



Designation: **E2610–08 (Reapproved 2011) E2610 – 18**

Standard Test Method for Sensory Analysis—Duo-Trio Test¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E2610; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers a procedure for determining whether a perceptible sensory difference exists between samples of two products.

1.2 This test method applies whether a difference may exist in a single sensory attribute or in several.

1.3 This test method is applicable when the nature of the difference between the samples is unknown. It does not determine the size or the direction of the difference. The attribute(s) responsible for the difference are not identified.

1.4 Compared to the triangle test, the duo-trio test is statistically less efficient, but easier to perform by the assessors. For details on how the duo-trio test compares to other three-sample tests, see Refs (1-4).²

1.5 This test method is applicable only if the products are homogeneous. If two samples of the same product can often be distinguished, then another method, for example, descriptive analysis, may be more appropriate.

1.6 This test method is applicable only when the products do not cause excessive sensory fatigue, carryover or adaptation.

1.7 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.8 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*³

E253 Terminology Relating to Sensory Evaluation of Materials and Products

E456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics

E1871 Guide for Serving Protocol for Sensory Evaluation of Foods and Beverages

E1885 Test Method for Sensory Analysis—Triangle Test

E2262 Practice for Estimating Thurstonian Discriminal Distances

2.2 *ISO Standards:*⁴

ISO 4120 Sensory Analysis—Methodology—Triangle Test

ISO 10399 Sensory Analysis—Methodology—Duo-Trio Test

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definition of terms relating to sensory analysis, see Terminology **E253**, and for terms relating to statistics, see Terminology **E456**.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee **E18** on Sensory Evaluation and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee **E18.04** on Fundamentals of Sensory.

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² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this standard.

³ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

⁴ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, http://www.ansi.org.

3.2.1 α (*alpha*) *risk*—probability of concluding that a perceptible difference exists when, in reality, one does not. (Also known as Type I Error or significance level.)

3.2.2 β (*beta*) *risk*—probability of concluding that no perceptible difference exists when, in reality, one does. (Also known as Type II Error.)

3.2.3 p_c —probability of a correct response.

3.2.4 p_d (*proportion of discriminators*)—proportion of the population represented by the assessors that can distinguish between the two products.

3.2.5 *product*—material to be evaluated.

3.2.6 *sample*—unit of product prepared, presented, and evaluated in the test.

3.2.7 *sensitivity*—general term used to summarize the performance characteristics of the test. The sensitivity of the test is rigorously defined, in statistical terms, by the values selected for α , β , and p_d .

3.2.8 δ —Thurstonian measure of sensory difference (effect size) relative to perceptual noise (standard deviation) (see Practice E2262).

3.2.9 *triad*—three samples given to an assessor in the duo-trio test; one sample is labeled as a reference the other two samples are labeled with different codes. One of the coded samples is the same product as the reference. The other coded sample is different.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Clearly define the test objective in writing.

4.2 Choose the number of assessors based on the level of sensitivity desired for the test. The sensitivity of the test is, in part, a function of two competing risks: the risk of declaring the samples different when they are not (that is, α -risk) and the risk of not declaring the samples different when they are (that is, β -risk). Acceptable values of α and β vary depending on the test objective and should be determined before the test (see for example [Appendix X1](#) and [Appendix X2](#)).

4.3 Each assessor receives a triad where one sample is labeled as the reference and the other two samples are labeled with different codes. The assessors are informed that one of the coded samples is the same as the reference and that one is different. The assessors report which of the coded samples they believe to be the same as (or different from) the reference.⁵

4.4 Results are tallied and significance determined by reference to a statistical table.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The test method is effective for the following test objectives:

5.1.1 To determine whether a perceivable difference results or a perceivable difference does not result, for example, when a change is made in ingredients, processing, packaging, handling or storage; or

5.1.2 To select, train and monitor assessors.

5.2 The test method itself does not change whether the purpose of the duo-trio test is to determine that two products are perceivably different versus that the products are not perceivably different. Only the selected values of p_d , α , and β change. If the objective of the test is to determine if there is a perceivable difference between two products, then the value selected for α is typically smaller than the value selected for β . If the objective is to determine if the two products are sufficiently similar to be used interchangeably, then the value selected for β is typically smaller than the value selected for α and the value of p_d is selected to define “sufficiently similar.”

