Three

HOW TO CODE THE RORSCHACH

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Coding Rorschach responses is an involved process. It requires taking all of the text transcribed during the test administration (qualitative material) and turning it into numeric scores (quantitative information) that will later be used in the structural summary, and ultimately, for interpretation.

There are two parts to the coding process. The first involves coding each response and the second involves entering the codes (or scores) for each response onto a page that organizes all the coded information category by category, called the Sequence of Scores sheet. (The codes can also be entered into a computer program such as RIAP or ROR-SCAN that can generate the Sequence of Scores sheet.) We will walk you through each task, step-by-step.

Once the examiner has completed the two steps outlined in this chapter, he or she will then tally the coded information and compute the summary scores and indices for the Structural Summary. Creating the Structural Summary is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

THE CODING PROCESS

Coding responses is probably the most difficult task for the new examiner. Learning to accurately code the Rorschach takes time and requires guidance from an experienced examiner or Rorschacher. We strongly recommend that any examiner who plans to use the Rorschach take a class and/or be supervised by someone with experience in administering the Rorschach.

Before discussing the actual coding system, two important aspects of the Rorschach coding process need to be emphasized. First, the examiner must understand the theoretical goal behind Rorschach coding. Second, the examiner must rely on the coding rules in Exner's *Comprehensive System* (vol. 1, 1993)

in order to accurately score the responses. As a complement, we have created a Rorschach Scoring worksheet (see Appendix 4) that helps with speed and accuracy in coding, which the first-time examiner may find useful.

Theoretical Goals Underlying the Coding Process

Understanding the theory behind the Rorschach is helpful to the coding process. An experienced examiner makes final decisions based on the theoretical framework of the test and the coding process. Read chapter 2 from Exner's *Comprehensive System* (vol. 1, 1993) for a more complete understanding of the Rorschach. Essentially, this broad-reaching test is composed of a stimulus that allows the examinee's traits and styles to be expressed. When interpreting the data, the examiner cannot focus solely on one small aspect of the examinee or one small coded variable; each aspect can be understood only in the context of the examinee's other features. A whole picture of the examinee must be developed, a task that can challenge a new or inexperienced examiner.

The overarching goal of coding is to try to understand "how the characteristics of a person merge together in a series of complex interrelationships that breeds a reasonable understanding of that person" through the protocol (Exner, 1993, p. 85). Futhermore, the cardinal rule in coding Rorschach responses is that "the code or score should represent the cognitive operation at the time the subject gave the answer" (p. 85). Don't code the response that first appears during the Inquiry Phase; to code accurately, you must include data from both the Response and Inquiry. However, "The coder-interpreter must resist the temptation to consider the original response and the information developed in the Inquiry as being continuous, for this is an illogical assumption. Many events transpire between the original response and the Inquiry and . . . the latter occurs under a much different structure than the former" (Exner, 1993, p. 87). In other words, the examinee's experience may differ between Response and Inquiry Phase. The examiner must note the difference.

The second most important rule in the coding process is that "all of the components that appear in the response should appear in the coding" (Exner, 1993, p. 87). In other words, don't leave anything out that should have been coded. Errors of omission are often much more important than coding disagreements because they can lead to a distorted picture of the examinee's

Rapid Reference 3.1

Coding Rules

- Overarching goal of the coding process: to understand "how the characteristics of a person merge together in a series of complex interrelationships that breeds a reasonable understanding of that person" (Exner, 1993, p. 85).
- Cardinal rule of coding: "The code or score should represent the cognitive operation at the time the subject gave the answer" (Exner, 1993, p. 85).
- Second rule of coding: "All of the components that appear in the response should appear in the coding" (Exner, 1993, p. 87). Avoid errors of omission.

psychological characteristics. Rapid Reference 3.1 summarizes the Rorschach (Exner, 1993) coding rules.

What Needs to Be Coded?

Every one of the examinee's responses to the inkblots must be coded under multiple categories. In order to accurately code each response, an examiner relies on a codebook that lists the rules on how to categorize qualitative information (in this case the examinee's responses to the inkblot). The codebook allows any trained examiner to code responses reliably.

That codebook for the Rorschach inkblot test can be found in Chapters 4 through 9 of Exner's *Comprehensive System* (vol. 1, 1993). Exner's Workbook (1995), while more accessible, simply does not cover all the information needed to accurately code the responses. This Essentials guide also does not cover all the rules of the coding system (see Caution 3.1) and is not meant to replace Volume 1 or the Workbook. Instead, it should be viewed as a companion to Volume 1, providing an overview of the coding system. As a guide it also provides lists of general rules and scoring descriptions.

CAUTION 3.1

The Examiner's Primary Source for Coding

To code completely and accurately, rely on the *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System,* (vol. 1, Exner, 1993).

Our Rorschach Scoring Worksheet: Accuracy, Speed, Confidence

Our Rorschach Scoring worksheet, located in Appendix 4, will help first-time examiners code as accurately, completely, and quickly as possible. It also allows examiners to use Exner's preferred continuous approach to coding. A continuous approach coding strategy involves taking a single response and going through each of the coding categories for that response before starting the scoring process for the next response. Scoring in this manner allows the examiner to think in terms of the integrated score and helps to avoid errors of addition and omission.

The Rorschach Scoring worksheet helps the examiner thoroughly cover all coding categories for each response by providing a separate worksheet for each response (see Rapid Reference 3.2). The worksheet includes the seven coding categories, special directions, references to the coding rules in Volume 1 of Exner's Comprehensive System book and his Workbook (1993, 1995), options for coding each category, and a space for coding justification.

