IBPS · SBI · RRB · PO & CLERK

Bank PO Tricks by Question Type

Every question type a Bank PO paper actually asks, and the specific method that cracks it fastest. Quant and reasoning, with the traps that cost marks.

Quant short tricks | Reasoning methods | Question-type wise | Free

Simplification & Approximation

The fastest marks in the paper. Solve by **BODMAS**: Brackets, Order (powers, roots), Division, Multiplication, Addition, Subtraction. Left to right within the same rank.

APPROXIMATE BEFORE YOU CALCULATE

When the question says 'approximate value', round first. 19.87% of 449.6 ≈ 20% of 450 = 90. Rounding after calculating wastes the entire advantage.

FRACTION BEATS DECIMAL

Convert percentages to fractions on sight: 12.5% = 1/8, 16.67% = 1/6, 37.5% = 3/8, 6.25% = 1/16. 37.5% of 512 becomes 3/8 × 512 = 192 in one step.

√ of a perfect square	**match last digit, then bracket**
x% of y	**= y% of x**
Successive % a, b	**a + b + ab/100**

REVERSE THE PERCENTAGE

16% of 25 looks awkward; 25% of 16 is 4. Since x% of y equals y% of x, always flip to whichever side is easier.

Number Series

Check in this order: **differences → ratios → squares/cubes → primes → alternating patterns**. Most series break on the first or second check.

Pattern	Example	Rule
Constant diff	4, 9, 14, 19	+5
Changing diff	2, 3, 6, 11, 18	+1, +3, +5, +7
Multiply	3, 6, 12, 24	×2
×n + k	2, 5, 11, 23	×2 + 1
Squares ±	3, 8, 15, 24	$n^2 - 1$
Cubes ±	9, 28, 65, 126	$n^3 + 1$
Alternating	2, 5, 4, 10, 6	two series woven

WRONG-NUMBER SERIES

Do not hunt the odd one directly. Establish the rule from the first three or four safe terms, then walk forward. The first term that violates the established rule is the answer.

WHEN DIFFERENCES LOOK RANDOM

Take the difference of the differences. If that second row is constant or a simple series, the original is quadratic and you can extend it confidently.

Quadratic Equations (compare x and y)

The signature Bank PO question. Two equations, find the relation between x and y. You rarely need the actual roots, only their signs and rough sizes.

READ THE SIGNS, SKIP THE ALGEBRA

For $x^2 + bx + c = 0$ the roots' signs follow from b and c alone. c positive and b positive ⇒ **both roots negative**. c positive and b negative ⇒ **both roots positive**. c negative ⇒ **one root of each sign**.

Sum of roots	**$-b/a$**
Product of roots	**c/a**
Roots	**$[-b \pm \sqrt{(b^2 - 4ac)}] / 2a$**

THE 'NO RELATION' TRAP

If the two root ranges overlap even partly, the answer is **cannot be determined**. Test the extremes: compare the smallest x with the largest y and vice versa. Only if every pairing points the same way can you claim a strict relation.

Factorise by splitting the middle term: find two numbers multiplying to a×c and adding to b. Practise until 12, 15, 20, 24 and 36 split instantly, they dominate these questions.

Data Interpretation

Tables, bar, line, pie, caselet and missing DI. Marks per minute here is higher than arithmetic, so DI usually deserves priority.

COMPARE, DO NOT COMPUTE

For 'which is largest' or 'by what percent more', ratios settle it without full multiplication. To compare 348/412 with 289/351, cross-multiply, do not divide.

PIE CHARTS ARE PERCENTAGES

Convert degrees once: 360° = 100%, so 1% = 3.6°. Read every slice as a percentage of the whole and the arithmetic collapses.

READ THE QUESTION BEFORE THE GRAPH

Half of DI time is wasted absorbing data you never use. Read what is asked, then pull only those numbers.

% change	**(New − Old)/Old × 100**
A is what % of B	**A/B × 100**
A more than B by	**(A − B)/B × 100**

Quantity I vs Quantity II & Data Sufficiency

QUANTITY COMPARISON

Solve both quantities fully and independently, then compare. The common trap is assuming a relation from the shape of the expressions instead of the values.

DATA SUFFICIENCY DISCIPLINE

Never solve. Only ask whether a unique answer is reachable. Judge statement I alone, then II alone, and only then together. Deciding jointly first is the classic error.

> A statement giving a ratio without any absolute value is almost never sufficient alone. Watch for it, it is the most repeated pattern in this question type.

