Test 1: Inference

Directions

An inference is a conclusion a person can draw from certain observed or supposed facts. For example, if the lights are on in a house and voices can be heard coming from the house, a person might infer that someone is at home. But this inference may or may not be correct. Possibly the people in the house did not turn the lights and the television off when they left the house.

In this test, each exercise begins with a statement of facts that you are to regard as true. After each statement of facts you will find several possible inferences—that is, conclusions that some persons might draw from the stated facts. Examine each inference separately, and make a decision as to its *degree* of truth or falsity.

For each inference you will find spaces on the answer sheet labeled **T, PT, ID, PF,** and **F.** For each inference make a mark on the answer sheet under the appropriate heading as follows:

T   if you think the inference is definitely **TRUE;** that it properly follows beyond a reasonable doubt from the statement of facts given.

PT   if, in the light of facts given, you think the inference is **PROBABLY TRUE;** that it is more likely to be true than false.

ID   if you decide that there are **INSUFFICIENT DATA;** that you cannot tell from the facts given whether the inference is likely to be true or false; if the facts provide no basis for judging one way or the other.

PF   if, in the light of the facts given, you think the inference is **PROBABLY FALSE;** that it is more likely to be false than true.

F   if you think the inference is definitely **FALSE;** that it is wrong, either because it misinterprets the facts given, or because it contradicts the facts or necessary inferences from those facts.

Sometimes, in deciding whether an inference is probably true or probably false, you will have to use certain commonly accepted knowledge or information that practically every person has. This will be illustrated in the example that follows.

Example

Two hundred students in their early teens voluntarily attended a recent weekend student conference in a Midwestern city. At this conference, the topics of race relations and means of achieving lasting world peace were discussed, because these were the problems the students selected as being most vital in today's world.

1.   As a group, the students who attended this conference showed a keener interest in broad social problems than do most other students in their early teens.

2. The majority of the students had not previously discussed the conference topics in their schools.

3. The students came from all sections of the country.

4. The students discussed mainly labor relations problems.

5. Some teenage students felt it worthwhile to discuss problems of race relations and ways of achieving world peace.{End box for example.}

In the above example, inference 1 is probably true (**PT**) because (as is common knowledge) most people in their early teens do not show so much serious concern with broad social problems. It cannot be considered definitely true from the facts given because these facts do not tell *how much* concern other young teenagers may have. It is also possible that some of the students volunteered to attend mainly because they wanted a weekend outing.

Inference 2 is probably false (**PF**) because the students' growing awareness of these topics probably stemmed at least in part from discussions with teachers and classmates.

There is no evidence for inference 3. Thus there are insufficient data (**ID**) for making a judgment on the matter.

Inference 4 is definitely false (**F**) because it is given in the statement of facts that the topics of race relations and means of achieving world peace were the problems chosen for discussion.

Inference 5 necessarily follows from the given facts; it therefore is true (**T**).

In the exercises that follow, more than one of the inferences from a given statement of facts may be true (**T**), or false (**F**), or probably true (**PT**), or probably false (**PF**), or have insufficient data (**ID**) to warrant any conclusion. Thus you are to judge each inference independently.

Test 2: Recognition of Assumptions

Directions

An assumption is something presupposed or taken for granted. When you say, "I'll graduate in June," you take for granted or assume that you will be alive in June, that your school will judge you to be eligible for graduation in June, and similar things.

Below are a number of statements. Each statement is followed by several proposed assumptions. You are to decide for each assumption whether a person, in making the given statement, is really making that assumption–that is, taking it for granted, justifiably or not.

If you think that the given assumption is taken for granted in the statement, make a heavy black mark under **ASSUMPTION MADE** in the proper place on the answer sheet. If you think the assumption is *not* necessarily taken for granted in the statement, blacken the space under **ASSUMPTION NOT MADE.** Remember to judge each assumption independently.

Below is an example. The block at the right shows how these items should be marked on the answer sheet.

Example
Statement: "We need to save time in getting there so we'd better go by plane."

Proposed Assumptions:

1. Going by plane will take less time than going by some other means of transportation. (It is assumed in the statement that the greater speed of a plane over the speeds of other means of transportation will enable the group to reach its destination in less time.)

2. There is plane service available to us for at least part of the distance to the destination. (This is necessarily assumed in the statement since, in order to save time by plane, it must be possible to go by plane.)