Rapid Reference 3.3 describes how to use the Scoring worksheet in Appendix 4. The worksheet adds an extra step to Exner's Structural Summary, so it may appear to add time to the process. But in fact, it is a time saver because the examiner is less likely to be hesitant and more likely to code a response correctly and therefore feel more confident filling out the Sequence of Scores sheet. The worksheet is most useful for the first few administrations, when the new user is most unfamiliar with the complex coding process. Examiners may attempt to expedite coding by omitting the basis for a coding decision. However, including the information will make it much easier to explain the reasoning in class or supervision.

STEP-BY-STEP CODING

While it is true that the Rorschach is a sophisticated and complex coding system, the examiner should also know that in many ways it is very clear-cut and manageable. There are seven steps for coding each response since there are seven categories to code: (1) Location and Developmental Quality, (2) Determinants, (3) Form Quality, (4) Contents, (5) Popular Responses, (6) Organizational Activity (Z score),

Rapid Reference 3.2

Highlights of the Rorschach Scoring Worksheet

- There are separate sections for coding each of the seven categories.
- Sections parallel the Structural Summary sheet.
- Special directions for coding are given in "( )"s.
- Scoring options within a category are given in "{}"s.
- Reference pages to Exner's volume 1 book and workbook are given in "[ ]"s.

Rapid Reference 3.3

Using the Scoring Worksheet in Appendix 4

1. Use one Scoring Worksheet for each response.
2. Fill in each coding category with a score or check the not applicable (n/a) box.
3. After entering a score, at the end of that row write in why you made the coding decision.
4. When coding is completed, transfer the codes onto the Sequence of Scores sheet or into a Rorschach computer program (discussed later in this chapter).

and (7) Special Scores (see Rapid Reference 3.4). Don't Forget 3.1 provides an easy way to remember the seven categories.

1) Location and Developmental Quality

Location

- Location refers to the section or area of the inkblot being used, with four possible symbols ranging from the whole inkblot to an unusual detail (see Table 3.1).
- The scoring goal is to determine what part of the inkblot was used in the response.
- Location captures how the person approached the inkblot.
- There are two parts to identify: the location code (*W, D, Dd*, and *S*) and the location number (blank, 1–99).

Rapid Reference 3.4

Seven Coding Categories

1. Location and Developmental Quality
2. Determinants
3. Form Quality
4. Contents
5. Popular Responses
6. Organizational Activity (Z score)
7. Special Scores

How to Code Location

- Use the location sheet to determine the outline of the inkblot. (The location sheet is the page with 10 miniature inkblots, available either as a separate page or as part of the Structural Summary Blank.)
- If the whole inkblot was used, code a *W* for location and leave the location number blank or insert a dash. *W*'s do not have location numbers.

DON'T FORGET 3.1

Silly Sentences to Help Remember the Seven Categories

- Susie wanted to **locate and/or develop** an important **determinant** of what makes a **quality** life **forum.** For **contents,** she looked to **popular** magazines hoping to **organize** her thoughts and come up with a project that would get her a **special score** on the assignment.
- The student began her homework assignment. She wrote, "It's time for science to **locate and develop** the important **determinants** of what makes a life **form of quality.**" Her **contents** of life theory might be **popular** someday. The teacher thought the paper needed some **organizational** help, but it got a **special score** for creativity.

- If a single portion or portions of the inkblot were used, the examiner will find the location codes and location numbers in Table A starting on page 195 of Volume 1 of Exner's *Comprehensive System,* 1993). Use Figures 7 through 16 within Table A (one table for each of the the ten cards) to determine the score.
  - First, determine if the portion(s) is a common detail response or an unusual detail response. If so, code *D* or *Dd*.
  - Second, determine if white space was used in the response. If so, the location code also includes an *S* after the *W, D*, or *Dd*.
  - Third, compare the part of the inkblot used with Table A and determine the location number. If the exact area is not listed, the location number is *99* (Example: *Dd27, D7,* or *Dd99*).

Rapid Reference 3.5 outlines rules for coding location with multiple *D* or *Dd* areas.

Rapid Reference 3.5

Rules for Multiple *D* and/or *Dd* Areas

1. Two or more combined *D* areas, code *D*
2. Two separate objects are both *D,* code *D*
3. Composite of two *D* areas, but uncommon response, code *Dd*
4. Two or more combined areas and at least two objects, code *Dd*

Table 3.1 Location of Responses

Symbol	Symbol Name	Explanation
W	Whole Response	• The entire inkblot. *All* portions of the inkblot *must* be used. No segment can be omitted.
D	Common Detail Response	• A frequently identified area of the inkblot. Area is included in Table A. • Two or more *D* areas used in one response that are listed in Table A.
Dd	Unusual Detail Response	• An infrequently identified area of the inkblot. • Two or more areas of the inkblot used in one response, with at least one area listed as *Dd* and /or not found at all in Table A. If area is not included in Table A, coding is *Dd* and location is *99* (*Dd99*).
S	Space Response	• White space area used in response, as well as *W, D,* and *Dd.* • Remember Space (*S*) is *never* scored alone, but as *WS, DS,* or *DdS.*

Note. Modified table from *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System.* Volume 1: *Basic Foundations,* 3rd ed. (p. 94) by J. E. Exner, Jr., 1993, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Copyright 1993 by John Exner, Jr. Reprinted with permission.

Developmental Quality

- Developmental quality refers to the degree of meaningful organization or integration used in the response, with four possible symbols ranging from a synthesized to a vague response (see Table 3.2).
- The coding goal is to determine the quality of the processing of the response based on how form is used in the response.

How to Code Developmental Quality

- Refer to the location sheet to determine which portions of the inkblot are used.