5.3 The test method may change based on the test objective or the assessors’ familiarity with the product. The balanced-reference technique (see [9.1.1](#)) typically is used when neither product is more familiar than the other. The constant-reference technique (see [9.1.2](#)) frequently is used when one product is a control/current product or is familiar to the assessors.

6. Apparatus

6.1 Carry out the test under conditions that prevent contact between assessors until the evaluations have been completed, for example, using booths that comply with Ref (5).

6.2 Sample preparation and serving sizes should comply with Guide [E1871](#). See Refs (6) or (7).

7. Assessors

7.1 All assessors must be familiar with the mechanics of the duo-trio test (the format, the task, and the procedure of evaluation). Experience and familiarity with the product and test method may increase the sensitivity of an assessor and may therefore increase the likelihood of finding a significant difference. Monitoring the performance of assessors over time may be useful.

⁵ Organizations differ in the instructions they give their assessors. Some organizations instruct their assessors to select the sample that is most similar to the reference. Others instruct their assessors to select the sample that is most different from the reference. Either approach is acceptable.

7.2 Choose assessors in accordance with test objectives. For example, to project results to a general consumer population, assessors with unknown sensitivity might be selected. To increase protection of product quality, assessors with demonstrated acuity should be selected.

7.3 The decision to use trained or untrained assessors should be addressed prior to testing. Training may include a preliminary presentation on the nature of the samples and the problem concerned. If the test concerns the detection of a particular taint, consider the inclusion of samples during training that demonstrate its presence and absence. Such demonstration will increase the panel's acuity for the taint but may detract from other differences. See Ref (8) for details. Allow adequate time between the exposure to the training samples and the actual duo-trio test to avoid carryover.

7.4 During the test sessions, avoid giving information about product identity, expected treatment effects or individual performance until all testing is complete.

7.5 Avoid replicate evaluations by the same assessor whenever possible. However, if replications are needed to produce a sufficient number of total evaluations, every effort should be made to have each assessor perform the same number of replicate evaluations.

8. Number of Assessors

8.1 Choose the number of assessors to yield the level of sensitivity called for by the test objectives. The sensitivity of the test is a function of three values: the α -risk, and the β -risk, and the maximum allowable proportion of distinguishers, p_d .⁶

8.2 Prior to conducting the test, select values for α , β and p_d . The following can be considered as general guidelines.

8.2.1 For α -risk—A statistically significant result at:

- 10 to 5 % (0.10 to 0.05) indicates "slight" evidence that a difference was apparent
- 5 to 1 % (0.05 to 0.01) indicates "moderate" evidence that a difference was apparent
- 1 to 0.1 % (0.01 to 0.001) indicates "strong" evidence that a difference was apparent
- Below 0.1 % (<0.001) indicates "very strong" evidence that a difference was apparent

8.2.2 For β -risk—The strength of the evidence that a difference was not apparent is assessed using the same criteria as above (substituting "was not apparent" for "was apparent").

8.2.3 For p_d —The maximum allowable proportion of distinguishers, p_d , falls into three ranges:

- $p_d < 25\%$ represent small values
- $25\% < p_d < 35\%$ represent medium sized values
- $p_d > 35\%$ represent large values

8.3 Having defined the required level of sensitivity for the test using 8.2, use Table A1.1 to determine the number of assessors necessary. Enter Table A1.1 in the section corresponding to the selected value of p_d and the column corresponding to the selected value of β . The minimum required number of assessors is found in the row corresponding to the selected value of α . Alternatively, Table A1.1 can be used to develop a set of values for p_d , α and β that provide acceptable sensitivity while maintaining the number of assessors within practical limits. The approach is presented in detail in Ref (9).

