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Overview of *CogAT* for Parents

What is the *Cognitive Abilities Test*™ (*CogAT*®)?

Cognitive ability refers to a student's readiness to learn in different situations and environments and demonstrate creative problem-solving skills. Unlike a traditional achievement test, which measures how well a student has mastered the curriculum, the *Cognitive Abilities Test* (*CogAT*) shows us how well a child can reason abstractly and identify patterns and relationships in the world around them.

The *CogAT* measures reasoning in three areas, also called batteries, that are based on the most important ways students and teachers communicate in the classroom: **Verbal**, **Nonverbal**, and **Quantitative**.
Figure 1 shows the types of items that can be found in each battery of the *CogAT*.
Figure 2 shows a sample item from each subtest (second grade level).

Figure 1

Types of Reasoning Assessed

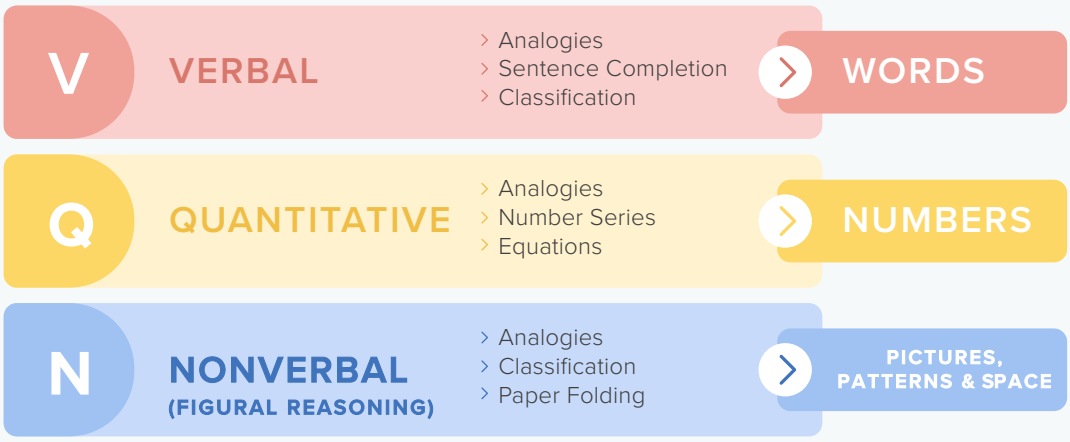
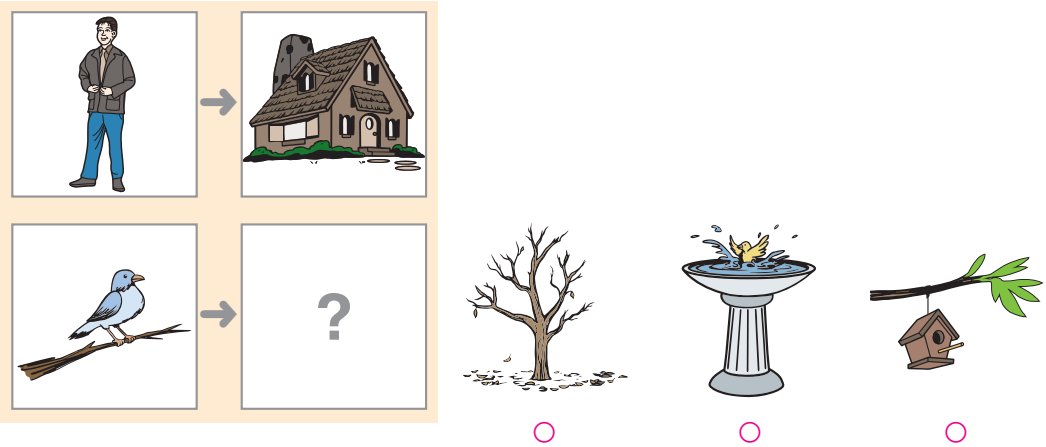
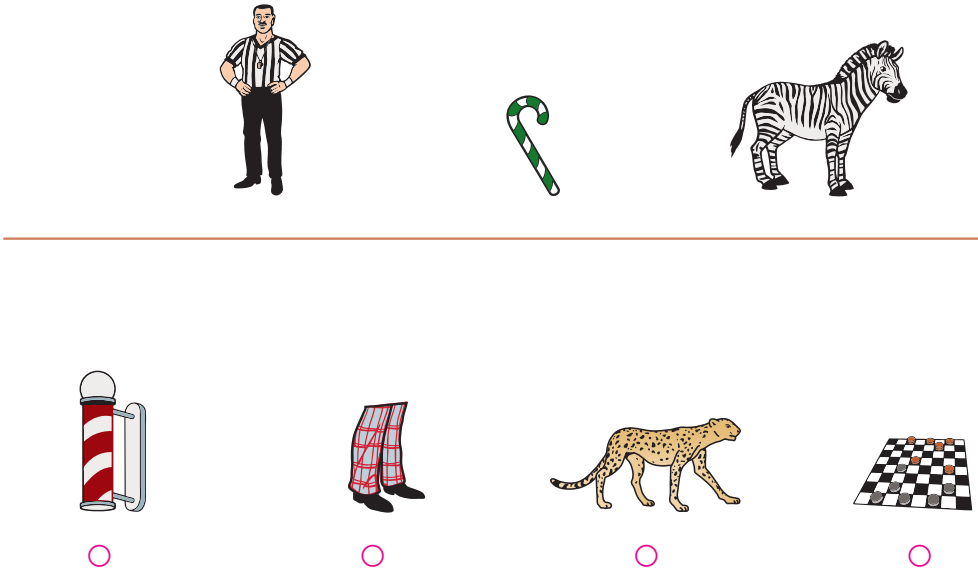