Table 3.2 Developmental Quality

Symbol	Symbol Name	Explanation
+	Synthesized Response	• One or more objects are described as separate but related through position or movement. At least one of the objects must have a specific form demand or be described in a manner that creates a specific form demand. ◆ Example: "Bird flying in a cloud" or "Two birds sitting on telephone wire."
v/+	Synthesized Response	• Two or more objects are described as separate but related. None of the objects have a specific form, and the description during inquiry does not introduce a form demand. ◆ Example: "Two clouds coming together."
o	Ordinary Response	• A single object is described from an area of the inkblot, and the description creates a specific form demand. The object has features that emphasize its outline and structural features. • Two objects are described with no meaningful relationship between them. ◆ Example: "One bird" or "Two birds."
v	Vague Response	• One or more unrelated objects are described without a specific form demand, outline, or structural features. ◆ Example: "One cloud" or "Two clouds."

Note. Modified table from *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System.* Volume 1: *Basic Foundations,* 3rd ed. (p. 99), by J. E. Exner, Jr., 1993, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Copyright 1993 by John Exner, Jr. Reprinted with permission.

DON'T FORGET 3.2

Specific Form Demand

Specific form demand means that the object being reported generally has a consistent form. The object's name or title implies a specific shape. For example, *man, bird,* or *butterfly* all suggest specific shapes. In other words, specific form demand is equated with specific shape.

- Determine developmental quality based on coding rules taking into consideration the number of objects and specific form demand (see Don't Forget box 3.2). Record only one code per response.

2) Determinants

- Determinants refers to the features, style, characteristics, or aspect of the inkblot that the examinee responded to, with 26 possible symbols from form to reflection responses (see Table 3.3).
- The scoring goal is "to provide information concerning the complex perceptual-cognitive process that has produced the response" (Exner, 1993, p. 103). Did the examinee respond to form, movement, color, shading, or symmetry of the inkblot?
- A blend is when more than one determinant is coded for a single (usually complex) response. A period (".") or full stop is placed between each determinant. Rapid Reference 3.6 describes the correct procedure for coding a blend.
- Some examiners and researchers consider determinants to be the most important aspect of the Rorschach to score, with the greatest implication for interpretation.

Rapid Reference 3.6

Blends

When more than one determinant is coded for a single response, it's a blend.

Writing out Blends*:

1. Movement (M, FM, m) is listed first.
2. Form, color, and shading are listed next (in no particular order).
3. Reflections (rF, Fr) are listed last.
4. Full stops or periods (".") are placed between each determinant.

Example: "Mp.CF.rF"

*Current convention on how to order determinants. However, some examiners code blends in the order that the determinants appear in the response.

Table 3.3 Determinants

Symbol Name	Symbol	Explanation
Form	F	• Using *only* the form or shape features of the inkblot. No movement involved and rarely seen in blends.
Movement		• Movement (human, animal, or inanimate) used in the inkblot; movement is defined as any state of muscular tension.
	M (Human Movement Response)	• Responses with human activity. • Animal or a fictional character in a humanlike activity. • Animal movement where the movement describes a human activity that is *not* specific to that species. • Human experience such as emotion.
	FM (Animal Movement Response)	• Responses that include movement of an animal. Must be specific to the movements of that species of animal.
	m (Inanimate Movement Response)	• Responses with movement of an inanimate, inorganic, or dead object; may be static movement or an activity that is congruent with object.
Chromatic Color		• Using chromatic colors (colors of the rainbow, such as red, orange, yellow, green, blue, or violet) in the inkblot. *Not* black or white.
	C (Pure Color Response)	• Responses using *only* the chromatic colors with no form aspect reported.
	CF (Color Form Response)	• Responses primarily based on chromatic colors. Aspects of form are also included but are of secondary importance in the response.

Table 3.3 continued

Symbol Name	Symbol	Explanation
	FC (Form-Color Response)	• Responses based mainly on features of the form. Colors of the rainbow are included but are of secondary importance in the response and are used more as an elaboration and/or clarification.
	Cn (Color Naming Response)	• The chromatic colors of the inkblot are identified by name, such as "this is red, yellow, and blue."
Achromatic Color		◆ Using light and dark features of the inkblot, such as black, white, and gray features.
	C' (Pure Achromatic Color Response)	• Responses using *only* black, white, and gray features of the inkblot. Definitely viewed by examinee as color and no form is involved, such as "it's all black like at night."
	C'F (Achromatic Color-Form Response)	• Responses primarily based on black, white, and gray. Aspects of form are also included but are of secondary importance in the response.
	FC' (Form-Achromatic Color Response)	• Responses based mainly on features of the form. Black, white, and gray are included secondarily in the response and are more of an elaboration and/or clarification.
Shading-Texture		◆ Using light and dark features of the inkblot to suggest texture, such as *rough* or *furry.*
	T (Pure Texture Response)	• Shading components of the inkblot used to suggest texture or tactile qualities.
	TF (Texture-Form Response)	• Responses with the shading components interpreted as texture or tactile. Aspects of form are also included but are of secondary importance and are used for elaboration and/or clarification.

Table 3.3 continued

Symbol Name	Symbol	Explanation
	FT (Form-Texture Response)	• Responses based mainly on form features. Shading components of the inkblot used to suggest tactile qualities are included but are of secondary importance in the response.
Shading-Dimension		◆ Using shading to suggest a three-dimensional perspective.
	V (Pure Vista Response)	• Responses using shading components of the inkblot to suggest depth or dimensionality without form.
	VF (Vista-Form Response)	• The shading components are interpreted as depth or dimensionality. Aspects of form are included but are of secondary importance in the response.
	FV (Form-Vista Response)	• Responses based mainly on form features. Shading components of the inkblot are included to suggest dimensionality but are of secondary importance in the response.
Shading-Diffuse		◆ Using the diffuse shading of the inkblot, such as lighter and darker contrasts with no reference to either texture or dimension.
	Y (Pure Shading Response)	• Responses using *only* light-dark features of the inkblot without using form and with no reference to either texture or dimension.
	YF (Shading-Form Response)	• Responses primarily based on light-dark features of the inkblot. Aspects of form are also included but are of secondary importance in the response.
	FY (Form-Shading Response)	• Responses based mainly on features of the form. Light-dark features of the inkblot are included but are of secondary importance in the response.

