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:**

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.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHOVEL : DIG</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) bag : buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) baby : cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) cloud : rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) fork : eat</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) car : stop</td>
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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:**

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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.