

Figure Sequences — Strategy & Tricks

Four matrices, one hidden rule, six lookalike options. Name the rule, apply it mechanically, and the answer stops being a matter of taste.

Contents: What the item asks · The first two seconds · One property at a time · Named tricks that buy seconds · The 75-second routine · Where the points leak · Six worked items, easy to hard · Three drills for the scan · Solve one with me · Build it up: easy, medium, hard · Against the clock · Exam day · Cheat sheet

What the item asks

Four small grids in a row. Something changes from one to the next, always by the same rule, and you say what comes next. Nothing to discover — a rule to name, then apply.

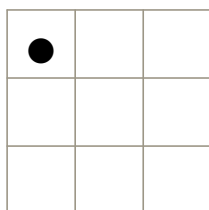
Each grid holds a few shapes in mostly empty cells. Between matrices a shape can **move** to another cell, **turn**, flip between **filled and hollow**, change **colour**, or be **joined by another shape**. That list is complete.

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

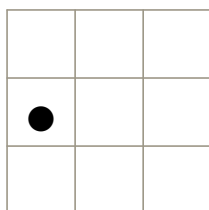
The keypad. Number the cells once and every rule becomes a sentence you can say. Cell 5 is the centre; the border runs 1-2-3-6-9-8-7-4 clockwise.

The rules in one breath 20 items in 25 minutes — about 75 seconds each. Six options, A to F, exactly one correct. Each supplies **both** Matrix 5 and Matrix 6 as a pair. No negative marking, so a blank scores what a wrong guess scores: nothing.

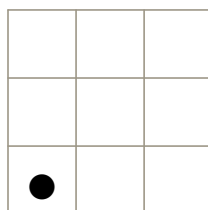
The pairing matters. Options often share a Matrix 5 and split on the sixth, or on a colour. Picture only Matrix 5 and you land on a shortlist, not an answer. Build the **rule** — it gives you the sixth free.



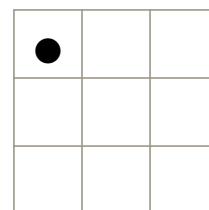
M1



M2



M3



M4

A whole item in miniature. The circle walks $1 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 7$ down the left column and wraps back to 1. Matrix 5 is the circle in cell 4; Matrix 6 is the circle in cell 7.

Notice what made that easy: you read a rule off the first step, then checked it twice more. The rest of this guide is a faster way of doing that.

The first two seconds

Before you track anything, **count**. Different counts along the strip means a counter, and the count alone kills most options. Equal counts — the usual case — means the same shapes are being moved, turned or recoloured.

If you see	It is	Do this
Same glyph, different cell	A walk	Say the cell numbers; find the step and the wall behaviour
Same cell, different orientation	Rotation in place	Read clockwise or anticlockwise; confirm on step three
Shapes on the other side, count unchanged	Reflection or whole-grid turn	Test a corner: a mirror keeps its row or column, a turn neither
The number of glyphs changes	Counter	Find the increment, then where new glyphs land
Filled and hollow alternating	Fill toggle	Read the parity off Matrix 4 alone
Cell and orientation both changing	Combined rule	Split it: position, then orientation, then fill
A glyph identical in all four	An anchor	Confirm, ignore — but check the options kept it

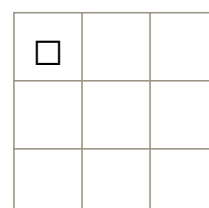
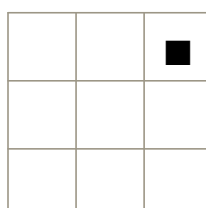
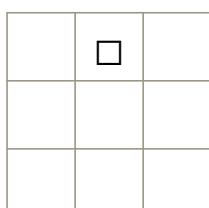
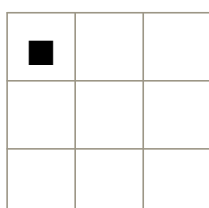
Most items above the easy band combine two rows of that table. That is not a harder kind of item; it is two easy items stacked, taken one at a time.

The count-then-track scan Two seconds, every item: how many shapes, and are they the same shapes? Those two answers drop you into exactly one row above, and the row says what to do.

One property at a time

One idea underpins everything: a matrix has independent properties — cell, orientation, fill, count — and each follows its own rule. Read them separately and each is easy. Read them together and you see fog.

1. **Count.** Different counts means a counter; equal counts means the same shapes moved.
2. **Pick one glyph and track only it.** Cover the rest with a finger. Say its cell number across the strip aloud: "1, 2, 3, 6".
3. **Name the step and direction.** How many cells, which way, and what it does at the wall — wrap, bounce back, or turn the corner.
4. **Confirm on every step, not just the first.** A rule read from M1 → M2 is a guess; it becomes a rule when it also makes M3 from M2 and M4 from M3. This habit prevents more wrong answers than everything else here.
5. **Now the second property.** Orientation, then fill, then colour. Read it, confirm it on all three steps. Properties are independent: a shape can turn without moving and move without turning.
6. **Build Matrix 5 in your head before looking at the options.** Apply each confirmed property to Matrix 4 once, then find your picture. Read the options first and they will suggest rules to you — the wrong ones are built to.
7. **If your picture is not there exactly, eliminate by property.** Strike every option breaking something you are sure of, cheapest first: count, then fill and colour, then cell, then orientation.



Run the seven steps on this before reading on.