Table 3.3 continued

Symbol Name	Symbol	Explanation
Form Dimension	FD (Form-Based Dimensional Response)	• Responses using three-dimensionality (3-D) based *only* on the form. Using elements of size and/or the shape of the outline in contrast to other areas of the inkblot; an object appearing in perspective or in relation to another object, such as a dog *in front of* or *behind* a tree. No use of shading is involved.
Pairs and Reflections		• Using two identical objects or percepts, either as a pair or reflection.
	2 (Pair Response)	• Responses using two identical images based on the symmetry of the inkblot. *Only* the objects in the response must be equivalent, not the entire inkblot. The objects must not be identified as being reflected or as mirror images.
	rF (Reflection-Form Response)	• Responses that include a reflection or a mirror image. The object or content has no specific form requirement such as clouds, landscape, and shadows.
	Fr (Form-Reflection Response)	• Responses that include reflection or a mirror image based on the symmetry of the inkblot. The response is based on form features and the object has a specific form.

Note. Modified table from *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System.* Volume 1: *Basic Foundations,* 3rd ed. (pp. 104–5), by J. E. Exner, Jr., 1993, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Copyright 1993 by John Exner, Jr. Reprinted with permission.

Rapid Reference 3.7

Form Rules

- *Form only:* If only form or shape is described, code form (*F*).
- *Form with movement:* If form is described with movement, code movement (*M, FM, m*).
- *Form dominant:* If form is the main determinant factor, elaborated by another aspect, code form first (*FC, FC', FT, FY, Fr*).
- *Form secondary:* If form is only modestly described, more as an elaboration to another aspect, code form second (*CF, C'F, TF, VF, YF, rF*).
- *Formless:* No form is described, code no form (*C, C', T, V, Y*).
- *Formless with Form:* Use a step-down rule. If a formless object is put in relation to an object with a form, then code form second (i.e., "Blood on a bear's body" steps down from a *C* for blood to a *CF*.
- *Reflections:* Reflection always includes some aspect of form, either primary or secondary (*Fr or rF*).

How to Score Determinants

- Rely on the transcribed text of the test and the description of what area of the inkblot was used (on the location sheet) to identify determinants.
- More than one determinant can be coded, but the same determinant cannot be coded twice for a single response.
- Form (*F*) is usually coded alone and it is extremely unusual to find in blends.
- If movement (*M, FM, m*) is used, a second code must be included to describe the movement as active, passive, or both. (See Table 3.4.)
- Active/passive codes are placed as superscripts after the movement determinant (i.e., M^p).

Rapid Reference 3.7 summarizes the form rules for coding the Rorschach.

Form Quality

- Form quality refers to how well an examinee's description of a form fits the area of the inkblot used, with four possible symbols from superior-overelaborated to minus (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.4 Active-Passive Movements

Movement Superscripts		• Any movement can be active, passive, or both.
	a (active)	• Responses with movement that is more dynamic or animated than *talking*. Examples in Table 11, page 110 of Exner (1993). • Responses in which an object is described as having both active and passive movements (i.e., a man leaning against a tree [passive] and tapping his foot [active]).
	p (passive)	• Responses with movement that is less or equally dynamic/animated than *talking*. • Responses with movement which should be static (i.e., a person lying down). • Responses in which the movement is reported as a picture, painting, caricature, or abstract piece of art, even with active movement reported in the art (i.e., a man running as a piece of artwork).
	a-p (active-passive)	• Responses in which two or more objects are described with movement and one is active and the other is passive (i.e., one dog biting another dog).

Note. Adapted description from *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System.* Volume 1: *Basic Foundations,* 3rd ed. (pp. 109–113), by J. E. Exner, Jr., 1993, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Copyright 1993 by John Exner, Jr. Reprinted with permission.

- The coding goal is to determine how well or accurately an examinee's percept or response relates to the inkblot form, using Exner's Table A (explained below) as a guide.
- Coding a response ordinary (o) versus superior-overelaborated (+) can involve the examiner's subjective judgment.

How to Code Form Quality

- Use the transcribed text of the test and the location sheet to determine level of form quality. (Use only those responses that include some aspect of form.) Rapid Reference 3.8 summarizes form quality coding.

- Based on the location for each card, look up the form quality (FQ) description or category in Table A starting on page 195 of volume 1 or on page 101 of the Workbook (Exner, 1993; Exner, 1995). Table A provides a listing of responses, by card and location area for form quality codes ordinary (o), unusual (u), or minus (–). Table B starting on page 255 of volume 1 and on page 162 of the workbook provides illustrations of responses that should be coded superior-overelaborated (+) (Exner, 1993; Exner, 1995). Caret marks (<v>) are references to when the examinee turns the card to the left, upside down, or to the right to give a response.
- Table 3.5 provides a general description of Form Quality, but Table A is the primary source for empirically derived Form Quality scores (Exner, 1993).
- If the answer is not listed in Table A and is not a superior-elaborated response:

  1. Try to extrapolate conservatively from the answers in Table A. (For example, a top and a gyroscope are similar to each other and could be given the same form quality score.)
  2. If the object only has a remote similarity to an object in Table A, carefully consider the criteria between unusual and minus.
  3. Many responses contain multiple objects. Choose the lowest or most conservative score (minus, then unusual, then ordinary, then superior-elaborated), unless the object with the lowest form quality score is unimportant to the overall response. (For example, "Two dogs are looking at the same thing, maybe they are looking at a bug." The bug is less important than the two dogs doing the observing.)

