

Coding Guide for the Rorschach Comprehensive System

Location S)

W, D, Dd (also

- If response is not W, code D vs. Dd, using Table A. If location is not listed in Table A Dd99.
- Multi-object responses: 1st consider each object's Loc score, & then assign a single Loc code to the overall response:
 - (1) If objects add up to whole blot W
 - (2) If all objects are D D; If all objects are Dd Dd.
 - (3) D+Dd Dd

Developmental Quality (DQ)

+, 0, v/+, v

- DQ is coded by answering 2 yes/no questions:

		Synthesis?	
		Y	N
Any F.D.?	Y	+	0
	N	v/+	v

- (1) Are there 2 (or more) separate & related objects?
 - “Related” includes any simple, spatial relationship (ex: “across from”, “next to”, “with”)
 - Pairs of objects are not necessarily “related” (ex: “2 dogs” No; “2 dogs kissing” Yes)
- (2) Do any of the objects have form demand?
 - Benchmarks: Tree, leaf, & flower do not have F.D.
 - But these (& other) objects can have F.D. if Pt's description gives more clearly-defined shape (ex: tulip, maple leaf, Lake Erie, cumulous cloud all of these do have F.D.)
- Clothing: Cg is considered a separate & related object, only if the Cg changes the shape of the person/object wearing it. (ex: “woman in hi-heels, see how they are pointy-shaped” DQ+; “butler in a tuxedo. He's wearing a tuxedo b/c the whole area is black” DQo)

Determinants (2)

F, M, FM, m, C, Cn, C', Y, T, V, FD, r,

Form (F):

- Code F as default, in those rare instances when no Det is clearly articulated.
- Do not code F in a blend (ex: F.FC FC; F.M^a M^a). F is subsumed by any other determinant.

Movement (M, FM, m):

- Human movement (M) includes:
 - (1) Any movement/activity that is performed by a human (ex: “man sleeping”)
 - (2) Any emotion experienced by a human (ex: “she is sad”)
 - This also includes any emotion that is attributed to the blot (ex: “this blot symbolizes joy”)
 - (3) Any movement/activity or emotion that is performed/experienced by a non-human & is implausible for the animal/object (ex: “bears high-fiving”, “a happy tree”, “frog howling at the moon”)
- Animal movement (FM): Movement/activity or emotion that is performed/experienced by an

animal, but only if it is plausible for the species (otherwise, code M, as above)

- Inanimate movement (m): Movement/activity involving “insensate” objects (i.e., anything other than a human or animal). Includes any movement that is not categorized as M or FM.
-Static movement: For animate objects (humans and animals) described as “lying down” or other similarly “static” activities, M or FM is coded, because we presume that some amount of energy is being exerted. But, for inanimate objects, m is not coded unless there is an unnatural tension state (i.e., gravity is at work). (ex: “rug lying on the floor” Not m; “rug hanging on the wall” m)

Active vs. Passive: Add a or p superscript after each movement Det

- Benchmark: “talking” p. (Note that even slightly more active than talking, such as “yelling” a.)
- Static movement in art (i.e., movement that is “frozen” in art) p (ex: “painting of tigers attacking” p)
- a & p in the same response:
 - (1) One actor, engaged in both a & p movement a only (ex: “man standing & screaming” M^a)
-Also note that if a single actor engages in 2 types of mvmt (rare), only one mvmt Det is coded for that actor (ex: “bird sitting (FM) & thinking about politics (M) M^p)
 - (2) 2 (or more) actors, both coded with same movement Det, & both with same superscript code simply as expected (ex: “man talking to this other man, who is lying down” = M^p & M^p M^p)
 - (3) 2 (or more) actors, both coded with same movement Det, with one a & one p a-p (ex: “dog chasing a cat, & the cat is standing there” = FM^a & FM^p FM^{a-p}). This is rare, so code conservatively.

Color (C): Note: All of these Color rules also apply to the other multi-level Dets (C', Y, V, T, r).

- 1st, decide whether to code Color. Pt must explicitly articulate the use of color (ex: “a red bird”, “finger paint because of the colors”)
Locators: Color-phrases that are simply used by Pt to explain where s/he sees the object are not coded Color, unless Pt also explicitly articulates the use of color as a Det (ex: “these red parts are flowers” Not Color; but “these red parts are flowers... they're red flowers” Color)
Direct, unequivocal use of color (over-rides locator rule, above): If Pt uses a color-phrase as a locator, do code Color if the use of color is direct & unequivocal. That is, code Color when:
 - (1) The object is always the same color (ex: red blood, blue sky, green grass), AND
 - (2) Pt's wording conveys an unequivocal connection between the color & the object, so that we can confidently assume that color helped determine the response (ex: “the red is blood” Color; “the red might be blood” Not Color)
- 2nd, decide which form-level to assign (C vs. CF vs. FC), based on which element (color vs. form) was more important to the Pt in determining the response:
-Code Pure C conservatively (i.e., only when form is absent). Most Color responses are CF or FC.
-CF vs FC:
 - (1) Assign a default code, by considering whether the colored object has form demand (see DQ, above): If the object has F.D., default = FC. If object does not have F.D., default = CF.
 - (2) Read the entire response & consider which element (color vs. form) Pt emphasized most: Which did Pt state more often? Which did Pt state 1st?