8.4 If one wishes to use Thurstonian δ as a measure of sensory effect size, use Tables A2.1 and A2.2 to convert between p_d and δ . See Ref (10) for further discussion on the relationship between Thurstonian δ and p_d .

8.5 Often in practice, the number of assessors is determined by material conditions (for example, duration of the experiment, number of available assessors, quantity of product). However, increasing the number of assessors increases the likelihood of detecting small proportions of distinguishers. Thus, one should expect to use larger numbers of assessors when trying to demonstrate that products are similar compared to when one is trying to prove they are different. Often 20 to 36 assessors are used when testing for a difference. For comparable sensitivity when testing for similarity, 40 to 78 assessors are needed.

9. Procedure

9.1 If neither product is more familiar than the other, use the balanced reference technique (9.1.1). If the product is familiar to the assessors (for example, a control sample from the production line), use the constant reference technique (9.1.2).

9.1.1 *Balanced-Reference Technique*—Prepare worksheets and scoresheets (see Appendix X1) in advance of the test so as to utilize an equal number of the four possible sequences of two products, A and B:

A_RAB
B_RAB

A_RBA
B_RBA

9.1.1.1 Distribute these at random among the assessors so that serving order is balanced.

⁶ In this test method, the probability of a correct response, p_c , is modeled as $p_c = 1 - p_d + (1/2)(1 - p_d)$, where p_d is the proportion of the entire population of assessors who can distinguish between the two products. It is a strictly statistical "guessing model" of the assessor's behavior. It is not a psychometric model of the assessor's decision process, such as the Thurstone-Ura model that could also be applied in discrimination testing.

9.1.2 *Constant-Reference Technique*—Prepare worksheets and scoresheets (see [Appendix X2](#)) in advance of the test so as to utilize an equal number of the two possible sequences of two products, A and B:

A_RAB

A_RBA

9.1.2.1 Distribute these at random among the assessors so that serving order is balanced.

9.2 Present each triad simultaneously if possible, following the same spatial arrangement for each assessor (on a line to be sampled always from left to right, in a triangular array, etc.). Within the triad, assessors are typically allowed to make repeated evaluations of each sample as desired. If the conditions of the test require the prevention of repeat evaluations for example, if samples are bulky, leave an aftertaste, or show slight differences in appearance that cannot be masked, present the samples sequentially and do not allow repeated evaluations. In addition, if the samples change over time, for example, chewing gum or cereal with milk, samples should be tested sequentially.

9.3 Instruct the assessors to evaluate the reference sample first and then evaluate the two coded samples in the order in which they were presented. The assessor should then indicate which of the two coded samples is the same as the reference.

9.4 Each scoresheet should provide for a single triad of samples. If a different set of products is to be evaluated by an assessor in a single session, the completed scoresheet and any remaining product should be returned to the test administrator prior to receiving the subsequent triad. The assessor cannot go back to any of the previous samples or change the verdict on any previous test.

9.5 Do not ask questions about preference, acceptance, or degree of difference after the initial selection of the sample that matches the reference. The selection the assessor has just made may bias the reply to any additional questions. Responses to such questions may be obtained through separate tests for preference, acceptance, degree of difference, etc. (see Ref (~~1011~~)). A comment section asking why the choice was made may be included for the assessor's remarks.

9.6 The duo-trio test is a forced-choice procedure; assessors are not allowed the option of reporting “no difference.” An assessor who detects no difference between the samples and requests to report “no difference” should be instructed to randomly select one of the coded samples as being the same as the reference. In such situations the assessor can indicate that the selection was only a guess in the comments section of the scoresheet.