Rapid Reference 3.8

Form Quality Coding

For multiple objects,

1. Choose the most "conservative score" or lowest FQ level. A (– is lower than *u* and *u* is lower than *o*.)
2. The object with the lowest score should be important to the response.

If the response is formless (no form), do not code form quality.

Table 3.5 Form Quality

Symbol	Symbol Name	Explanation
+	Superior-overelaborated	• A response that is exceptionally precise and articulate and doesn't sacrifice the correct fit of the form. Response is unique in how the details are described and in how the form is used, however it is not necessarily an original answer. • May be listed in Table A as *o,* but response is usually well articulated, as in Table B. May not be listed in Table A or B.
o	Ordinary	• The obvious, commonplace, easily seen, and easily explained response that identifies an object frequently reported by others. • May not be listed in Table A as *o.*
u	Unusual	• An uncommon response, in which the contours of the inkblot are not significantly violated and the examiner can quickly and easily identify the object. • May not be listed in Table A as *u.*
–	Minus	• A distorted and unrealistic use of a form, in which the examiner can only identify the object with difficulty, or not at all. The response is imposed on the inkblot and disregards the structure of the inkblot. • May not be listed in Table A as –.

Note. Modified table from *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System.* Volume 1: *Basic Foundations,* 3rd ed. (p. 152), by J. E. Exner, Jr., 1993, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Copyright 1993 by John Exner, Jr. Reprinted with permission.

4) Contents

- Contents refers to the name or class of object(s) used in the response, with 27 possible codes from whole human to x-ray (see Table 3.6).
- The coding goal is to categorize the objects described in the inkblot.

Table 3.6 Contents

Symbol	Symbol Name	Explanation (the response can include)
H	Whole Human	• A whole human figure. • If it is a *real* historical figure such as Joan of Arc, add secondary content code *Ay* (see below).
(H)	Whole Human (fictional or mythological)	• A whole fictional or mythological human figure, (i.e., a clown, fairy, giant, witch, fairytale creature, ghost, angel, science-fiction creature that is humanoid, humanlike monster.)
Hd	Human Detail	• An incomplete human form (i.e., a leg) or a whole form without a body part (i.e., a person without a head).
(Hd)	Human Detail (fictional or mythological)	• An incomplete fictional or mythological human figure (i.e., wings of an angel, arms of a witch). • All masks. (i.e., love, hate, sound, smell)
Hx	Human Experience	• Human emotional or sensory experience/ description (i.e., love, hate, sound, smell). Usually also scored special content *AB.*
A	Whole Animal	• A whole animal form.
(A)	Whole Animal (fictional or mythological)	• A whole fictional or mythological animal form (i.e., dragon, unicorn, Disney character).
Ad	Animal Detail	• An incomplete animal form (i.e., cat's head, claw of a crab, animal skin, rug made of animal skin).
(Ad)	Animal Detail (fictional or mythological)	• An incomplete fictional or mythological animal form (i.e., wings of Pegasus, parts of the body of a Disney character).
An	Anatomy	• Skeletal, muscular, organs or other internal anatomy without reference to x-ray (i.e., bones, skull, heart, vertebrae).

Table 3.6 continued

Symbol	Symbol Name	Explanation (the response can include)
		• If the response involves a laboratory tissue slide, add a secondary content code, *Art*.
		• If the response involves an X-ray, code only *Xy*.
Art	Art	• Paintings, drawings, illustrations, ranging in style from abstract to realism.
		• Art objects (i.e., statue, jewelry, chandelier, crest, seal, decoration).
		• Secondary content code for a laboratory tissue slide.
		• Many responses also have secondary content codes (i.e., a painting of two bears would be *Art*, *A*).
Ay	Anthropology	• Objects with a specific cultural and/or historical connotation even if still in use today (i.e., Arrowhead, prehistoric ax, Jewish menorah, Napolean's hat).
Bl	Blood	• Blood, either human or animal.
Bt	Botany	• Any type of plant life, individual parts or whole.
Cg	Clothing	• Any article of clothing.
Cl	Clouds	• Clouds. Used specifically as a reference to clouds. Any cloud variations (i.e., fog or mist) are coded *Na*.
Ex	Explosion	• A blast or explosion, including fireworks.
Fi	Fire	• Fire or smoke.
Fd	Food	• Anything edible.
Ge	Geography	• Any map, general or specific.

Table 3.6 continued

Symbol	Symbol Name	Explanation (the response can include)
Hh	Household	• Any household item used, inside or outside the house (except a lightbulb, which is coded *Sc*).
		• Rugs, except those made of animal skin, which are coded *Ad*.
Ls	Landscape	• Any form of landscape (i.e., mountains, underwater, deserts, swamps).
Na	Nature	• Anything from a natural environment that is not coded as *Bt* or *Ls*.
		• Anything astronomical or weather related (i.e., sun, planets, water, rainbow, fog, mist).
Sc	Science	• Anything associated with or that is a product of science or science fiction (i.e., computers, microscope, vehicle of transportation, rocket, lightbulb).
Sx	Sex	• Anything involving sex organs, activity of a sexual nature, or sexual reproduction (i.e., buttocks, menstruation, intercourse, abortion, breast—unless used to point out female figure).
		• *Sx* is usually scored as a secondary content. Primary contents are typically *H, Hd, An*.
Xy	X-Ray	• Any X-ray, skeletal or organs. When *Xy* is coded, *An* is not included as a secondary code.

Note. Modified table from *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System*. Volume 1: *Basic Foundations,* 3rd ed. (pp. 158–59), by J. E. Exner, Jr., 1993, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Copyright 1993 by John Exner, Jr. Reprinted with permission.