1 — Count. One shape each: not a counter. **2 — Track it.** Cells 1, 2, 3, 1. **3 — Name it.** One cell right along the top row, *wrapping* at the wall. **4 — Confirm.** Three out of three, and the third step is the valuable one: a bounce would have gone back to cell 2, so the strip settles the edge behaviour. **5 — Second property.** Filled, hollow, filled, hollow — toggling, also three out of three. **6 — Build it.** M4 is hollow in cell 1; one right is cell 2; hollow toggles to filled. Matrix 5 is a **filled square in cell 2** — and you never looked at an option.

The two-step rule Never accept a rule you have seen happen once. Two confirmations, or it is a guess. The best decoys are built from rules that fit M1 → M2 perfectly and fall apart at M3.

Named tricks that buy seconds

The keypad. Say the walk aloud. "1, 2, 3, 6, 9" is instantly clockwise round the border; the same walk seen as pictures is a blur. Learn the ring order once.

Fill parity. When fill alternates, Matrix 5's fill depends on Matrix 4 alone. One glance, one flip, and every wrongly-filled option dies before you have thought about position.

The wall test. At an edge a walker must wrap, bounce, or turn the corner. Find the matrix where it first hits the wall — that one alone tells you which. Strips include it on purpose.

The return check. Four 90° turns return a grid to its start; two mirrors do the same. So if M4 is identical to M1, Matrix 5 is identical to M2 — no rule-building needed.

The disagreement scan. Read the six options as a column. Any property they all agree on is not being tested. The property they *split* on is the item.

Anchor first, then ignore. A shape identical in all four is an anchor. Confirm it once and stop looking — but check it in the options, where a favourite decoy quietly hollows it.

Mirror or turn? Take one corner shape. A left-right mirror keeps its row; top-bottom keeps its column; 90° keeps neither; 180° sends it to the opposite corner.

Say it, do not stare at it Every trick here turns a picture into a sentence — "1, 2, 3, 6, clockwise, toggling". Sentences you can check; pictures you can only squint at.

The 75-second routine

Seventy-five seconds is comfortable if the first ten are spent well. People who run out of time are rarely slow at rotating shapes; they are slow at deciding what to look at first.

Seconds	Do	Do not
0–10	Count the shapes. Pick the glyph to track	Try to see the whole rule at once
10–30	Track that glyph's cell across all four. Name step, direction, wall	Look at the options
30–45	Second property — orientation, then fill. Confirm each	Re-derive what you confirmed
45–60	Build Matrix 5 in your head, then find it	Accept the first option that looks close

Seconds	Do	Do not
60–75	Two survivors? Derive Matrix 6, or scan the property they split on	Start again from Matrix 1

What to skip. Colour, unless the options disagree about it. Any glyph that never changes. Any second glyph, until the first is solved. And Matrix 6 — derive it only if two options survive on Matrix 5.

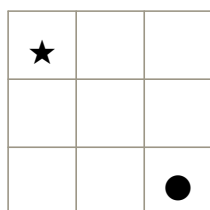
When to guess. At 75 seconds, stop deriving and start eliminating. Take every property you have *confirmed* — one is enough — strike the options that break it, and take the survivor matching the most. With no negative marking that is the highest-scoring move.

Ninety seconds is the ceiling Past 90 seconds you are not solving an item, you are borrowing time from two later ones you would have got right. Confirmed properties, best survivor, next.

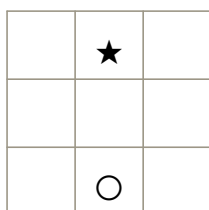
Where the points leak

Decoys are not random near-misses. Each is the correct matrix with exactly one property broken — which is why elimination by property beats eyeballing. The standing cast:

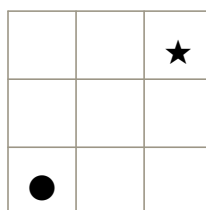
- **The copied matrix.** An exact duplicate of M2 or M4. Familiar is not next.
- **The wrong-way turn.** Anticlockwise where the rule is clockwise — the commonest error here.
- **Mirror sold as a turn.** 180° and a top-bottom mirror agree on one symmetric glyph and nothing else.
- **The tampered anchor.** All correct, except the shape meant to stay identical.
- **One step short.** M4 unchanged, for those who found the rule and forgot to apply it.
- **Fill drift.** Right cell, right orientation, fill carried from M3 instead of M4.
- **The shared Matrix 5.** Three options agree on the fifth and split on the sixth.
- **The rule that fits step one.** Explains M1 → M2 beautifully, cannot explain M3.



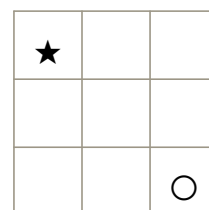
M1



M2



M3



M4

The trap in one strip. M4 looks like M1, so the return check tempts you to copy M2 — but M4's circle is hollow and M1's was filled. A shortcut, not a licence to skip checking.

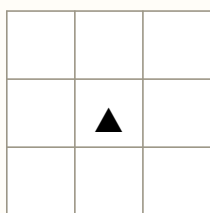
When you are stuck Say what you *have* confirmed and strike every option breaking it. Stuck nearly always means two unsolved properties in your head at once. Drop one, finish the other.

Six worked items, easy to hard

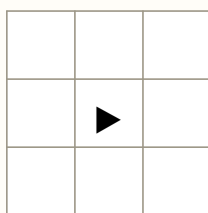
Cover the options each time and build Matrix 5 yourself before opening the answer.