10. Analysis and Interpretation of Results

10.1 Use [Table A1.2](#) to analyze the data obtained from a duo-trio test. The actual number of assessors can be greater than the minimum value given in [Table A1.1](#). If the number of correct responses is greater than or equal to the number given in [Table A1.2](#), conclude that a perceptible difference exists between the samples. If the number of correct answers is less than the number given in [Table A1.2](#), conclude that the samples are sufficiently similar. Again, the conclusions are based on the risks accepted when the level of sensitivity (that is, p_d , α and β) was selected in determining the number of assessors ([Table A1.1](#)).

10.2 If desired, calculate a confidence interval on the proportion of the population that can distinguish the samples. This method is described in [Appendix X3](#).

11. Report

11.1 Report the test objective, the results, and the conclusions. The following additional information is recommended:

11.1.1 The purpose of the test and the nature of the treatment studied;

11.1.2 *Full Identification of the Samples*—Origin, age, lot number, packaging, where obtained, method of preparation, quantity, shape, storage prior to testing, serving size, and temperature (sample information should communicate that all storage handling and preparation was done in such a way as to yield samples that differ only due to the variable of interest, if at all);

11.1.3 The number of assessors, the number of correct selections, and the result of the statistical evaluation;

11.1.4 *Assessors*—Age, gender, experience in sensory testing, experience with the product category, experience with the samples in the test;

11.1.5 Any information and any specific instructions given the assessor in connection with the test;

11.1.6 The test environment: use of booths, simultaneous or sequential presentation, light conditions, whether the identity of the samples was disclosed after the test and the manner in which it was done; and

11.1.7 The location and date of the test and the name of the panel leader.

12. Precision and Bias

12.1 Because results of sensory difference tests are functions of individual sensitivities, a general statement regarding the precision of results that is applicable to all populations of assessors cannot be made. However, adherence to the recommendations stated in this standard should increase the reproducibility of results and minimize bias.

13. Keywords

13.1 difference testing; discrimination test; duo-trio test; sensory analysis; similarity testing

A1. NUMBER OF ASSESSORS AND CORRECT RESPONSES NEEDED FOR A DUO-TRIO TEST
TABLE A1.1 Number of Assessors Needed for a Duo-Trio Test (1011)

NOTE 1—Entries are the minimum number of assessors required to execute a duo-trio test with a prespecified level of sensitivity determined by the values chosen for p_d , α and β . Enter the table in the section corresponding to the chosen value of p_d and the column corresponding to the chosen value of β . Read the minimum number of assessors from the row corresponding to the chosen value of α .

α		β							
		0.50	0.40	0.30	0.20	0.10	0.05	0.01	0.001
$p_d = 50\%$									
0.40		2	4	4	6	10	14	27	41
0.30		2	5	7	9	13	20	30	47
0.20		5	5	10	12	19	26	39	58
0.10		9	9	14	19	26	33	48	70
0.05		13	16	18	23	33	42	58	82
0.01		22	27	33	40	50	59	80	107
0.001		38	43	51	61	71	83	107	140
$p_d = 40\%$									
0.40		4	4	6	8	14	25	41	70
0.30		5	7	9	13	22	28	49	78
0.20		5	10	12	19	30	39	60	94
0.10		14	19	21	28	39	53	79	113
0.05		18	23	30	37	53	67	93	132
0.01		35	42	52	64	80	96	130	174
0.001		61	71	81	95	117	135	176	228
$p_d = 30\%$									
0.40		4	6	8	14	29	41	76	120
0.30		7	9	13	24	39	53	88	144
0.20		10	17	21	32	49	68	110	166
0.10		21	28	37	53	72	96	145	208
0.05		30	42	53	69	93	119	173	243
0.01		64	78	89	112	143	174	235	319
0.001		107	126	144	172	210	246	318	412
$p_d = 20\%$									
0.40		6	10	23	35	59	94	171	282
0.30		11	22	30	49	84	119	205	327
0.20		21	32	49	77	112	158	253	384
0.10		46	66	85	115	168	214	322	471
0.05		71	93	119	158	213	268	392	554
0.01		141	167	207	252	325	391	535	726
0.001		241	281	327	386	479	556	731	944
$p_d = 10\%$									
0.40		10	35	61	124	237	362	672	1124
0.30		30	72	117	199	333	479	810	1302
0.20		81	129	193	294	451	618	1006	1555
0.10		170	239	337	461	658	861	1310	1905
0.05		281	369	475	620	866	1092	1583	2237
0.01		550	665	820	1007	1301	1582	2170	2927
0.001		961	1125	1309	1551	1908	2248	2937	3812