How to Code Contents

- Use the transcribed text of the test to determine content.
- Many responses require more than one content code; however, each code can only be used once for a given response. Include all content codes with two exceptions:

  1. When a response includes *Na, Bt,* and/or *Ls,* only *Na* is scored.
  2. When a response includes both *Bt* and *Ls* (and *Na* is not present), score only one.

- Unique content that does not fit under any other content category receives an idiographic code (*Idio* or *Id*).

Rapid Reference 3.9 summarizes content coding rules.

5) Popular Responses

- Popular responses refers to frequently given responses.
- The coding goal is to determine whether the examinee's response is the conventional or commonly given response for each card.

How to Code Popular Responses

- Use the transcribed text of the test and location sheet to determine if the examinee's response is a popularly given response. For example, Card I's popular response is a bat or butterfly.
- Look up the examinee's description of the card in Table A, starting on page 195 in volume 1 or page 101 of the workbook (Exner, 1993; Exner, 1995). The first sentence below the card number provides the popular response(s) for that card. A more detailed description of the popular responses can be found in Table 24 on page 162 in volume 1 or Table 8 on page 57 of the workbook (Exner, 1993; Exner, 1995).
- Make sure the examinee's response uses the same location of the card as the popular response.
- Code a *P* if the answer is exactly the same as the popular response for that card. If it is not a popular response, no code is necessary and you can leave it blank.

6) Organizational Activity

- Organizational activity refers to the degree of organization required to integrate the form described in the response. It uses a Z score, a weighted method of assigning a score to a response.
- The coding goal is to provide a numerical Z score representing the degree of organizational activity.
- Every card has an organizational activity or Z score if the response includes form and meets at least one of the following criteria:

  1. The location score is "whole" with developmental quality codes, either synthesized (*W*+), ordinary (*Wo*), or vague synthesized (*Wv*/+).
  2. It meaningfully integrates at least two adjacent or nonadjacent parts of the inkblot (portions that may or may not touch).
  3. It meaningfully integrates white space.

Rapid Reference 3.10 summarizes when not to code a Z score.

How to Code Organizational Activity

- Use the location codes and the developmental quality (DQ) codes, scored earlier, to determine the Z score.
- Determine if the card meets criteria (see Rapid Reference 3.11) for a Z value and which category the response could fit (ZW, Zadj, Zdis, ZS).
- Look up the organizational (Z) values based on the type of organizational activity for each of the 10 cards in one of the following sources:

Rapid Reference 3.9

Content Rules

- A unique content response should be written out and entered under idiographic contents (Idio), in the Contents column.
- No duplicate codes for a given response.
- Responses can receive more than one content code with two exceptions:
  1. Only nature (*Na*) is scored even if a response includes nature (*Na*), botany (*Bt*) and/or landscape (*Ls*).
  2. For botany (*Bt*) and landscape (*Ls*) when nature (*Na*) is not present, score only one.

Rapid Reference 3.10

Don't Code for a Z Score

Responses never receive an organizational score if:

1. *Dv.*
2. white space or without reference to the white space.
3. no form involvement (i.e., pure *C*, *T*, *Y*, or *V*).
4. Special Score, *CONFAB.*

1. The table called Organizational (Z) Values on the Notes and Calculations page of the Structural Summary Blank
2. Table 20 on page 147 of volume 1 (Exner, 1993)
3. Table 8 on page 60 of the Workbook (Exner, 1995)

- If the response meets more than one category's criteria, choose the category with the highest Z value for that card.

• Remember that form must always be involved to receive a Z score, so pure *C, T, Y,* or *V* responses are never coded with an organizational activity score.

7) Special Scores

- Special scores refers to the presence of an unusual characteristic(s) in the response, with 16 possible scores from deviant verbalizations to color projection (see Table 3.7).
- The coding goal is to categorize the unusual verbalizations.

CAUTION 3.2

Demographic Variables and Level 1 and Level 2 Scores

Demographic variables such as age, education, or culture are not considered in distinguishing level 1 and level 2 scores. These elements are considered during the interpretation stage when comparing an examinee's scores with the scores listed in the descriptive statistics tables.

How to Code Special Scores

- Use the transcribed text of the test to determine special scores.
- For deviant verbalizations (*DV, DR*) and inappropriate combinations (*INCOM* and *FABCOM*), determine the degree of cognitive slippage or bizarreness, represented as level 1 and level 2 responses (see Table 3.8) Caution box 3.2 warns examiners not to consider an examiner's demographic information when coding level 1 and 2 scores.
- It is not uncommon for a response to receive more than one special score; however, exceptions and certain exclusionary rules are listed in Rapid Reference 3.12. Use these rules to avoid inflating the total sum of special scores.
- The same wording or the same instance of cognitive confusion never receives more than one special score. Verbiage much be completely independent to receive more than one special score.

Caution 3.3 summarizes what examiners should keep in mind when coding an examinee's responses.

Rapid Reference 3.11

When to Code for a Z Score

- The examiner should code for a Z score if a response includes form and meets at least one of the following criteria:
  1. ZW: It has a location code *W and* a Developmental Quality code of +, *v*/+, or *o* (answers with a *Wv* are not assigned a score).
  2. ZAdj: It is a response that meaningfully integrates separate objects in adjacent areas of the inkblot (areas that touch).
  3. ZDis: It is a response that meaningfully integrates separate objects in nonadjacent areas of the inkblot (areas that don't touch).
  4. ZS: It is a response that meaningfully integrates white space with other details of the inkblot in the description (such as "eyes in a face").
- If a response meets criteria for more than one category, choose the score with the highest Z value for that card.

Note. Adapted descriptions from Exner (1993), p. 16.

CAUTION 3.3

The Coding Process

- The examiner should take his or her time coding. With inaccurate coding, the examiner unintentionally creates the foundation for an inaccurate interpretation.
- Scan each response carefully and review options. Be aware of errors of omission and over coding.
- Reliability studies suggest greater disparity between examiners by omissions than by coding disagreements (Exner, 1993).