(3) Make final decision re: FC vs. CF: Code the default, unless Step (2) showed convincingly that the other element was more important. (ex: “red paint, mostly because it’s shaped just like paint droplets & also I guess because they’re red” FC; Default=CF, but Pt articulated convincing emphasis on form over color, so over-ride default)

- 2 (or more) colored objects in a multi-object response: 1st consider each colored object’s code (C/CF/FC), & then assign a single Color code to the overall response:
 - (1) If all colored objects are same form-level Code that level (ex: FC+FC FC)
 - (2) If colored objects differ Code toward Pure C (ex: FC+CF CF)

Step-Down Principle (over-rides previous rule): If a Pure C object is touching any formed object CF (ex: Card II: “blood (C at D3) is on these bears (D1) CF)

Achromatic Color (C’) & Diffuse Shading (Y):

- Both C’ & Y are often signaled by the same key words: black, white, grey, light, or dark
- Solids (ex: “all dark”) C’. Variations / gradations (ex: “lighter here & darker here”) Y
- If wording is ambiguous, default = Y

If shading (Y) contributes to T or V (below), do not code Y; Y is subsumed by T or V. Y can be coded in the same response as T (or V), but only if Y is articulated as entirely distinct from & T (or V) (ex: “the lines here make it LL a fuzzy bear, & he’s sitting on a stump, which is all striped, with light & darker lines” TF.YF)

Texture (T):

- Response must include (1) a tactile impression, which is (2) clearly due to shading
 - Tactile impression must be either stated (ex: “furry”) or demonstrated by rubbing the shaded area.

If Pt gives tactile impression, but fails to state/show that shading was involved Not T.

Vista (V):

- Response must include (1) the impression of depth or 3-dimensionality, which is (2) clearly due to shading
 - V vs. T for ambiguous words (ex: “bumpy”): Code T only if Pt clearly articulates the tactile impression (ex: “looks like it would feel bumpy”). If wording is ambiguous, default = V

Form Dimension (FD):

- Depth/3-dimensionality is described, due to one of the following (but not caused by shading):
 - (1) Relative size of objects/parts (ex: “man lying down, feet up close, because they’re so big”)
 - (2) One object/part obscuring another (ex: “bug under a leaf, because you can only see its head”)
- V vs. FD: Code V only if Pt clearly articulates shading. If wording is ambiguous, default = FD

Reflection (r) & Pair (2):

Pair (2) is often stated with subtle wording, such as simply pluralizing the noun (ex: “crabs... see its body, claw, & legs.” This is sufficient to code (2), even though the description focuses on just one side of the blot)

- Do not code (2):
 - (1) When Reflection is present. r subsumes (2)
 - (2) For bilateral body parts (ex: “lungs” or “hands” Not (2))
 - (3) When Pt explicitly differentiates the paired objects (ex: “a man & woman looking at each other” or “two people, one skinny & one fat” Not (2))

Form Quality (FQ) none)

o, u, - (also +,

- Code o vs. u vs. -, by finding name of object & location used, in Workbook Table A
 - If object is not listed in Table A, extrapolate by using a synonymous object, if available
 - If location is not listed in Table A (i.e., Dd99), extrapolate using a highly similar location, if available
 - If still unable to use Table A, ask “Can I see the object quickly & easily?” If yes u. If no -
- Multiple-object responses: 1st consider each important object’s FQ score, & then assign a single FQ score to the overall response:
 - If all objects earn same FQ score, assign that score (ex: FQu+FQu FQu)
 - If objects earn different FQ scores, code “down” toward - (ex: FQo+FQu FQu)
 - But consider only “important” objects

Contents Ay,

H, (H), Hd, (Hd), Hx, A, (A), Ad, (Ad), An, Art,

Sx, Xy

Bl, Bt, Cg, Cl, Ex, Fi, Fd, Ge, Hh, Ls, Na, Sc,

Some guidelines for Human & Animal contents. These apply to all variations (ex: parenthesized, details)

