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What Is an Analogy?

An **analogy** is a statement in which two word pairs share the same relationship.

For example: *Captain* is to *boat* as *pilot* is to *aeroplane*.

The *captain* is the person who controls a boat, just as a *pilot* is the person who controls an *aeroplane*. Each pair of words fits into the same simple sentence that directly explains the relationship between the words.

Analogy Tips:

A typical analogy looks like this:

finger: hand :: toe : foot

The colon (:) means “is to” and the double colon (::) means “as”.

The analogy is read “*Finger* is to *hand* as *toe* is to *foot*”.

Write three similar analogies below.

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Types of Analogies

Here are 10 types of analogies and examples.

Type	Examples
1. object/person: description	fire : hot
2. agent: object	artist : brush
3. agent: action or object : function	doctor : heal, closet : store
4. object/description/action: greater/lesser size or degree	tap : bang, glad : ecstatic
5. person/object : location	judge : court
6. cause : effect	ignite : burn
7. part : whole	sailor: navy
8. object/person: category	elm: tree, thief: criminal
9. word : synonym	lukewarm : tepid
10. word: antonym	hot: cold

Can you think of another person/object : location analogy?



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Relationship Sentences

The best way to figure out the relationship between a pair of words is to create a relationship sentence. A **relationship sentence** is a simple sentence that clearly shows the relationship between the two words. Write a relationship sentence using the following word pair:

elm: tree

Think: “An *elm* is a type of *tree*.”

Test: Which of the following two word pairs is the correct analogy?

rose : flower

grass : meadow

Plug each word pair back into the relationship sentence:

Write: Relationship sentences: A *rose* is a type of *flower*. That makes sense. A *grass* is a type of *meadow*. That doesn't make any sense.

The correct answer is elm : tree :: rose : flower.

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Relationship Sentences

Sometimes a relationship sentence isn't specific enough the first time around. When that happens, the relationship sentence needs to be adjusted. Here's an example:

bird : nest :: _____

- (a) goose : duck (c) water : ripple
(b) tree : forest (d) bear: cave

A relationship sentence for bird : nest might be, "A bird lives in a nest." Test each choice by plugging it into the relationship sentence.

- (a) A goose lives in a duck? No way.
(b) A tree lives in a forest? Maybe – but keep checking.
(c) A water lives in a ripple? No.
(d) A bear lives in a cave? That sounds like it could be right, too.

Write a more specific relationship sentence. Make the relationship between the two words clear.

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Complete the Analogy

Choose the correct word to complete the analogy.

tired : exhausted :: _____ : furious

- (a) calm
- (b) unhappy
- (c) angry
- (d) amused

What type of analogy is this?

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