Table 3.7 Special Scores

Category	Symbol Name	Level	Explanation
Unusual Verbalizations	(DV) Deviant Verbalizations	Neologism	• An incorrect word or neologism in place of a correct one when the examinee has the verbal capacity. ◆ DV1: Some bacteria you might see under a *telescope* (instead of *microscope*). • DV2: A woman is ready for a *virginal* exam.
		Redundancy	• Odd language repeating information about the object(s) reported. The response can not be justified by subcultural idioms or limited vocabulary. ◆ DV1: a *pair* of *two* birds. DV2: a *backward reversed* propeller of an airplane.
	(DR) Deviant Responses	Inappropriate Phrases	• Phrases that are inappropriate or completely irrelevant. ◆ DR1: It's a cat. *My father always hated cats.* • DR2: An abstract of President Carter *if you look at it from a Democratic perspective.*
		Circumstantial Responses	• Fluid or rambling answers in which the examinee inappropriately elaborates or has marked difficulty in achieving a definition of the object. Sometimes wandering off target and never returning to subject.

Table 3.7 continued

Category	Symbol Name	Level	Explanation
			◆ DR2: *I'm a mechanic,* so I can tell it's a car, *but I'm not sure how to look at it. I can see the back wheel and brake, which should always be checked . . .*
Inappropriate Combination	(INCOM) Incongruous Combination		• Inappropriately merging separate inkblot details or images into a single object. Coded *only* when the combination describes a single object. ◆ INCOM1: An orange man. INCOM2: A woman with the head of a chicken.
	(FABCOM) Fabulized Combination		• An implausible or unbelievable relationship is described between two or more objects in the inkblot. ◆ FABCOM1: Two chickens *holding basketballs.* FABCOM2: A man sitting there *and you can see his heart pumping.*
	(CONTAM) Contamination		• The most bizarre of the inappropriate combinations. Two or more impressions fused into a single response in a manner that clearly violates reality. The objects might otherwise be reported separately. • Involves a single discrete area of the inkblot. ◆ CONTAM: It must be a *bird dog* because it has the body of a dog and the nose of a bird.

Table 3.7 continued

Category	Symbol Name	Level	Explanation
(ALOG) Inappropriate Logic			• Without prompting, spontaneously uses strained, unconventional, or loose logic to justify a response. ◆ ALOG: It's white *so it must be from an angel.*
Perseveration and Integration Failure	(PSV) Perseveration	Within Card Perseveration	• Within one card, consecutive answers that have exactly the same location, determinant, content, DQ, FQ, and Z scores. Content score can change as long as it stays within the same category. Popular and Special scores need not be the same. • Examinee gives two separate answers, not an alternative answer to card. ◆ *PSV* on Card I: This could be a bat or it could be a butterfly, too.
		Content Perseveration	• Answer that identifies an object that was seen previously. Object can be engaged in a different activity. ◆ *PSV* on Card I and Card V: Oh, there's that butterfly again, this time it's sitting on a branch.
		Mechanical Perseveration	• Mechanistic report of the same object over and over again, usually by examinees who are cognitively and/or neurologically impaired. ◆ *PSV* on Cards I, II, III, etc.: It's a bat.

Table 3.7 continued

Category	Symbol Name	Level	Explanation
	(CONFAB) Confabulation		• Inappropriate generalization from one detailed area to the whole inkblot. • Z score and ALOG are not coded. ◆ CONFAB: It's a claw, it's a lobster.
Special Content Characteristics	(AG) Aggressive Movement		• Movement response with current aggression (no past tense).
	(COP) Cooperative Movement		• Movement response with a clearly positive or cooperative interaction.
	(MOR) Morbid Content		• An object is identified as dead, destroyed, ruined, spoiled, damaged, injured, or broken. • An object is attributed as having a clearly dysphoric feeling or characteristic such as a sad tree.
Other Special Features	(AB) Abstract Content		• Human Experience (Hx) content coded answers noting human emotion or sensory experience. • Clear and specific symbolic representation of an object when form is used. An abstract painting is scored only when specific representation is noted, such as it represents the struggle for power.

Table 3.7 continued

Category	Symbol Name	Level	Explanation
	(PER) Personalized Answers		• Refers to personal knowledge or experience as part of the basis for justifying and /or clarifying a response. • Response needs to include more than just general commentary or a reference to self (i.e., not just "*I* think it looks like . . ." but, "My mother showed me . . .")
	(CP) Color Projection		• Identifies an achromatic (black-white) area of the inkblot as chromatic (colors of the rainbow).

Note. Adapted from Exner (1993), pp. 166–74.

Rapid Reference 3.12

Exclusionary Rules for Special Scores

1. If *CONFAB,* never include *ALOG,* even if *ALOG* is in the response.
2. If *CONTAM,* never include *DV, DR, INCOM, FABCOM,* or *ALOG,* even if in the response.
3. If *DV, DR, INCOM, FABCOM,* or *ALOG*:
   a. The verbiage meeting criterion for each of these scores must be completely separate from the others.
   b. When criteria overlap, code only one special score and use a step-up rule: pick the score with the highest weighted value from *Wsum6*. [Weighted values: *ALOG* (5), *FABCOM* (4, 7), *DR* (3, 6), *INCOM* (2, 4), *DV* (1, 2)].

Table 3.8 Special Scores Level 1 and Level 2

Level 1 Responses	• Mild or modest instances of illogical, fluid, particular, or circumstantial thinking. Responses are similar to cognitive slips that occur when people are not paying close attention to how they are expressing themselves or to the judgments they are making. • Responses sound like products of immaturity, lack of education, judgments that are not well thought out, or careless errors.
Level 2 Responses	• Moderate or severe dissociated, illogical, fluid, or circumstantial thinking. Expressing flawed judgment and/or a very unusual mode of talking. • Responses stand out because of their bizarreness and seldom create scoring doubts. When the examiner has legitimate doubts about whether a response meets level 2 criteria, take a conservative stance and assign a level 1 score.