3. Travel by plane is more convenient than travel by train. (This assumption is not made in the statement—the statement has to do with saving time, and says nothing about convenience or about any other specific mode of travel.){End box}

Test 3: Deduction

Directions

In this test, each exercise consists of several statements (premises) followed by several suggested conclusions. *For the purposes of this test, consider the statements in each exercise as true without exception.* Read the first conclusion beneath the statements. If you think it *necessarily* follows from the statements given, make a heavy black mark under **CONCLUSION FOLLOWS** in the proper place on the answer sheet. If you think it is *not a necessary conclusion* from the statements given, put a heavy black mark under **CONCLUSION DOES NOT FOLLOW,** even though you may believe it to be true from your general knowledge.

Likewise, read and judge each of the other conclusions. Try not to let your prejudices influence your judgment—just stick to the given statements (premises) and judge each conclusion as to whether it *necessarily* follows from the premise.

The word *some* in any of these statements means an indefinite part or quantity of a class of things. *Some* means *at least* a portion, and *perhaps* all of the class. Thus, "Some holidays are rainy" means *at least* one, possibly more than one, and *perhaps* even all holidays are rainy.

Study the example carefully before starting the test.

Example
Some holidays are rainy. All rainy days are boring. Therefore, . . .

1. no clear days are boring. (The conclusion does not follow. You cannot tell from the statements whether or not clear days are boring. Some may be.)

2. some holidays are boring. (The conclusion necessarily follows from the statements since, according to them, the rainy holidays must be boring.)

3. some holidays are not boring. (The conclusion does not follow, even though you may know that some holidays are very pleasant.){End box}

Test 4: Interpretation

Directions

Each exercise below consists of a short paragraph followed by several suggested conclusions.

For the purpose of this test, assume that everything in the short paragraph is true. The problem is to judge whether or not each of the proposed conclusions logically follows beyond a reasonable doubt from the information given in the paragraph.

If you think that the proposed conclusion follows beyond a reasonable doubt (even though it may not follow absolutely and necessarily), then make a heavy black mark under **CONCLUSION FOLLOWS** in the proper place on the answer sheet. If you think that the conclusion does not follow beyond a reasonable doubt from the facts given, then blacken the space under **CONCLUSION DOES NOT FOLLOW.** Remember to judge each conclusion independently.

Look at the example below; the block at the right shows how the answers should be marked on the answer sheet.

Example
A study of vocabulary growth in children from eight months to six years old shows that the size of spoken vocabulary increases from zero words at age eight months to 2,562 words at age six years.

1. None of the children in this study had learned to talk by the age of six months. (The conclusion follows beyond a reasonable doubt since, according to the statement, the size of the spoken vocabulary at eight months was zero words.)

2. Vocabulary growth is slowest during the period when children are learning to walk. (The conclusion does not follow since there is no information given that relates growth of vocabulary to walking.){End box for examples}

Test 5: Evaluation of Arguments

Directions

In making decisions about important questions, it is desirable to be able to distinguish between arguments that are strong and arguments that are weak, as far as the question at issue is concerned. *For an argument to be strong, it must be both important and directly related to the question.*

An argument is weak if it is not directly related to the question (even though it may be of great general importance), or if it is of minor importance, or if it is related only to trivial aspects of the question.

Below is a series of questions. Each question is followed by several arguments. *For the purpose of this test, you are to regard each argument as true.* The problem then is to decide whether it is a *strong* or a *weak* argument.

Make a heavy black mark on the answer sheet under **ARGUMENT STRONG** if you think the argument is strong, or under **ARGUMENT WEAK** if you think the argument is weak. Judge each argument separately on its own merit. *Try not to let your personal attitude toward the question influence your evaluation of the argument, since each argument is to be regarded as true*.

In the example, note that the argument is evaluated as to how well it supports the side of the question indicated.

Example
Should all young adults in the United States go to college?

1. Yes; college provides an opportunity for them to learn school songs and cheers. (This would be a silly reason for spending years in college.)

2. No; a large percent of young adults do not have enough ability or interest to derive any benefit from college training. (If this is true, as the directions require us to assume, it is a weighty argument against all young adults going to college.)

3. No; excessive studying permanently warps an individual's personality. (This argument, although of great general importance when accepted as true, is not directly related to the question, because attendance at college does not necessarily require excessive studying.)

When the word "should" is used as the first word in any of the following questions, its meaning is, "Would the proposed action promote the general welfare of the people in the United States?"