Easy 1 — one glyph, one property EASY · target 30s

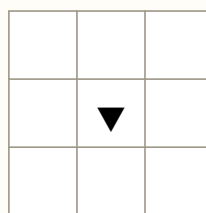
The arrow stays in the centre. Which option is Matrix 5?



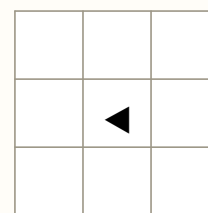
M1



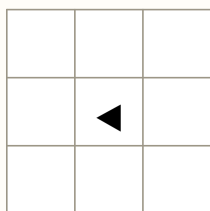
M2



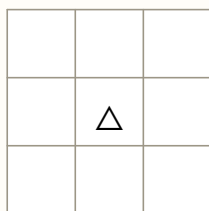
M3



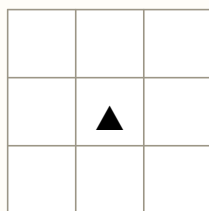
M4



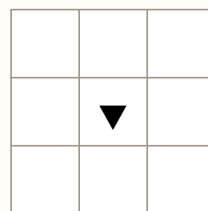
A



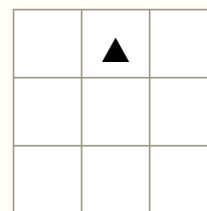
B



C



D



E

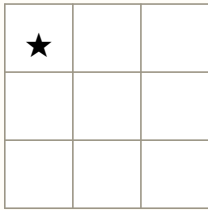
Steps

1. Count: one shape each. Cells: 5, 5, 5, 5 — position is not the rule, so every option outside cell 5 is dead.
2. Orientation: up, right, down, left — 90° clockwise, three out of three.
3. Build M5: left turned clockwise is up; fill never changed. A filled up-arrow in cell 5.
4. A never turned, B is hollow, D turned twice, E is in cell 2.

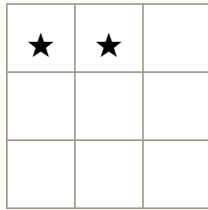
Answer: C — filled ▲ in cell 5. The only option in cell 5, pointing up, filled.

Easy 2 — the counter EASY · target 35s

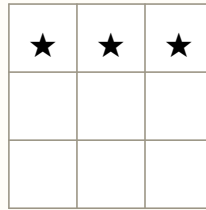
Count before anything else. Which option is Matrix 5?



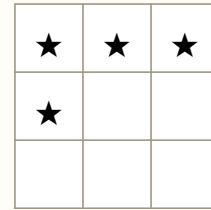
M1



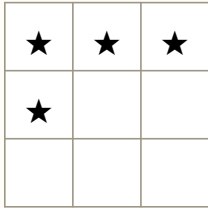
M2



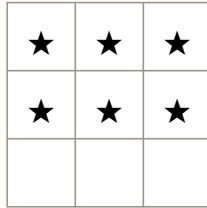
M3



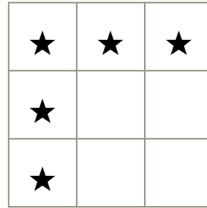
M4



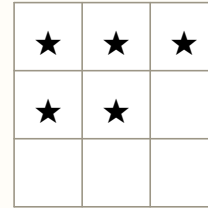
A



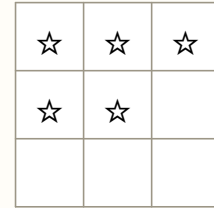
B



C



D



E

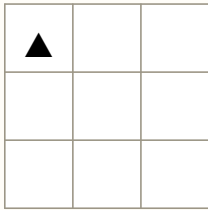
Steps

1. Count: 1, 2, 3, 4. One star added per step, so M5 holds five — that alone kills A (four) and B (six).
2. Occupied cells run 1; 1-2; 1-2-3; 1-2-3-4. Each new star takes the next keypad cell in reading order, so the fifth goes in cell 5.
3. Build M5: filled stars in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
4. C puts the fifth star in cell 7. E has the right cells and hollow stars.

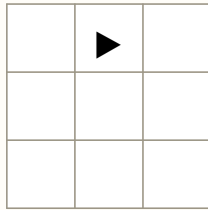
Answer: D — five filled stars in cells 1 to 5. Right count, right cell, right fill; each other option breaks exactly one.

Medium 1 — a ring walk and a turn MEDIUM · target 50s

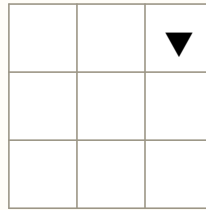
Two properties move at once. Take them separately. Which option is Matrix 5?



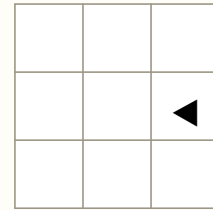
M1



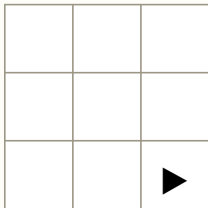
M2



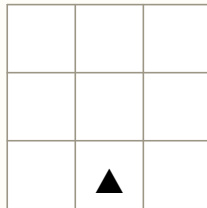
M3



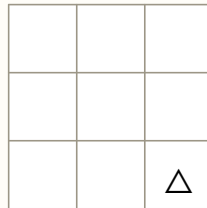
M4



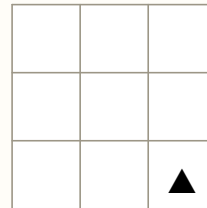
A



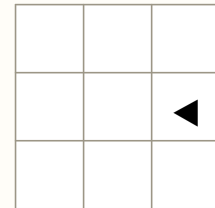
B



C



D



E

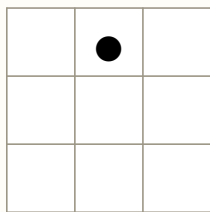
Steps

1. Position first, ignoring the arrowhead. Cells: 1, 2, 3, 6 — one step clockwise round the ring, three out of three. One more from 6 is cell 9.
2. Orientation only: up, right, down, left — 90° clockwise. Left turned clockwise is up.
3. Fill never changes. Build M5: a filled up-arrow in cell 9.
4. A is in the right cell but never turned. B turned right and took two ring steps. C is hollow. E is M4 unchanged.

