, currently used by the leading assessment companies in the world, including WORKFORCE, SHL, Dragnet, Saville, Cut-e, TalentQ and more. We advise reading this guide from start to end, picking up any tip that suits your thinking process.

Reading the Passage and Time Management

The Verbal Reasoning subtest assesses your reading comprehension and verbal critical reasoning skills under severe time constraints. You will usually have less than half a minute for every question!

The section is comprised of reading passages with each of them followed by 2-4 statements.

1. You must first consider your solving strategy. Try and apply both of the following strategies, in order to see which one suits you best:
 - Start by reading the passage.
 - Start by reading the question.
2. Choosing the first strategy, read each passage once very carefully. Add the meaning of one sentence to the one before it, trying to draw a mental "map" of the information and the logic in the passage.
3. If a sentence confuses you, reread it and the one before it if necessary, to try and fully absorb the information to the fullest extent.
4. If the meaning of a word or phrase is unclear to you, try to grasp its meaning by its context. This is very important, since the verbal reasoning section examines both your comprehension and vocabulary skills.
5. Notice extreme words that refer to: Exclusion, inclusion, prohibition, negation, etc. Remember that the relationship between the different parts of the passage are sometimes more important than their actual content.
6. Pay close attention to qualifiers, since they are frequently used as determiners for the correct answer. Only extreme qualifiers such as all/none/always/never apply to the entire group of their object. Qualifiers such as few/some, many/most, still leave place for exceptions.
7. Some students believe that it is pointless to read the passage first without knowing the questions. This is not true - it is to be decided upon self-experience, and by trial and error.

8. If you choose the strategy of starting by reading the question, you should scan the passage cursorily and locate the relevant section of the text.

Doing so, carefully read adjacent sentences, and try to infer the correct answer from them.

9. In most cases, the statements are ordered with respect to the passage's progress.

Knowing what the three possible answers **REALLY** mean

True

1. A statement is True if the same information given in the statement is given explicitly in the passage. In this case:
 - The statement typically summarises a complex piece of information given in the passage using rephrases and/or synonym words and terms.
 - Sometimes, the statement brings together pieces of information that are given in different places in the passage. Find these pieces of information and verify that each piece is true for the whole statement to be true.
2. A statement is also True if you can correctly infer its content from the information.
 - In this case, there must be enough information to make the inference.
 - Remember to rely **SOLELY** on the information introduced in the passage: Even if your general knowledge and familiarity with the topic presented suggest that the information is invalid, you must assume that it is the passage alone that can supply facts and information for decision making. In other words, there is no obligation that the information of the passage will be 100% correct.
 - Notice that your inference doesn't over generalise the details of the passage, even if it seems like a definitive conclusion. Any seemingly correct answer which presents a broader inference than the one supported by the passage falls into the "Cannot Say" criteria.

False

1. A statement is False only if it directly contradicts something mentioned in the passage. You must find that piece of information in the passage that confirms the contradiction.
2. Once again, the statement could be testing the accuracy of your reading comprehension skills and your vocabulary. If you have trouble understanding a part of the passage, try to understand the broader context and ask yourself if the statement is reasonable or not in light of the passage as a whole.
3. Keep in mind that the fact that a statement is saying something different than the passage doesn't make it instantly a false one. It could still be a "Cannot Say" if it doesn't explicitly contradict the passage.

Cannot say

1. Cannot say means that the piece of information you are asked about is simply not given in the passage and that the passage gives no grounds for correctly inferring the truth or falsity of the statement.
2. This does not mean to say that this answer is the easiest to get right. On the contrary, it is often the hardest. The answers True or False are clearer to discern. The passage either explicitly says the same thing as the statement, in which case the answer is True, or the passage explicitly contradicts the statement, in which case the answer is False. To determine that the answer is cannot say, you must be sure that the information you need to give the answers True or False is simply absent from the text. Do not infer something from the passage unless you are given a clear basis in the passage itself for doing so.
3. Again, the statement could hypothetically be a true or a false one. You might even be sure from your personal knowledge about its verity. Yet, if I contradicted in the passage, or could not be inferred from it, according to the rules you Cannot say.