Figure 2

Verbal – Picture Analogies



Verbal – Picture Classification

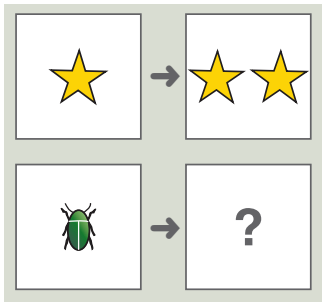


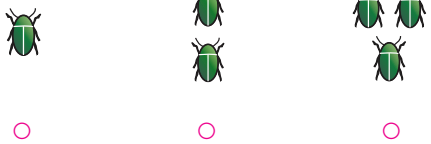
Verbal – Sentence Completion (not pictured)

Figure 2 *Continued*

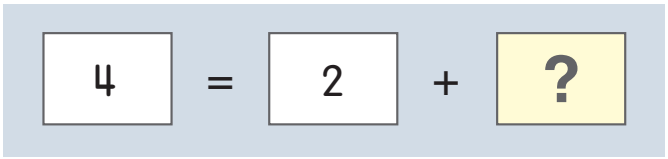
Quantitative – Number Analogies

1



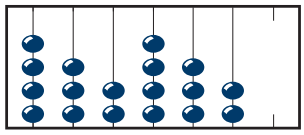


Quantitative – Number Puzzles



2 3 4 6

Quantitative – Number Series



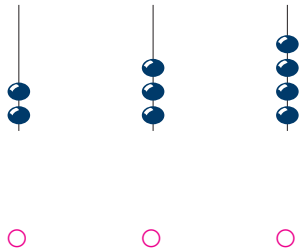
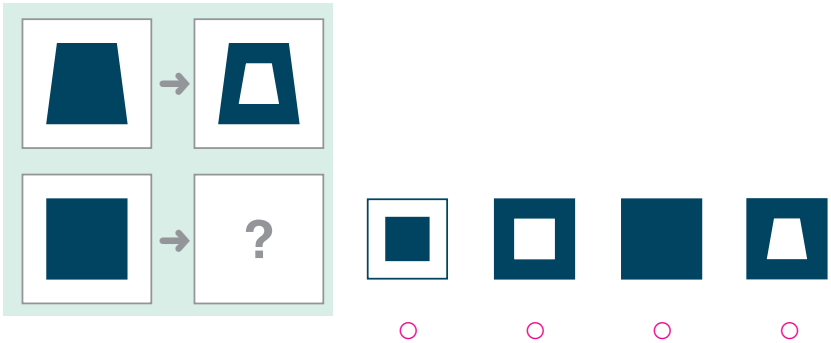
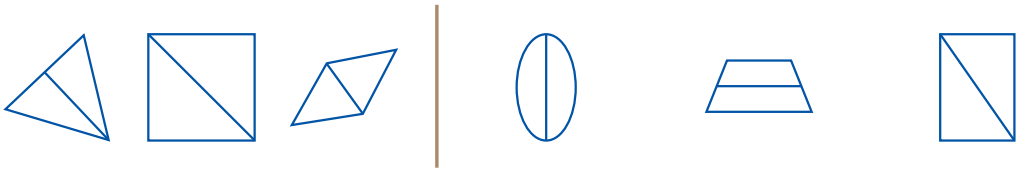