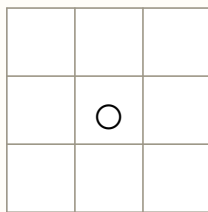
Answer: D — filled ▲ in cell 9. The only option with all three confirmed properties: cell 9, up, filled.

Medium 2 — a wrap and a toggle MEDIUM · target 55s

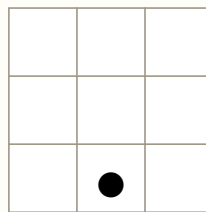
Watch the bottom of the column. Which option is Matrix 5?



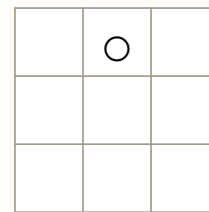
M1



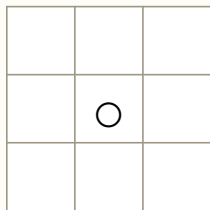
M2



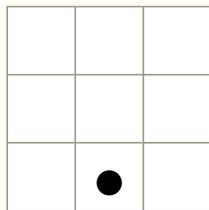
M3



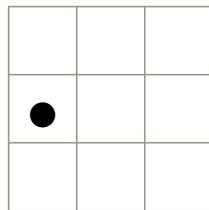
M4



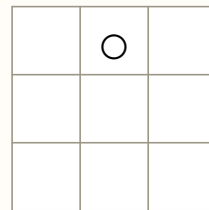
A



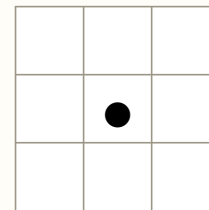
B



C



D



E

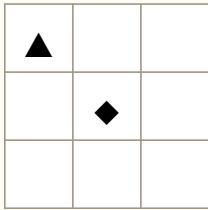
Steps

1. Position: cells 2, 5, 8, 2. One cell down the middle column, wrapping rather than bouncing — M3 → M4 proves it. One more from 2 is cell 5.
2. Fill: filled, hollow, filled, hollow. M4 is hollow, so M5 is filled — that alone kills A and D.
3. Build M5: a filled circle in cell 5.
4. B kept M3's cell, C moved left instead of down, D is M4 unchanged.

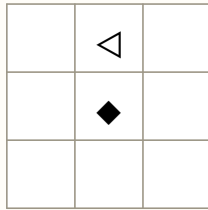
Answer: E — filled ● in cell 5. The only option both in cell 5 and filled. The answer sitting last is why you build the matrix before you scan.

Hard 1 — three properties and an anchor HARD · target 70s

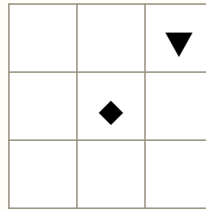
Something here never changes. Find it, then ignore it. Which option is Matrix 5?



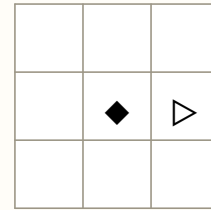
M1



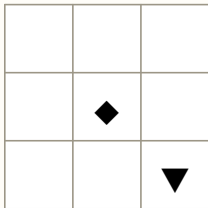
M2



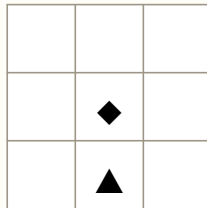
M3



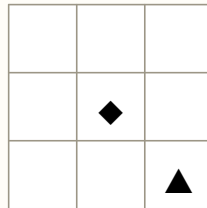
M4



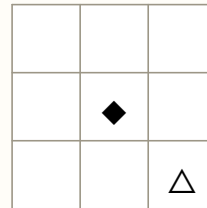
A



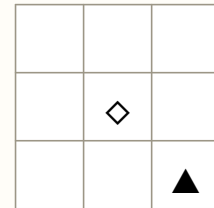
B



C



D



E

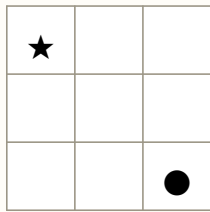
Steps

- Count: two shapes each. The filled $\blacklozenge$ sits in cell 5 in all four — an anchor. Confirm it, then track only the arrow.
- Arrow cells: 1, 2, 3, 6 — one step clockwise round the ring, so M5 puts it in cell 9.
- Arrow direction: up, left, down, right — each turn 90° anticlockwise, so right becomes up.
- Arrow fill: filled, hollow, filled, hollow. M4 is hollow, so M5 is filled.
- Build M5: filled $\blacktriangle$ in cell 9, $\blacklozenge$ untouched in cell 5. A turned clockwise, B took two ring steps, D forgot the toggle, E hollowed the anchor.