- H vs. Hd: Depends on Pt’s specific wording, but if ambiguous, default = whole H
- H vs. A: Bipeds H. Quadrupeds & others A. If ambiguous, default =H
- Hd (or Ad) as part of a whole H (or A): Code only the whole & not the detail (ex: “a man, see his hands” H only; “man with bat wings” H only; no Ad, but this odd combination will later be coded INC)
- Some specific rules:
 - Person who actually existed in history no parens. Ex: George Washington H; Also, dinosaur A
 - Embryo or fetus Usually H, but maybe Hd, depending on wording. No parens
 - Animal-skin rug Ad , but might also add Hh, depending on wording
 - Mask, shadow, or silhouette Parens. Usually (Hd), depending on wording. Clown (H)
 - Skeletons & skulls An; Not H or any variation of H

Hx: Do not code when animals are experiencing emotions that are plausible for the species (ex: “angry dogs” No Hx; “dogs in love” Hx)

-Also, note that “mean” & “evil” are not emotions, so do not code Hx for these words

- Sx: Do not code for sex-related body parts if they are only casually mentioned in a series of body parts (ex: “a man, see his head, torso, penis, legs, feet” No Sx). Only code Sx for body parts if (1) the sex-related body part is a sole/primary content or (2) attention is paid to the sex-related body part

Guidelines to prevent over-coding contents that load onto a single interpretive variable:

- Na+Ls+Bt in a single response:
 - (1) Na+ either Ls &/or Bt Na only (Na subsumes Ls & Bt)
 - (2) Ls+Bt (but without Na) Code one (whichever is more prominent) but not both
- An+Xy in a single response Xy only
- Art+Ay in a single response Can code both, but only if both contents are emphasized;

Otherwise code whichever one is more prominent

Popular

P

- See Workbook Table 8 for each card's specific P criteria

Be sure criteria are met in the intended/conventional manner (ex: Card V, W: "bat" is P, only if head is at the card's top)

Do not overlook P in an otherwise poor response (ex: FQ-, special scores). If P criteria are met
P

Z Score

ZW, ZA, ZD,

ZS

- 1st, decide whether the response earns a Z score:
 - (1) ZW: Response Loc = W. But note exception: Wy does not qualify for ZW
 - (2) ZA: Response includes 2 (or more) separate & related objects, located in adjacent blot areas
 - (3) ZD: Response includes 2 (or more) separate & related objects, located in distant blot areas
 - (4) ZS: Response Loc includes S, & the S area is integrated with the painted area(s) of the blot

-ZA & ZD: Note we are only concerned with whether the blot areas are adjacent vs. distant. It does not matter whether the objects themselves are described as adjacent vs. distant. (ex: Card I, D2: "2 bugs holding hands" ZD only, because D2 & D2 are not touching; it is irrelevant that the bugs are touching)

- 2nd, decide which number value (i.e., Z score) to assign. See Table A for each card's unique Z values
-If response qualifies for more than one Z category, assign the highest value

Special Scores

Cognitive SS: DV, DR, INC, FAB, CONTAM,

ALOG

Other SS: PSV, AB, AG, COP, MOR, PER, CP, GHR,

PHR

Cognitive Special Scores (CSS): DV, DR, INC, FAB, CONTAM, ALOG: Some general rules:

- Only code one CSS per phrase. If phrase includes multiple CSS, code only the most severe CSS (see Structural Summary for point values). Overall response can be coded for more than 1 CSS, but this is rare & is only correct if they are given in separate parts of the response. Code Conservatively.
-This rule does not apply to "Other" SS, which can be coded as often/as many as needed.
- Level 1 or 2 (added to each DV, DR, INC, & FAB). If ambiguous, default = Lv1
-Lv1= Meets criteria, but subtle / minor. Some are easily overlooked
-Lv2 = More obvious, bizarre, jarring. These often make examiner to want to cringe or giggle.

DV: Brief, unusual word usage. Typically one word or very short phrase. Includes:

- (1) Neologism: Nonexistent or incorrectly-used word
-Do not code DV for words reflecting limited language, or for idiomatic expressions / slang
- (2) Redundancy: Brief phrase is redundant

DR: Response becomes "derailed." Pt strays from the task (i.e., explaining what he sees & why).

Includes:

- (1) Circumstantial or tangential phrases. Often lengthy & rambling

(2) Inappropriate phrases. Often brief but bizarre enough to be considered off-task. These are odd, irrelevant comments. These often prompt examiner to think, "Huh?"

Do not code DR for parenthetical comments Pt makes before or after offering response. These are fairly common & are not considered off-task because Pt is not currently engaged in the task.