Figure 2 *Continued*

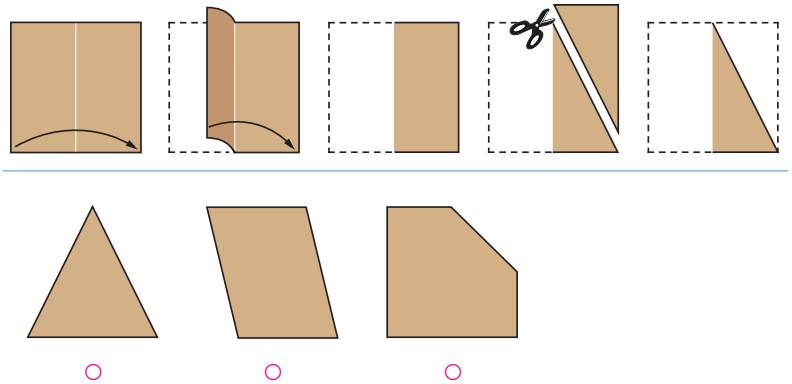
Nonverbal – Figure Matrices



Nonverbal – Figure Classification



Nonverbal – Paper Folding



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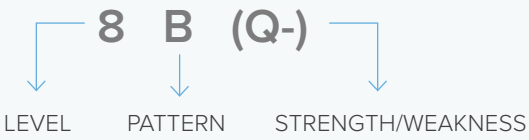
After taking the full *CogAT*, each student receives an *Ability Profile*—a simple code that summarizes that student's cognitive abilities. This document will assist you in interpreting the *Ability Profile,* understanding what ability data is, and how it can be used.

Interpreting the ***Ability Profile***

Every student who completes the minimum number of items on the full *CogAT* receives an *Ability Profile* code like this one:



This *Ability Profile* can help teachers adapt to meet student needs, assist parents in supporting their children at home, and provide students with a better understanding of their own learning. The following sections explain how to interpret each part of the profile.

Level

Each *CogAT Ability Profile* begins with a number that represents the student's *median* age stanine. This indicates the student's overall level of reasoning ability relative to other students their age. Stanine is short for "standard nine." The name comes from the fact that stanine scores range from a low of 1 to a high of 9.

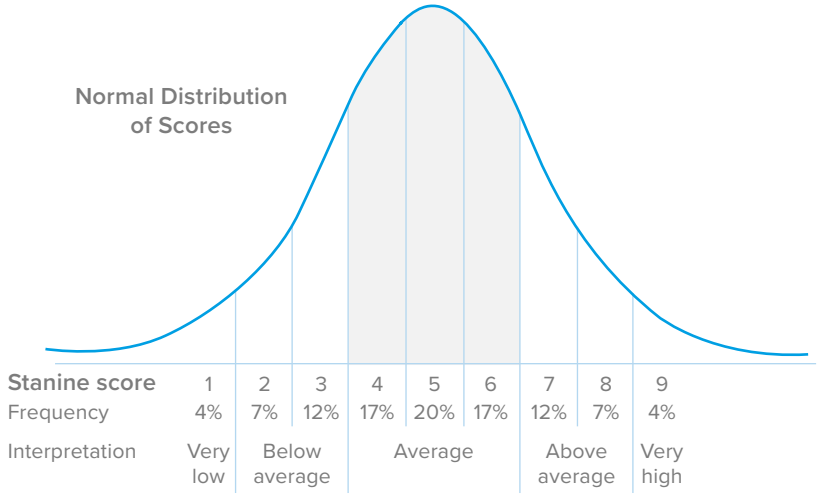
Interpreting Stanine Level

Level	Indication
1, 2, 3	below average
4, 5, 6	average
7, 8	above average
9	very high