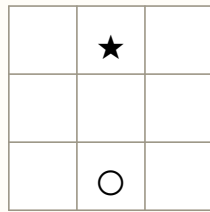
Answer: C — filled $\blacktriangle$ in cell 9, filled $\blacklozenge$ untouched in cell 5. The only option with all four confirmed properties; each other breaks exactly one.

Hard 2 — two movers going opposite ways **HARD · target 75s**

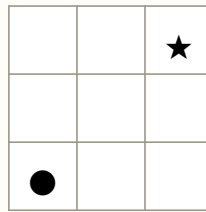
Two shapes, two independent rules. Finish one, then the other. Which option is Matrix 5?



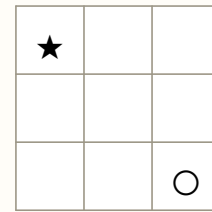
M1



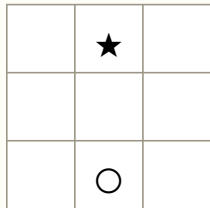
M2



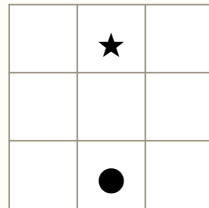
M3



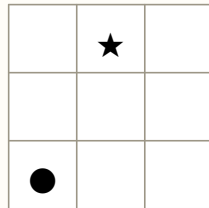
M4



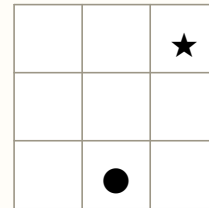
A



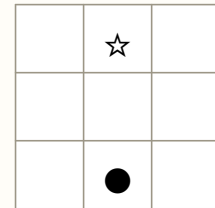
B



C



D



E

Steps

1. The star alone: cells 1, 2, 3, 1 — one right along the top row, wrapping 3 back to 1, fill never changing. M5: cell 2, filled.
2. The circle alone: cells 9, 8, 7, 9 — one left along the bottom row, wrapping 7 back to 9. M5: cell 8.
3. Circle fill: filled, hollow, filled, hollow. M4 is hollow, so M5 is filled — which is also why M4 is not a repeat of M1 and the return check does not apply.
4. Build M5: filled in cell 2, filled ● in cell 8.
5. A is an exact copy of M2 — right everywhere but the circle's fill. C left the circle put, D moved the star two cells, E hollowed a star that never toggles.

Answer: B — filled in cell 2, filled ● in cell 8. A is the dangerous one: four of five properties right, failing only on the circle's fill.

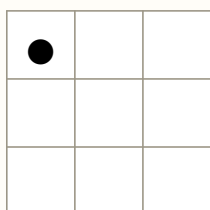
Three drills for the scan

These train the reading, not the solving. Say your answer aloud before you open each one.

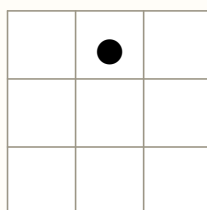
Name the rule

Eight short strips, ten seconds each. Name the rule in six words or fewer — the word limit is the drill, because a rule you cannot say that briefly is one you have not finished reading.

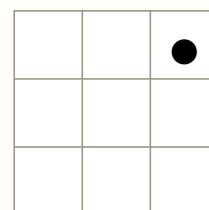
1. (10s)



M1



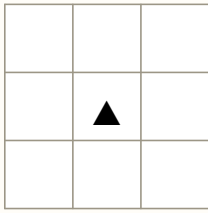
M2



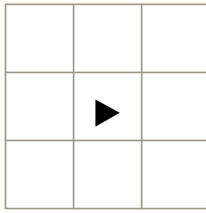
M3

Answer: Shifts one cell right (1 → 2 → 3).

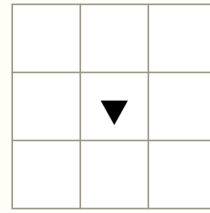
2. 2. (10s)



M1



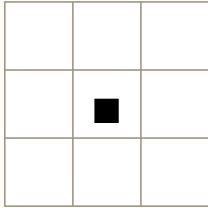
M2



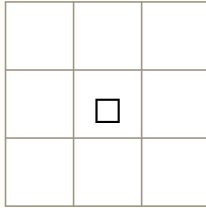
M3

Answer: Turns 90° clockwise in place.

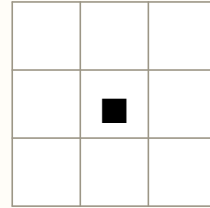
3. 3. (10s)



M1



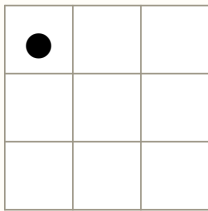
M2



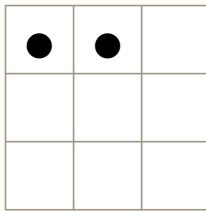
M3

Answer: Fill toggles every step.

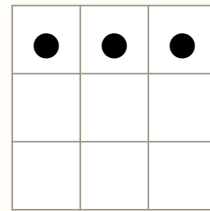
4. 4. (10s)



M1



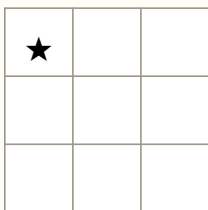
M2



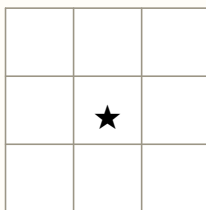
M3

Answer: Adds one circle, left to right.

