Cognitive Ability Test Questions and Answers for Employers

Cognitive ability tests measure candidates' critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and overall mental agility. Employers use these tests to identify individuals who excel in analyzing situations, reasoning logically, and making quick, effective decisions.

Types of Cognitive Ability Questions

Cognitive ability tests typically include the following categories:

Category	Description
Numerical Reasoning	Ability to interpret and analyze numerical data
Verbal Reasoning	Understanding and analyzing written information
Abstract Reasoning	Recognizing patterns and relationships
Logical Reasoning	Drawing accurate conclusions from given information
Attention to Detail	Identifying subtle errors and discrepancies

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20 Challenging Cognitive Ability Test Questions and Answers

Numerical Reasoning

Q1: A company's profit in 2023 was $150,000—a 25% increase from 2022. What was the profit in 2022?

Answer: $120,000
Explanation: $150,000 ÷ 1.25 = $120,000. The original amount increased by 25% to reach $150,000.

Q2: If 8 machines can produce 64 units in 4 hours, how many units can 12 machines produce in 3 hours?

Answer: 72 units
Explanation: 8 machines produce 16 units/hour (64 units ÷ 4 hours). Each machine produces 2 units/hour. Thus, 12 machines produce 24 units/hour × 3 hours = 72 units.

Q3: A product costs $120, and the selling price is increased by 40%. What's the new selling price?

Answer: $168
Explanation: 120 × 1.40 = $168.

Q4: A team completed a project in 10 days, working 6 hours daily. How many days would it take if they worked 8 hours daily?

Answer: 7.5 days
Explanation: Total hours = 10 days × 6 hours/day = 60 hours. At 8 hours/day, 60 ÷ 8 = 7.5 days.

Verbal Reasoning

Q5: "All executives attend weekly meetings. Jessica is an executive." What can you conclude?

Answer: Jessica attends weekly meetings.
Explanation: As an executive, Jessica must attend weekly meetings.

Q6: "No managers are temporary employees. Sarah is a manager." Is Sarah a temporary employee?

Answer: No.
Explanation: Managers are explicitly excluded from being temporary employees.

Q7: "Most employees prefer flexible work hours. Mark is an employee." Can you say Mark definitely prefers flexible work hours?

Answer: No.
Explanation: "Most" doesn't imply "all," so Mark might be an exception.

Q8: Which term does not belong: Contract, Agreement, Proposal, Signature?

Answer: Signature
Explanation: Signature is an action, not a type of document like the others.

Abstract Reasoning

Q9: Complete the sequence: 3, 6, 12, 24, ?

Answer: 48
Explanation: Each number is double the previous one.

Q10: Complete the pattern: ○, △, □, ○, △, ?

Answer: □
Explanation: Shapes repeat every three.

Q11: Complete the alphabetical sequence: AZ, BY, CX, DW, ?

Answer: EV
Explanation: The first letter progresses forward (A-B-C-D-E), and the second backward (Z-Y-X-W-V).

Q12: Complete the numeric series: 5, 10, 17, 26, ?

Answer: 37
Explanation: Increasing intervals (+5, +7, +9, +11).

Logical Reasoning

Q13: "All accountants have certifications. Brian is an accountant." Does Brian have a certification?

Answer: Yes.
Explanation: The premise explicitly states all accountants have certifications.

Q14: "If the computer crashes, data is lost. The computer has crashed." What is true?

Answer: Data is lost.
Explanation: Given the condition, the crash implies lost data.

Q15: No sales representatives are remote workers. All remote workers have laptops. Can sales representatives have laptops?

Answer: Yes.
Explanation: Having laptops is not exclusively tied to remote workers.

Q16: If "Some projects are urgent" is true, is it necessarily true that "All projects are urgent"?

Answer: No.
Explanation: "Some" does not imply "all."

Attention to Detail

Q17: Find the discrepancy: 459123, 459123, 459132, 459123.

Answer: Third sequence (459132).
Explanation: Numbers are rearranged incorrectly.

Q18: Identify the anomaly: REPORT, REPORT, REPOT, REPORT.

Answer: Third word (REPOT).
Explanation: Letters "O" and "R" are switched.

Q19: Find the odd one: XYZZX, XYZZX, XZYZX, XYZZX.

Answer: Third pattern (XZYZX).
Explanation: The third pattern differs from the others.

Q20: Detect the error: 876543, 876543, 875643, 876543.

Answer: Third sequence (875643).
Explanation: Numbers are incorrectly ordered.

Effective Tips for Employers, HR Managers, and Recruiters

- Clearly outline the cognitive skills necessary for each role.
- Integrate cognitive testing early to streamline candidate selection.
- Pair cognitive tests with structured interviews and personality tests.
- Regularly update and refine your tests to align with job responsibilities.
- Maintain fairness, validity, and legal compliance.
- Provide detailed instructions to ensure accurate results.

Using cognitive tests helps employers identify talented individuals efficiently. This practice ensures a smarter, more precise hiring process that benefits your organization.

For more detailed guidance, visit AssessGrow.