# Why Walkthroughs

Complete Walkthroughs vs. Answer Explanations

Most preparation courses provide answer explanations that do not help students better understand their mistakes, which is a critical part of improving scores. In this preparation guide, we replace stale, old explanations with complete walkthroughs to identify why each incorrect answer fails based on the objective exam criteria, and we highlight the typical traps in the answer choices. The lessons you learn in this course will teach you how to take advantage of standardized exams like the SHSAT, and the walkthroughs will apply the same criteria learned from the lessons. Every good answer explanation should indicate the following:

1. Exactly why the right answer is correct -- what attributes does the answer have that you can expect to encounter on other right answers you will see on test day?
2. Exactly why the wrong answer is incorrect -- what attributes does the answer have that you can expect to encounter on other wrong answers you will see on test day?
3. If applicable, the fastest and easiest way you could have arrived at the right answer.
4. The attributes of the question that will appear in other problems on test day, so you can exploit them when you see them in the future.
5. The tricks that the test designer tried to play on untrained test takers when it constructed the question, and how you can avoid similar tricks on test day.
6. If applicable, the core lessons covered by each question.

In general, typical answer explanations alone do not address these issues. On reading questions, in particular, answer explanations in most course books provide some limited or circular statement that amounts to saying, "Option A is correct because it is the right answer, and the other choices are wrong because they are not correct." Consider the following representative example of an actual answer explanation to a reading problem. The question prompt asks about the function of a line of text from the passage, and the correct answer is it "provides humorous insight" into the main character in the passage. The explanation quotes a few lines of text in support of the right answer suggesting these quotes show the character has a "sense of humor." In other words, the answer "humorous insight" is correct because the chosen quotes suggest something humorous. The "explanation" doesn't tell us *why* the quoted lines are humorous! As a result, a student doesn't know how to identify something humorous in the future for the real exam. The explanation concludes by telling us the wrong answers are incorrect because they do not fit with the quoted text -- no explanation why and no insight into how students can identify similar wrong answers in the future. "Humor" for standardized exams does not mean "funny." It usually means something "unexpected" occurred. After all, funny is a subjective concept, and different possible interpretations could invalidate a standardized reading exam. By contrast, "unexpected behavior or circumstance" is an objective way to define the term "humor." That detail is useful for test takers to know. Even when explanations provide more detailed answers, they usually fail to help students learn the more profound lesson from a problem to apply to future questions.