

Test-Taking Strategy

WORKING METHODICALLY

Good test-takers have one thing in common: they work methodically. When you work methodically, you take orderly steps to answer the question and you use your time wisely. You spend time reading or studying only the information that will help you answer the questions. If you work methodically, then you will have enough time on a test to try all the questions, answer the ones you know, guess at the ones you don't know, and avoid making careless mistakes.

Read the paragraph below.

Did you know that some birds dance? Believe it or not, many birds not only dance but also sing and perform as part of a courtship ritual. A courtship ritual is a set of behaviors that can help establish a bond between birds before they mate. Some birds have very elaborate courtship behaviors, such as dances that take years to learn. Other birds have simple courtship rituals. Courtship rituals vary from one species of bird to the next. Whooping cranes and Sandhill cranes are birds that perform elaborate courtship dances. Cranes bow, jump up and down, and flap their wings as part of their courtship dance. Another type of bird called the Atlantic puffin has a courtship ritual called billing. Billing is a behavior where puffins rub their beaks together. A male cardinal will feed a female cardinal as a courtship ritual. A male hummingbird will do a dazzling flying pattern for a female that he wants to impress. Courtship behaviors are as different as every type of bird. However, all courtships include behaviors that are used to communicate mating information from one bird to another.

Answer the question.

1. Which of the following best defines a courtship ritual?
 - A. A process in which two birds rub their beaks together
 - B. A dramatic dance that a male bird does for a female bird
 - C. A set of behaviors done by many birds before they mate
 - D. A ritual in which one bird feeds another bird before mating

How to find the answer:

Working methodically can help you answer this question. First read the question and think about what it is asking. The question asks for a definition of courtship ritual. Next compare each answer choice with the paragraph to see if the definition fits with all the courtship rituals. Finally choose the best answer choice.

- Answer **A** describes birds rubbing their beaks together. The paragraph describes this behavior as a courtship ritual performed by the Atlantic puffin. However, this definition of courtship does not fit with the other birds discussed in the paragraph. Answer **A** is not correct.
- Answer **B** tells about a dance done by a male bird. By comparing this definition to the paragraph, you can see that not all courtship rituals include “dances.” Answer **B** is not the best answer choice.
- Answer **C** defines courtship ritual as a set of behaviors done by some birds before they mate. This definition fits with each of the courtship rituals described in the paragraph. Answer **C** is probably correct, but read the last answer choice to make sure it is not a better answer.
- Answer **D** tells about one bird feeding another. The paragraph states that male cardinals feed female cardinals as part of their courtship ritual. This behavior, however, does not describe all courtship rituals. Answer **D** is not the correct answer.
- Answer **C** is the correct answer because the definition describes all courtship rituals, not just an example of one performed by some types of birds.