Some phrases are still on-task but lengthy, because of Pt is giving excessive detail, or is being indecisive. Do not code DR for these lengthy phrases, because Pt is still on-task.

DR & PER can both be coded, but this is rare, so code conservatively. (ex: "These LL boots, like I wore in boot camp (PER but still on-task). I hated boot camp. I bet if you gave these blots to people in boot camp, they'd hate doing this too (now off-task, so add DR)."

INC, FAB, & CONTAM all involve implausible combinations of objects, parts, or features:

INC: Implausible combination of parts or features within a single object (ex: "man with machine-gun hands")

-Implausibly combined features: Ex: "pink bear" (implausible color), "smiling snake" (implausible activity), "dog deeply in love" (implausible emotion; note latter 2 are also coded M instead of FM)

Do not overlook common-but-subtle misnaming of animal body parts (ex: "dog with hands," or "BF with antlers" both INC, although they might mistakenly be omitted or mistakenly coded DV).

FAB: Implausible combination of separate objects (ex: "ant carrying a chair")

-Note specific rule: Implausible transparencies (ex: "man walking & u can see his kidneys") FAB2

Note that many responses (usually 2 animals interacting implausibly) qualify for both INC & FAB but are coded FAB only (ex: "2 snakes smiling lovingly at each other" FAB. Here, "snake smiling" INC, & "snakes smiling at each other" FAB, but only the more severe CSS (FAB) is coded.)

CONTAM: 2 (or more) objects/images are fused into a single, implausible percept

- Rare, so code conservatively

ALOG: Response includes highly strained or idiosyncratic logic. Usually stated as, "It is X because Y."

Note a more subtle form of ALOG: The logical statement might be plausible, but is stated with inappropriate certainty / restrictiveness; uses wording such as "X must be Y" (ex: "It must be a man & woman, because they're standing close"; "All black, so it has to be evil" both ALOG)

Other Special Scores: PSV, AB, AG, COP, MOR, PER, CP, GHR, PHR:

PSV (Perseveration): Includes:

(1) Within-Card PSV: On same card, 2 consecutive responses earn identical codes for these 6 categories: Loc, DQ, Det, FD, Content, Z Score Code the 2nd response PSV

(2) Across-Card PSV (or Content PSV): Pt describes object he had seen in an earlier card, & Pt's wording treats object as if it is literally the same object; as if the object is "following Pt through the cards." (ex: Card V: "There's another bat" Not PSV; but "There's that bat again" PSV)

(3) Mechanical PSV: So rare, can be disregarded for our purposes

AB (Abstract): Response includes a clear, symbolic representation

- Usually uses words such as "represents", "symbolizes", "means"

Abstract art is not coded AB unless the art is explicitly described as representing something (ex:

“an abstract painting” Not AB; “abstract painting symbolizing sadness” AB)

AG & COP: Aggressive & Cooperative Movement

- Both require present-tense movement, so will only be coded when M, FM, or m is already coded
 - Past-tense aggression (ex: 2 bears, bloody because they just fought) Not AG
 - Future-tense aggression: AG depends on specific wording. If response includes “preparatory aggression” & earns a movement Det (ex: a lion, leaping, about to pounce on this person”) AG; If aggression is purely future tense, with no movement determinant (ex: “a lion, LL he is about to pounce on this man”) Not AG
 - “Mean” & “evil” are not inherently AG (note no movement Det). No AG unless response also explicitly describes movement/activity
- COP requires 2 objects in the card, but AG can be a single object (ex: “a man glaring” AG; “a man smiling warmly” Not COP; “a man smiling warmly at this other man” COP)
- AG & COP can be (rarely) coded together, when the aggressive activity is being performed collaboratively

MOR (Morbid Content): Includes:

- (1) Object is dead, damaged, or spoiled in any way
 - Blood is not inherently MOR
- (2) Clearly dysphoric affect (usually some variation of “sad”)

PER (Personalized Response): Pt refers to past personal experience to explain the response

- Usually signaled by personal pronouns, But PER must also include a reference to personal past experience as a means of explaining the response. Do not code PER for parenthetical or off-topic self-references (ex: “It’s a flower, I love flowers” Not PER).

CP (Color Projection): Description of chromatic color in a purely achromatic blot or blot area.

- Rare, so code conservatively, only when CP is clearly stated.

GHR & PHR (Good & Poor Human Representation Responses):

- 1st, decide whether the response is a Human Representation (HR) response (i.e., any of the following):
 - (1) Any human content: H, (H), Hd, (Hd), or Hx
 - (2) Human movement: M
 - (3) Human-like animal movement: FM with COP or AG
- For any HR response, assign GHR or PHR, using Workbook Table 10