The test uses a nationwide sampling of test results (called "national norms") to calculate scores. Students are grouped by age in one-month intervals from 4 years 11 months through 18+ years of age. If your child achieved an average stanine score (4-6), the test indicated that they performed at about the same level as other students their age who took the test. If a child achieves a stanine score that is above average (7-9), they performed better than other students who took the test. A below average stanine (1-3) means that the child had a lower performance than other students their age who took the test. See Figure 3 for a visual representation:

Figure 3

Median Stanine by Reasoning Ability Level



Pattern

The median stanine is followed by a letter that indicates the *pattern* of your child's scores. The pattern shows whether the three battery scores are relatively equal or some scores are significantly higher or lower than other scores. The pattern is classified as either an A, B, C, or E profile.

Pattern	Description	Approximate percentage of students with this profile
A	The student's Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal Battery scores are roughly at the s**A**me level	44%
B	Two of the scores are roughly the same. The third score is a relative strength or weakness, significantly a**B**ove or Below the other two.	33%
C	Two scores **C**ontrast. The student shows a relative strength and a relative weakness.	12%
E	An E profile indicates **E**xtreme score differences. At least two scores differ by 24 or more points on the standard age score (SAS) scale.	10%

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Relative strengths and weaknesses

Depending on the student's *Ability Profile*, there may be one or two additional letters after the pattern that indicate any relative strengths and/or weaknesses evident in their battery scores. Keep in mind that these are only in relation to that child's other skills–not those of other students.
Not all profiles contain these additional letters. For those that do, here is how to interpret these letters:

- V, Q, or N followed by a plus sign (+) indicates a relative strength on the Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal Battery, respectively.
- V, Q, or N followed by a minus sign (–) indicates a relative weakness on the Verbal, Quantitative, or Nonverbal Battery, respectively.

Sample score interpretations

An *Ability Profile* of 4B (V+) means that the student's median stanine is 4 (average) and that the student's score on the Verbal Battery was significantly higher than (a**B**ove) the student's scores on the two other batteries. Here are some additional examples of profiles and their interpretation:

Profile	Interpretation
9A	Very high scores on all three batteries
8B (Q-)	Generally high scores but a relative weakness on the Quantitative Battery
2B (N+)	Generally below average scores, but a relative strength on the Nonverbal Battery
5C (V+N-)	Generally average scores with a relative strength on the Verbal Battery and a relative weakness on the Nonverbal Battery
8E (V-)	Generally high scores but an extreme relative weakness on the Verbal Battery

How can ability data **be used**?

The *Ability Profile* is a unique and powerful tool that provides educators, students, and parents with information about a student's potential.

Using the information from the profile, teachers can adapt instruction based on best practices for each ability level and group students with others who will complement and enhance their learning. Teachers can also use targeted strategies to build upon specific strengths and assist students in shoring up their weaknesses to encourage academic growth. For example, a student with a relative strength in verbal reasoning will benefit from talking or writing about what they are learning, and a student with a strength in nonverbal reasoning will benefit from using models and manipulatives to learn new concepts. A student with a relative weakness in verbal reasoning may benefit from having instructions written on the board for reference as opposed to being expected to recall verbal directions. A student with a relative weakness in quantitative reasoning will likely benefit from using drawings and/or words to explain math problems.

As parents, we can also use this information to support our children in their learning and reasoning skills at home. We encourage you to see our *Additional Resources* below to use the *Ability Profile* data to the fullest.

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An important note about test scores

Your child is a unique human being, with numerous immeasurable personal qualities and characteristics that will shape their contribution to the world. It is important to understand that the *CogAT*, though very useful in finding the potential in our students, is just one assessment, and results can vary depending on a variety of external factors. While these scores are an invaluable illustration of a student's academic abilities, they are not the only measurement of your child's abilities and skills. Multiple types of assessments, data points, and observations are used by your child's school to determine their needs. We hope that the *Ability Profile* serves as one valuable tool for you and your child's teacher to support your child as they learn and grow into their full potential.

Additional resources

Getting to Know CogAT for Parents (video)

CogAT.com

How to Support Your Learner at Home

How to Conference with Your Child's Teacher

How to Talk with Your Child about Their Learning