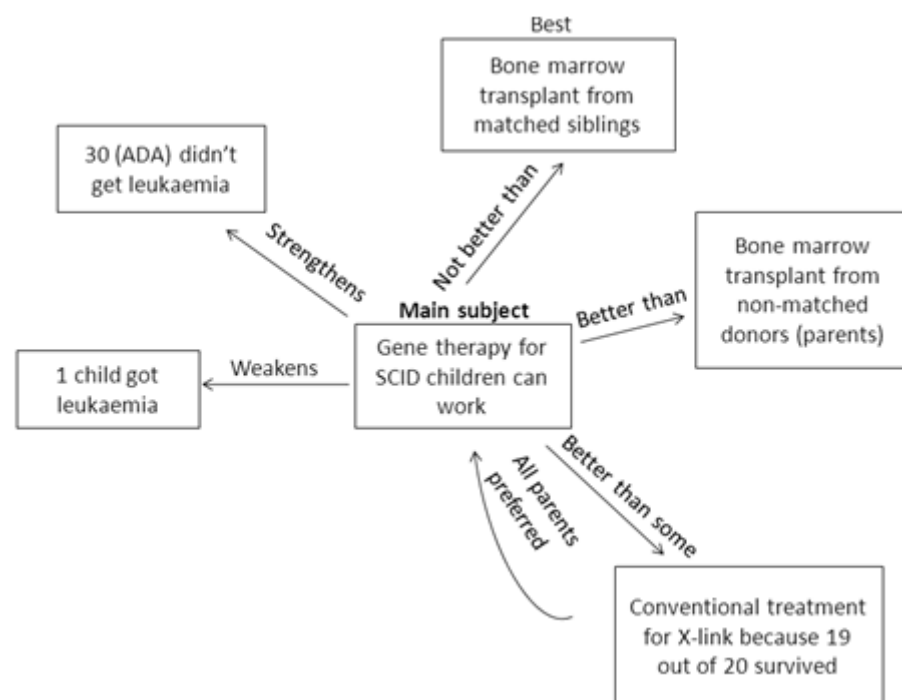
An Example Passage and statements:

Two studies published recently show that 13 of 16 children treated with gene therapy – treating diseases by correcting a patient's faulty genes - for severe combined immune deficiency, or SCID, have had their immune systems restored.

The best treatment for the disease is a bone marrow transplant from an immunologically matched sibling. But, when no matched donor is available, unmatched donors, such as parents, are recruited; these transplants are only around 70 per cent successful. The success of gene therapy now rivals or betters that seen in these unmatched donor situations.

In 2001, a child in the trial developed leukaemia, thought to have been induced by a component in the modified virus, or vector, the researchers used to insert the correct gene into the boy's cells. Of the 30 children worldwide who have been treated with gene therapy for another form of SCID, marked by a deficiency in the enzyme adenosine deaminase (ADA), none has developed leukaemia. Yet medical researchers maintain that gene therapy is still a better alternative than the conventional treatment for X-linked SCID in some children because 19 of the 20 children who have received gene therapy for X-linked SCID are still alive. When told these odds, all parents of children with X-linked SCID have opted for gene therapy.

An optional "mental map" for this passage could look like this:



Statement 1

Only one child with ADA deficiency related SCID got leukaemia.

This statement is False, since it directly contradicts a sentence within the passage: "*Of the 30 children worldwide who have been treated with gene therapy for another form of SCID, marked by a deficiency in the enzyme adenosine deaminase (ADA), none has developed leukaemia.*"

It is a bit misleading since it is also mentioned that "a child in the trial developed leukaemia", and in addition "*19 of the 20 children who have received gene therapy for X-linked SCID are still alive*". The combinations of these two sentences might give rise to an inference that the child who had leukaemia is the 20th child. This may be true, but it is not true that this child had an ADA deficiency related SCID. Note how this observation is drawn directly from the mental map.

Statement 2

The remedy for SCID with the lowest rate of success currently is a bone marrow transplant from an immunologically unmatched parent.

We were introduced with 2 methods for treating SCID. If, as the passage states first, "The best treatment for the disease is a bone marrow transplant from an immunologically matched sibling" and, second, "the success of gene therapy now rivals or betters that seen in unmatched donor situations" we understand that the treatment with the same or lowest rate of success is a bone marrow transplant from an immunologically unmatched parent. Therefore, the answer is **True**.

Again, this observation can be drawn directly from the mental map.

Statement 3

Siblings are always immunologically matched.

Let's solve this question using the elimination method. Although this method is lengthy, it is good for practice purposes, as it helps sharpen critical reasoning skills.

The passage discusses "*an immunologically matched sibling*" and "*unmatched donors, such as parents.*"

→ Is the statement **True**?

We can infer from the passage that there are siblings who are immunologically matched. Yet, the statement uses the qualifier "always", and the passage **does not say** whether or not siblings are always immunologically matched, nor can this fact be inferred from it. Since neither of the terms for a True statement are validated, this statement cannot be true.

→ Is the statement **False**?

In order for the statement to be false, we need to find a direct contradiction within the passage. If the passage were to include a sentence like "some siblings are not immunologically matched", then we could infer that this statement is false, since it is not possible to use "always" when the state isn't consistent. This sentence or similar doesn't appear in the passage, so we cannot disqualify it. However, another reason prompts us to choose **False** as the correct answer. This is a good example for a misleading statement. Most of us have heard about bone marrow transplants, and we probably know that not all siblings are perfectly matching donors. Yet, since the readers should base their answer solely on the information in the passage and not rely on general knowledge, one has no basis to mark this statement as false.

We eliminated both **True** and **False** as possible answers; **therefore the correct answer is "Cannot say"**.

Now it's time to start practicing. Good luck!