Note. Adapted descriptions from Exner (1993), p. 166.

TRANSFERRING CODES TO THE SEQUENCE OF SCORES SHEET

The Sequence of Scores sheet has 10 columns listing all the coding scores for each response. One of Exner's computer-generated Sequence of Scores sheet is shown in Table 3.9. If hand-scoring, it might be best for the new examiner to fill out the Sequence of Scores sheet after completing the coding using our Scoring worksheet in order to insure greater accuracy, while the more advanced examiner might fill out the Sequence of Scores sheet at the same time as he or she codes the responses.

If computer scoring, some examiners use computer software such as RIAP or ROR-SCAN interpretive reports, specifically designed for the Exner Comprehensive System. In these cases, the examiner codes the re-

Table 3.9 Scoring Sequence for Protocol L.S.

Card	No	Loc	#	Determinant(s)	(2)	Content(s)	POP	Z	Special Scores
I	1	Wo	1	FMpo		A	P	1.0	
	2	W+	1	Ma-po	2	H, (A)		4.0	AB, COP
	3	Ddo	24	Fo		Sc			
II	4	D+	6	FMpo	2	Ad	P	3.0	
	5	DS+	5	ma.CFo		Sc, Fi		4.5	
III	6	D+	1	Ma+	2	H, Ls	P	3.0	COP
	7	Do	3	FCo		Cg			
IV	8	W+	1	FMp.FD.FTo		A, Bt		4.0	
	9	Do	3	FYo		Bt			PER
V	10	Wo	1	Fo		A	P	1.0	DR
VI	11	Wo	1	FTo		Ad	P	2.5	
	12	Do	4	ma.FYo		Sc			
	13	Do	3	Fo		Ay			
VII	14	D+	1	Fo	2	Hd, Id	P	1.0	
	15	Do	2	Fo		A			
	16	W+	1	Ma+	2	H		3.0	COP
VIII	17	Wo	1	CFo	2	Art		4.5	
	18	Do	1	Fo		A	P		
	19	Do	4	FMa.FDu		A			
IX	20	Do	4	Fo		Hd			
	21	Do	8	Fo		Hh			
	22	D+	1	Ma.mpo		H, Sc		2.5	
X	23	Do	1	Fo	2	A	P		
	24	Do	7	FMao		A			
	25	W+	1	CFo	2	Bt		5.5	

Note.

sponses and then enters the scores into the computer program. While examiners use these software packages because they generate both the Structural Summary and interpretative information (discussed in the next several chapters), the printout of the Sequence of Scores sheet that comes with it is an added advantage.

In Conjunction with our Scoring worksheet

If the examiner has used our Scoring worksheet, filling in the Sequence of Scores sheet will take only a few minutes. At the end of the coding process, the examiner should have one Scoring worksheet for each response. The codes from these pages are now transferred to the Sequence of Scores sheet. Note that the worksheet's sections match the Sequence of Scores columns. Use Table 3.10 for directions and helpful tips on how to transfer the codes and make the notations.

Without our Scoring Worksheet

The examiner can choose to fill in the Sequence of Scores sheet during the coding process. The examiner may want to use a pencil rather than a pen, so corrections look neater. Use Table 3.10 for directions and helpful tips for filling in what codes goes in each column of the Sequence of Scores sheet.

Table 3.10 Filling in the Sequence of Scores Sheet

Column Name	What Codes Go in the Column?	General Tips
Card	Card number	• Use Roman numerals.
Resp. No.	Response number	• Use Arabic numerals and number continuously. Do not renumber each card.
Location and DQ	Location codes (W, D, Dd, S) and Developmental Quality codes (+, v/+, o, v)	• List Location code(s) first. *S* is listed after *W, D,* or *Dd.* • After Location codes, list Developmental Quality code.
Loc. No.	Location number code	• List number. If DQ is a *W* may be leave blank or insert a dash (-).

Table 3.10 continued

Column Name	What Codes Go in the Column?	General Tips
Determinant(s) and Form Quality	Determinants with form quality determinants	• List determinants, which are separated by a full stop (.) or periods. Movement is listed first, followed by form, color, and shading (in no particular order). Reflections are listed last under blends. (Some instructors prefer to list determinants based on the order they appear in the response.) • Active and passive superscripts immediately follow a movement determinant. • At the end of the row, the last code should be form quality (if the response has form).
(2)	Pairs determinants (2)	• List as (2), if scored.
Content(s)	Contents	• List one after another in the order they were stated.
Pop	Popular Responses	• List *P,* if scored.
Z Score	Organizational Activity	• List numeric Z score.
Special Scores	Special Scores	• List one after another in the order they were stated. • For *DV, INC, DR, FAB*, after the special score code note if level 1 or 2.

TEST YOURSELF

1. **What is the cardinal rule of coding?**
2. **What is the best resource for coding rules?**
   (a) this Essentials book
   (b) Exner's Volume 1
   (c) Exner's Workbook
   (d) all of the above
   (e) b and c
3. **Specific form demand does not necessarily mean it has a specific shape.** True or False?
4. **Almost all responses have a form, so a first-time examiner knows that he or she can almost always code an F.** True or False?
5. **If the examinee's content can't be listed under any of the other categories, do not use idiographic (*Id* or *Idio*) unless the examiner has sent a letter to the Rorschach Workshops informing them of the unusual response.** True or False?

Answers: 1. The code or score should represent the cognitive operation at the time the examinee gave the answer; 2. b; 3. False; 4. False; 5. False.