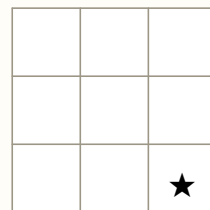
5. 5. (10s)



M1



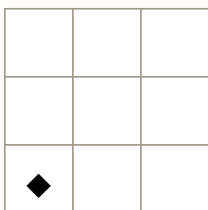
M2



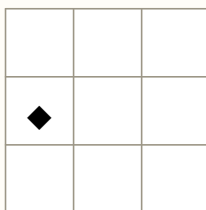
M3

Answer: Moves diagonally down-right (1 → 5 → 9).

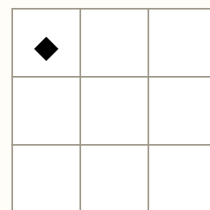
6. 6. (10s)



M1



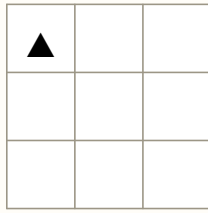
M2



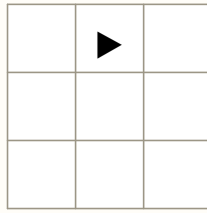
M3

Answer: Shifts one cell up (7 → 4 → 1).

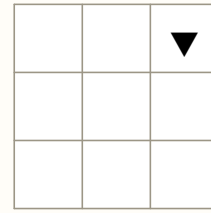
7. 7. (12s)



M1



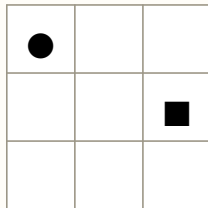
M2



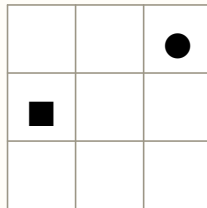
M3

Answer: Shifts right and turns clockwise.

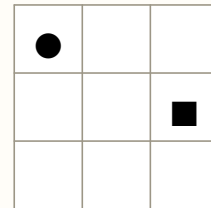
8. 8. (12s)



M1



M2



M3

Answer: Mirrored left-right each step.

Which option breaks the rule?

Each item names one confirmed property and offers four candidates for Matrix 5. Find the one that breaks *that property*; ignore everything else about it.

1. Rule: one cell clockwise round the ring. M4: ● in 3. Breaks **movement**? (A) ● in 6 (B) ○ in 6 (C) ● in 9 (D) ◆ in 6 (15s)

Answer: C. One clockwise step from 3 is 6; cell 9 is two. A, B and D sit in 6, so their movement is right.

2. Rule: fill toggles each step. M4: hollow square. Breaks **fill**? (A) ■ in 1 (B) ■ in 5 (C) □ in 9 (D) ■ in 7 (12s)

Answer: C. Hollow toggles to filled, so M5 is filled wherever it sits.

3. Rule: one star added per step, in reading order. M4: stars in 1-2-3-4. Breaks **count**? (A) 1-2-3-4-5 (B) 1-2-3-4-7 (C) 1-2-3-4 (D) 1-2-3-4-9 (15s)

Answer: C. Five are required; C has four. B and D have the right count and the wrong cell.

4. Rule: turns 90° anticlockwise each step. M4: ►. Breaks **orientation**? (A) ▲ in 9 (B) ▲ in 5 (C) ▼ in 9 (D) △ in 1 (15s)

Answer: C. Right turned anticlockwise is up; C points down — the wrong-way decoy.

5. Rule: the filled ◆ in cell 5 is an anchor. Breaks the **anchor**? (A) ◆ in 5, ▲ in 9 (B) ◆ in 5, ▼ in 9 (C) ◇ in 5, ▲ in 9 (D) ◆ in 5, △ in 9 (15s)

Answer: C. The anchor has been hollowed; the rest keep it and differ only in the arrow.

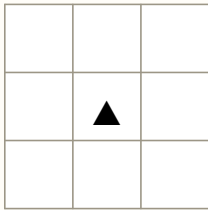
6. Rule: one cell down the middle column, wrapping at the bottom. M4: circle in 8. Breaks **movement**? (A) ● in 2 (B) ○ in 2 (C) ● in 5 (D) ○ in 2, doubled (15s)

Answer: C. From 8 the next step wraps to 2, not back up to 5 — the bounce-instead-of-wrap error.

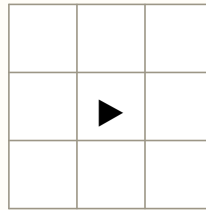
Turn, or mirror?

Six two-matrix strips, five seconds each. Which operation takes the first to the second: clockwise 90°, anticlockwise 90°, 180°, left-right mirror, top-bottom mirror?

1. 1. (5s)



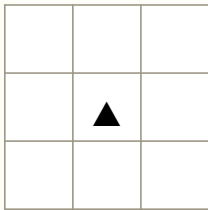
M1



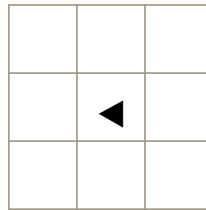
M2

Answer: Clockwise 90°.

2. 2. (5s)



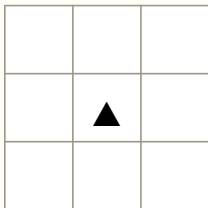
M1



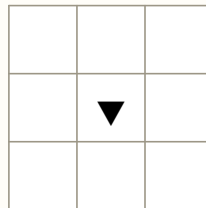
M2

Answer: Anticlockwise 90°.

