

# HSPT Verbal

Strategies for the 5 Question Types



# HSPT Verbal



- Section 1 of the HSPT is the Verbal Skills section.
- This 16-minute section contains 60 questions of 5 specific types.
- Each type requires different techniques for solving.

## Type 1: Synonym

- Question format: “\_\_\_ most nearly means”
- Suggested Study Skills:
  - Use Flash Cards for vocabulary mastery
  - Learn prefixes, roots, and suffixes
- Suggested Strategies:
  - Before reading the choices, write a simple synonym for the term. Then read the options and determine which is most similar to your idea.
  - Underline the prefix, root, and/or suffix and write its meaning. Then see which option best matches this.

*Example:*

Generate most nearly means

- imagine
- create
- project
- lose

## Type 2: Antonym

- Question format: “\_\_\_ means the *opposite* of”
- Suggested Study Skills:
  - Use Flash Cards for vocabulary mastery
  - Learn prefixes, roots, and suffixes
- Suggested Strategies:
  - Before reading the choices, write a simple synonym for the term. Then read the options and cross off any options that are most similar to your idea and chose the one option that is opposite of your idea.
  - Underline the prefix, root, and/or suffix and write its meaning. Then cross off any options that best match this and chose the one option that is the most opposite of this.

*Example:*

Fortify means the *opposite* of

- load
- weaken
- sail
- clean

## Type 3: Analogy

- Question format: “ \_\_\_\_\_ is to \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ is to”
- Suggested Strategy:
  - 1) Create a simple sentence relating the first 2 words in the question.
  - 2) Apply this sentence to the 3rd word in the question and each of the answer choices to see which fits best, keeping the wording and order the same as what was used for the first 2 words.

*Example:*

Tree is to trunk as flower is to

- a. bee
- b. stem
- c. leaf
- d. pollen



## Most Common Analogy Connections:

- Whole to Part (“*Ocean is to water;*” *The ocean is made up of water.*)
- Part to Whole (“*Wheel is to bus;*” *A wheel is part of a bus.*)
- Association (“*Bat is to ball;*” *Use a bat to hit a ball.*)
- Characteristic (“*Wise is to owl;*” *An owl is wise.*)
- Purpose (“*Mask is to protection;*” *A mask is used for protection*)
- Synonym (“*Spring is to jump;*” *Spring means the same as jump.*)
- Antonym (“*Bad is to good;*” *Bad means the opposite of good.*)
- Cause to Effect (“*Germ is to disease;*” *Germs cause disease.*)
- Effect to Cause (“*Honors is to study;*” *Studying results in honors.*)
- Sequence (“*Elementary is to secondary;*” *Elementary is before secondary.*)
- Degree (“*Apartment is to mansion;*” *An apartment is a not as fancy as a mansion.*)

## Type 4: Grouping

- Question format: “Which word does *not* belong with the others?”
- Suggested Strategy:
  - 1) Chose 2 words from the answer choices that are certainly linked together.
  - 2) Determine the specific relationship of these 2 words.
  - 3) From the remaining 2 options, decide which fits better into this relationship.

*Example:*

Which word does *not* belong with the others?

- a. speak
- b. yell
- c. sound
- d. whisper

## Most Common Relationships:

- Items in a category (*“love” and “anger;” not “emotion”*)
- Synonyms (*“honesty” and “sincerity;” not “quality”*)
- Types (*“orange” and “apple;” not “carrot”*)
- Degrees (*“residence” and “dwelling;” not “dungeon”*)
- Parts of speech (*“one” and “three;” not “fourth”*)
- Functions (*“audience” and “congregation;” not “podium”*)



## Type 5: Ranking

- Question format: Three sentence paragraph with the last sentence stating “If the first two statements are true, the third is”
- Suggested Strategy:
  - 1) Create a visual representation of the first two sentences using single letters to represent the items (for example, B for black horse).
  - 2) Put your pencil down. Then determine if the third sentence fits into your visual representation.
    - If it fits with the logic of your diagram, chose (A) true.
    - If it contradicts your diagram, chose (B) false.
    - If you cannot determine its relationship to your diagram (usually because it has nothing to do with the items given or because something is uncertain about the information given), chose (C) uncertain.

*Example:*

Penelope has more cats than Uma but fewer cats than Michael.  
Michael has fewer cats than Petra.  
Penelope has more cats than Petra.  
If the first two statements are true, the third is

- True
- False
- Uncertain

## Most Common Ranking Formats:

- If the sentences include comparison words such as “more,” “less,” “better,” “faster,” or “taller” . . .
  - use < and > symbols to arrange the items, putting them all in one statement if possible
- If the sentences include direction words such as “north,” “northeast,” or “before” . . .
  - draw a map of the items in relation to each other
- If the sentences include words such as “all,” “no,” “none,” or “some” . . .
  - use a Venn Diagram to represent the items’ relationships to each other

# Overall HSPT Verbal Strategy

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Identify which Question Type it is
  - Synonym
  - Antonym
  - Analogy
  - Grouping
  - Ranking
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Use the specific strategy for that Question Type