Arithmetic word problems

Time & work (LCM units)	**total = LCM of days**
A and B together	**ab/(a+b) days**
Downstream / upstream	**b + s / b − s**
Avg speed (equal distance)	**2xy/(x+y)**
Partnership profit	**∝ capital × time**
SI	**PRT/100**
CI amount	**$P(1 + R/100)^n$**
CI − SI (2 yrs)	**$P(R/100)^2$**
Profit %	**(SP − CP)/CP × 100**
Two successive discounts	**a + b − ab/100**

AGES

Set the present age as x and write every other age relative to it. Add or subtract the same number of years from **both** sides of a comparison, forgetting one side is the usual slip.

MIXTURES BY ALLIGATION

Cheaper : Dearer = (Dearer − Mean) : (Mean − Cheaper). Works for milk-water, price blends, average speeds and average marks alike.

Puzzles & Seating Arrangement

> The largest scoring block in reasoning. Types: linear rows, circular or square tables, floors, boxes, months and days, and category-based grids.

START WITH WHAT IS FIXED

Place definite statements first, never the conditional ones. Clues containing 'immediately', 'exactly' or a specific position are your anchors.

MAKE CASES EARLY

When a clue allows two placements, split into Case 1 and Case 2 straight away and carry both forward. A contradiction kills one branch cleanly. Guessing instead of branching is what burns time.

CIRCULAR DIRECTION RULE

Facing the centre reverses left and right; facing outward keeps them as seen. Mark every person's facing direction on the diagram before applying any left/right clue.

> Skip discipline matters more than speed. If a puzzle has not opened up after two or three clues, leave it and return, the next one may be far easier.

Syllogism

> Draw Venn diagrams. Treat every statement as true even when it contradicts real life.

POSSIBILITY QUESTIONS

A conclusion with 'can be true' or 'possibility' needs only **one** valid diagram. A definite conclusion must hold in **every** diagram you can draw.

EITHER-OR RULE

When two conclusions are individually false but form a complementary pair on the same subject and predicate, the answer is 'either follows'. Complementary pairs: (Some A are B / No A is B) and (All A are B / Some A are not B).

Statement	Definitely follows
All A are B	Some B are A
Some A are B	Some B are A
No A is B	No B is A
All A are B + All B are C	All A are C

Inequality

STRONG BEATS WEAK

Combine only along one continuous direction. A > B ≥ C gives A > C. But A > B ≤ C gives **no relation**, the chain reverses.

Chain	Conclusion
A > B > C	A > C
A ≥ B ≥ C	A ≥ C
A > B ≥ C	A > C
A > B ≤ C	no relation
A = B ≥ C	A ≥ C
A < B > C	no relation

CODED INEQUALITY

Decode every symbol into >, <, ≥, ≤ or = and rewrite the whole chain before testing conclusions. Testing while decoding causes most errors here.

> Either-or appears in inequality too: if the pair is (A ≥ B) and (A < B), one must be true, so 'either' follows.

Blood relations, direction & ranking

BLOOD RELATIONS BY GENERATION

Draw horizontal lines for one generation (siblings, spouses) and vertical for the next. Use + and – for male and female rather than words, it prevents the gender slip that costs the mark.

DIRECTION SENSE

Treat the start as origin (0,0). North is +y, east is +x. Track coordinates, then use Pythagoras for the shortest distance. Left and right turns depend on the direction currently faced, redraw at each turn.

Position from other end	**Total – position + 1**
Total from both ranks	**left + right – 1**
People between	**difference – 1**

Coding-decoding, series & input-output

LETTER POSITIONS BOTH WAYS

Memorise A=1 to Z=26 and the reverse. The **EJOTY** anchors help: E=5, J=10, O=15, T=20, Y=25. Opposite pair rule: letter + its opposite = 27, so the opposite of G(7) is T(20).

NEW-PATTERN CODING

Compare two coded sentences and find the word common to both; the code common to both must map to it. Build the dictionary word by word before attempting any question.

INPUT-OUTPUT

Identify what moves each step: largest or smallest first, left or right end, alphabetical order. Then jump directly to the asked step instead of writing every intermediate line.

Exam-day strategy

ACCURACY OVER ATTEMPTS

There is negative marking. A wrong answer costs you the mark you earned elsewhere, so a confident smaller attempt usually outscores a rushed larger one.

ORDER OF ATTACK

Take Simplification, Number Series and Quadratic Equations first, they are quick and certain. Then DI. Leave heavy arithmetic word problems and long puzzles for last.

THE TWO-MINUTE RULE

If a question has not yielded in about two minutes, mark and move. Sunk time is not recovered by staying, and the next question may be free marks.

> Sectional cut-offs exist. Clearing every section matters more than a high score in one, so never abandon a section entirely to chase marks in another.