3. 3. (8s)



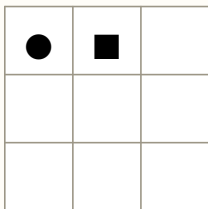
M1



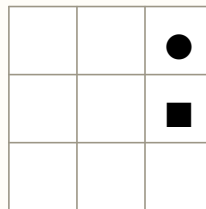
M2

Answer: Trick item: 180° and a top-bottom mirror both do this, and one centred triangle cannot tell them apart. Never settle turn-versus-mirror on one symmetric glyph.

4. 4. (8s)



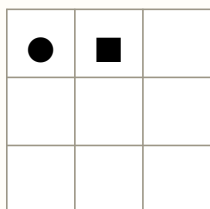
M1



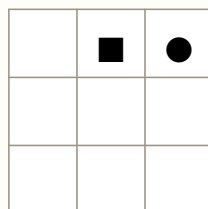
M2

Answer: Clockwise 90°. Cell 1 → 3 and 2 → 6: neither kept its row or column, so it is a turn.

5. 5. (8s)



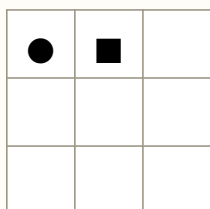
M1



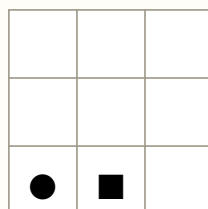
M2

Answer: Left-right mirror. Both stayed in the top row, and the square sat on the mirror line.

6. 6. (8s)



M1

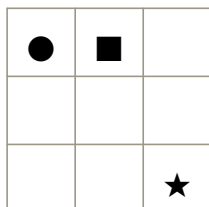


M2

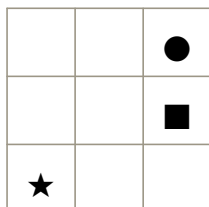
Answer: Top-bottom mirror. Both kept their column. A 180° turn would have sent the circle to cell 9, not cell 7.

Solve one with me

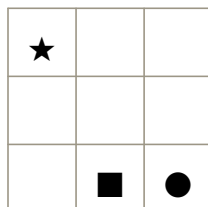
A medium item of the kind that panics people: nothing sits still, and no single glyph is worth tracking. Answer each question before reading the next, and do not scroll to the options.



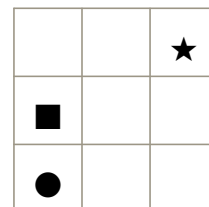
M1



M2



M3



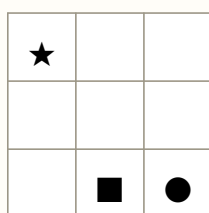
M4

M1 to M4. Three shapes, all of them moving.

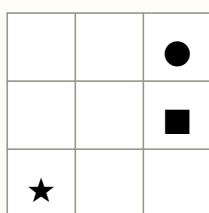
1. *How many shapes?* Three every time — circle, square, star. Nothing added or removed. Counter ruled out.
2. *Does any shape have a simple walk?* The circle goes 1 → 3 → 9 → 7; the star 9 → 7 → 1 → 3. Neither moves one cell at a time — they jump corner to corner. When individual tracks look wild, stop tracking individuals: the whole grid is transforming at once.
3. *Turn or mirror?* Use one corner. The circle goes 1 → 3, keeping its row, as a left-right mirror would. Now the square: 2 → 6. A left-right mirror sends cell 2 to itself, since 2 sits on the mirror line. So it is a turn.
4. *Which turn?* 1 → 3 → 9 → 7 is the top-left corner walking clockwise. Confirm with the square: 2 → 6 → 8 → 4, also clockwise. Three out of three.
5. *Is there a shortcut?* Four 90° turns return a grid to its start, and M1 to M5 is exactly four — so M5 equals M1. Check M4 is not already a copy of M1 (it is not: the circle is in 7), then read M1 off the page.
6. *What will the decoys be?* Predict them first. An anticlockwise turn, which from M4 reproduces M3. A 180° turn, which reproduces M2. Something with a hollowed circle.

The reveal MEDIUM · target 55s

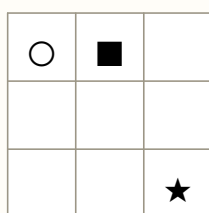
Whole grid turns 90° clockwise each step. Which option is Matrix 5?



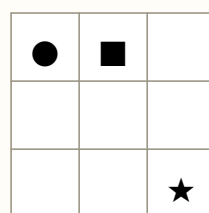
A



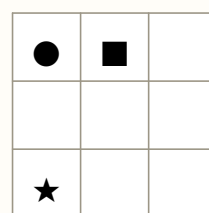
B



C



D



E

Steps

1. The rule: corners cycle 1 → 3 → 9 → 7 → 1, edges cycle 2 → 6 → 8 → 4 → 2, cell 5 fixed, fill unchanged.
2. Apply it to M4 once: circle 7 → 1, square 4 → 2, star 3 → 9 — which is M1 exactly, as the return check predicted.
3. A is the anticlockwise turn, so it is M3 again. B is the 180° turn, so it is M2 again.
4. C has all three in the right cells but the circle has gone hollow.
5. E has circle and square right and the star in cell 7 rather than 9 — one corner short.

