

Banking course - Reasoning Ability

Alphabet Series (IBPS Pattern)

IBPS PO & Clerk Level

Alphabet Series is a high-frequency topic in the **Reasoning Ability** section of IBPS PO and Clerk Prelims. It tests:

- Pattern recognition
- Logical sequencing
- Positional awareness
- Speed with accuracy

Most questions are direct scoring questions if concepts are strong.

Alphabet Position Mastery

Before solving any series, strong command over letter positions is mandatory.

- A = 1
- B = 2
- C = 3
- ...
- Z = 26

Reverse positions:

- Z = 1
- Y = 2

- $X = 3$
- ...
- $A = 26$

Important quick references:

- **EJOTY Rule** \rightarrow E(5), J(10), O(15), T(20), Y(25)
- Vowels positions \rightarrow **A(1), E(5), I(9), O(15), U(21)**

Shortcut approach:

- Convert letters into numbers first.
- Identify numerical pattern.
- Convert back to letter.

This avoids guesswork.

Constant Increment / Decrement Pattern

This is the most basic and common pattern.

Letters move with a **fixed gap**.

Example:

A, D, G, J, ?

Positions:

1, 4, 7, 10

Gap = +3

Next:

13 \rightarrow M

Similarly, decreasing pattern:

Z, X, V, T, ?

26, 24, 22, 20

Gap = -2

Key recognition tip:

If difference remains constant \rightarrow it is a fixed arithmetic progression.

Increasing / Decreasing Gap Pattern

The difference between letters increases or decreases stepwise.

Example:

B, E, I, N, ?

2, 5, 9, 14

Differences:

+3, +4, +5

Next difference:

+6

$14 + 6 = 20 \rightarrow T$

Recognition rule:

- Check if differences form sequence like +2, +3, +4
- Or -3, -4, -5

Example (decreasing):

Z, V, Q, K, ?

26, 22, 17, 11

-4, -5, -6

Next:

$-7 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow D$

These are very common in IBPS PO.

Alternate Term Pattern

Series may consist of two interlinked sequences.

Example:

A, D, C, F, E, ?

Split into:

Odd positions:

A, C, E $\rightarrow +2$

Even positions:

D, F $\rightarrow +2$

Next odd:

G

Always check alternate positions if pattern looks inconsistent.

Another example:

A, Z, B, Y, C, ?

Odd:

A, B, C

Even:

Z, Y

Next even:

X

Alternate patterns are extremely common in prelims.

Reverse Alphabet Pairing

Letters move in opposite direction simultaneously.

Example:

A, X, B, W, C, ?

A \rightarrow forward

X \rightarrow backward

Pattern:

1, 24

2, 23

3, 22

Next:

D (4) and V (22)

These patterns often combine forward + backward logic.

Opposite Letter Mapping (A–Z Type)

Each letter has an opposite in alphabet.

Opposite formula:

Opposite position = $27 - \text{original position}$

Example:

A(1) $\rightarrow 27 - 1 = 26 \rightarrow Z$

B(2) $\rightarrow 27 - 2 = 25 \rightarrow Y$

C(3) $\rightarrow 27 - 3 = 24 \rightarrow X$

Common IBPS pattern:

A, Z, B, Y, C, ?

Opposite mapping logic used.

Shortcut:

Remember pairs:

A–Z

B–Y

C–X

D–W

E–V

Square / Cube Position Pattern

Positions may follow mathematical rules.

Example:

- A ($1^2 = 1$)
- D ($2^2 = 4$)
- I ($3^2 = 9$)
- P ($4^2 = 16$)

Next:

$$5^2 = 25 \rightarrow Y$$

Similarly, cube pattern:

$$A (1^3 = 1)$$

$$H (2^3 = 8)$$

27 exceeds 26 \rightarrow adjust using cycle

Recognition clue:

If gaps are irregular but growing rapidly \rightarrow check square/cube.

Mixed Alphanumeric Pattern

Letters and numbers move simultaneously.

Example:

A1, C3, E5, G7, ?

Letters:

+2

Numbers:

+2

Next:

I9

Advanced type:

A26, B25, C24, ?

Letter increasing

Number decreasing

Answer:

D23

These appear often in IBPS PO.

Cycle Pattern (After Z Restart)

Alphabet is circular.

After Z (26), next becomes A (1).

Example:

Y, A, C, E, ?

25, 1, 3, 5

Pattern:

+2

Next:

7 → G

Adjustment rule:

If position > 26

Subtract 26

Example:

$$33 - 26 = 7$$

This is called **mod 26 logic**.

Symmetrical Pattern

Series mirrors itself.

Example:

A, C, F, C, A

Pattern:

+2, +3, -3, -2

Mirror around middle term.

These are less frequent but tricky.

Word Rearrangement Logic

Letters of a word are rearranged alphabetically.

Example:

TIMER

Arrange alphabetically:

E I M R T

Questions may ask:

- What is the new position of T?
- Which letter is 3rd from right after arrangement?

Method:

1. Rearrange alphabetically.
2. Compare original vs new positions.

Alphabet Test – Position Based Questions

In word-based problems:

Example:

BANKING

Count letters between A and G.

Step 1:

Write word properly.

Step 2:

Locate positions.

Step 3:

Count letters strictly between.

Another type:

Count vowels between two consonants.

Important:

Do not include boundary letters unless asked.

Pair Counting Logic

In word “EDUCATION”

Check pairs having same gap as in alphabet.

Method:

1. Compare each adjacent pair.
2. Calculate gap.
3. Match with actual alphabet gap.

These questions require careful checking.

Advanced Recognition Strategy

When solving series:

- Step 1: Convert to numbers.
- Step 2: Write differences above letters.
- Step 3: Check alternate patterns.
- Step 4: Check reverse pattern.
- Step 5: Check mathematical patterns.
- Step 6: Check alphanumeric interaction.

Never assume a pattern after only two terms.

Common IBPS PO Traps

- Pattern changes after 3rd term.
- Alternate + increasing gap combined.
- Reverse mapping hidden inside.
- Cycle adjustment forgotten.
- Wrong counting due to panic.

Speed Improvement Tips

- Memorize alphabet positions completely.
- Practice writing A–Z mentally in 5 seconds.
- Practice reverse mapping daily.
- Solve 20 timed questions per day.
- Identify patterns within 15 seconds.

Exam Weightage Insight

In IBPS PO & Clerk Prelims:

- 3–5 questions from Alphabet Series / Alphabet Test
- Usually easy-moderate
- Highly scoring
- Time per question: 30–45 seconds

In Mains:

Appears inside puzzles or coding-decoding combinations.