

SAT Central Ideas

Simplifying the question

Example 1

Psychologists wanted to test how young children think about rewards and fairness. In an experiment, two teachers handed out rewards while children (ages four to six) watched. The teachers gave out the same number of rewards, but one of them counted the rewards out loud. The children were then asked who was fairer. 73% chose the teacher who counted. The psychologists think that counting showed the children that the teacher wanted to be fair. The children may have believed that the teacher who did not count did not care about fairness.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

Choose 1 answer:

- a) Psychologists think children cannot understand the concept of fairness until they are six years old.
- b) An experiment found that counting out loud is the best way to teach mathematical concepts to children.
- c) An experiment showed that the way rewards are given out may affect whether young children think the situation is fair.
- d) Psychologists think young children expect to be rewarded when the children show that they care about fairness.

Easier

Psychologists wanted to see how young children think about fairness. In one test, two teachers gave rewards to children aged four to six. Both teachers gave the same number of rewards, but one teacher counted each reward out loud. The children then said which teacher was more fair. Most children chose the teacher who counted. The psychologists think this is because counting showed the teacher wanted to be fair.

Which choice best shows the main idea of the text?

- a) Young children cannot understand fairness until they are older.
- b) Counting out loud helps children learn math.
- c) How rewards are given can change if children think something is fair.
- d) Children think they should get rewards when they act fairly.

Easiest

Psychologists wanted to understand how young children think about fairness. In one study, two teachers gave rewards while children aged four to six watched. Both teachers gave the same number of rewards, but one teacher counted them out loud. The children were then asked which teacher was more fair. Most children chose the teacher who counted. The psychologists think this is because counting helped show that the teacher was trying to be fair.

Which choice best states the main idea of the text?

- a) Young children do not fully understand fairness until they are older.
- b) Counting out loud is a good way to help children learn numbers.
- c) The way rewards are given can affect whether children think something is fair.
- d) Children believe they should get rewards when they behave fairly.