Answer: D — circle in cell 1, square in cell 2, star in cell 9, all filled. The only option with both confirmed properties: the clockwise cycle and unchanged fill.

Why the self-talk works Every question above is one you can ask before seeing the item. The routine does the noticing, so under pressure you never stare at a strip wondering where to begin.

Build it up: easy, medium, hard

Work the tiers in order, untimed. The target is not a score — it is being able to say the rule in one sentence before looking at an option. If you cannot, the tier is not finished, however many you got right by recognising a picture.

Tier	What it drills	Move up when
Easy	One property: walks, turns in place, counters, toggles	You name the rule inside ten seconds, every item
Medium	Two properties, and walls — wraps, bounces, corners	You finish position before starting orientation
Hard	Three properties, several movers, whole-grid turns	You predict the decoys before reading the options

Live drill online: Easy set — one property, untimed —

<https://dmatprepguide.com/?try=drill&cat;=figure&tier;=easy&n;=6&timed;=0>

Live drill online: Medium set — two properties and walls, untimed —

<https://dmatprepguide.com/?try=drill&cat;=figure&tier;=medium&n;=6&timed;=0>

Live drill online: Hard set — combined rules and decoys, untimed —

<https://dmatprepguide.com/?try=drill&cat;=figure&tier;=hard&n;=6&timed;=0>

Between tiers, re-read the traps section. Decoys at the next tier come from the same eight ideas applied to more properties at once, so the tier above is never as new as it looks.

Against the clock

Speed here does not come from seeing faster; it comes from never re-reading. Every second spent going back to Matrix 1 is one the routine should have saved. Time each item and note *where* the seconds went: counting, tracking, confirming, or scanning options.

Item shape	Target	If you are over
One glyph, one property	25–35 s	You are reading the options too early
Two properties, or a wall	45–60 s	You are tracking both at once, not finishing one
Three properties or several movers	60–75 s	You are not eliminating — build certainty and strike

Live drill online: Easy set — 6 items, 35 seconds each —

<https://dmatprepguide.com/?try=drill&cat;=figure&tier;=easy&n;=6&timed;=1>

Live drill online: Medium set — 6 items, 60 seconds each —

<https://dmatprepguide.com/?try=drill&cat;=figure&tier;=medium&n;=6&timed;=1>

Live drill online: Hard set — 6 items, 75 seconds each —

<https://dmatprepguide.com/?try=drill&cat;=figure&tier;=hard&n;=6&timed;=1>

Bank, do not spend Finishing an easy item in 25 seconds does not mean checking it twice. It means fifty seconds banked for the hard item at the end.

Exam day

Twenty items, twenty-five minutes. Sets open with single-property items and thicken from the middle, so the early minutes are where time is banked or wasted. This family rewards a routine more than any other Core section: the reasoning is short, and most points lost go to a habit, not to difficulty.

- Count the shapes in all four matrices — two seconds, every item.
- Pick one glyph. Track only its cell. Say the numbers aloud.
- Name the step, the direction, and what happens at the wall.
- Confirm the rule on all three steps before accepting it.
- Second property: orientation. Third: fill. Confirm each.
- Build Matrix 5 in your head. Only then look at the options.
- Not there exactly? Strike on confirmed properties, cheapest first.
- Two survivors? Derive Matrix 6 — that is what the pair is for.
- At 75 seconds, take the option matching the most confirmed properties.

Mixed difficulty. Do not solve in order at any cost. Give a three-shape whole-grid item one pass; if the rule has not landed by 30 seconds, mark your best elimination and flag it. Two easy items rescued beat one hard item conquered.

The last thirty seconds. Stop solving. Answer every blank and flag — the option matching the most confirmed properties, or, if none, the one that is *not* a copy of an earlier matrix. An unanswered item is the only genuinely wasted one.

Live drill online: Exam simulation — 6 hard items at exam pace —

<https://dmatprepguide.com/?try=drill&cat;=figure&tier;=hard&n;=6&timed;=1>

The habit that scores Build the matrix before you read the options. Every decoy in this family is designed to be persuasive *before* you commit to a rule, and harmless afterwards.

Cheat sheet

- 20 items, 25 minutes, ~75 s each. Six options A–F, each a Matrix 5 + Matrix 6 pair. No negative marking.
- Only six things change: cell, orientation, fill, colour, size, count.
- Keypad: 5 is the centre; the ring runs 1-2-3-6-9-8-7-4 clockwise.
- Count first. Different counts = counter. Equal = same shapes moved.
- One property at a time, one glyph at a time.
- A rule seen once is a guess. Confirm on all three steps.
- At the wall: wrap, bounce, or turn the corner — the strip shows which.
- Fill parity: Matrix 5's fill depends on Matrix 4's alone.
- Return check: four 90° turns, or two mirrors, come back to the start.
- Mirror keeps a corner's row or column; 90° keeps neither; 180° goes opposite.
- Anchors: confirm, ignore — then check the options kept them.
- Build Matrix 5 in your head before reading a single option.
- Eliminate cheapest first: count, fill and colour, cell, orientation.
- Disagreement scan: the property options split on is the one tested.
- Decoys: a copy of M2 or M4, the wrong-way turn, the untoggled fill, the tampered anchor.
- Two options sharing Matrix 5? Derive Matrix 6.
- Stuck: name what is confirmed, strike what breaks it, take the best survivor.
- At 75 s answer and move; at 90 you steal from later items.
- Last 30 s: fill every blank. An unanswered item is the only wasted one.

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