TABLE A1.2 Number of Correct Responses Needed for Significance in a Duo-Trio Test (†011)

NOTE 1—Entries are the minimum number of correct responses required for significance at the stated α -level (that is, column) for the corresponding number of respondents, n (that is, row). Reject the assumption of “no difference” if the number of correct responses is greater than or equal to the tabled value.

NOTE 2—For values of n not in the table, compute the missing entry as follows: Minimum number of correct responses (x) = nearest whole number greater than $x = n/2 + z\sqrt{n/4}$, where z varies with the significance level as follows: 0.25 for $\alpha = 0.40$; 0.52 for $\alpha = 0.30$; 0.84 for $\alpha = 0.20$; 1.28 for $\alpha = 0.10$; 1.64 for $\alpha = 0.05$; 2.33 for $\alpha = 0.01$; 3.09 for $\alpha = 0.001$.

n	α							n	α						
	0.40	0.30	0.20	0.10	0.05	0.01	0.001		0.40	0.30	0.20	0.10	0.05	0.01	0.001
2	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	31	17	18	19	20	21	23	25
3	3	3	3	—	—	—	—	32	18	18	19	21	22	24	26
4	3	4	4	4	—	—	—	33	18	19	20	21	22	24	26
5	4	4	4	5	5	—	—	34	19	20	20	22	23	25	27
6	4	5	5	6	6	—	—	35	19	20	21	22	23	25	27
								36	20	21	22	23	24	26	28
7	5	5	6	6	7	7	—	40	22	23	24	25	26	28	31
8	5	6	6	7	7	8	—	44	24	25	26	27	28	31	33
9	6	6	7	7	8	9	—	48	26	27	28	29	31	33	36
10	6	7	7	8	9	10	10	52	28	29	30	32	33	35	38
11	7	7	8	9	9	10	11	56	30	31	32	34	35	38	40
12	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	60	32	33	34	36	37	40	43
13	8	8	9	10	10	12	13	64	34	35	36	38	40	42	45
14	8	9	10	10	11	12	13	68	36	37	38	40	42	45	48
15	9	10	10	11	12	13	14	72	38	39	41	42	44	47	50
16	10	10	11	12	12	14	15	76	40	41	43	45	46	49	52
17	10	11	11	12	13	14	16	80	42	43	45	47	48	51	55
18	11	11	12	13	13	15	16	84	44	45	47	49	51	54	57
19	11	12	12	13	14	15	17	88	46	47	49	51	53	56	59
20	12	12	13	14	15	16	18	92	48	50	51	53	55	58	62
21	12	13	13	14	15	17	18	96	50	52	53	55	57	60	64
22	13	13	14	15	16	17	19	100	52	54	55	57	59	63	66
23	13	14	15	16	16	18	20	104	54	56	57	60	61	65	69
24	14	14	15	16	17	19	20	108	56	58	59	62	64	67	71
25	14	15	16	17	18	19	21	112	58	60	61	64	66	69	73
26	15	15	16	17	18	20	22	116	60	62	64	66	68	71	76
27	15	16	17	18	19	20	22	122	63	65	67	69	71	75	79
28	16	16	17	18	19	21	23	128	66	68	70	72	74	78	82
29	16	17	18	19	20	22	24	134	69	71	73	75	78	81	86
30	17	17	18	20	20	22	24	140	72	74	76	79	81	85	89

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A2. CONVERSION TABLES BETWEEN p_d AND THURSTONIAN δ FOR A DUO-TRIO TEST

TABLE A2.1 Conversion from Thurstonian δ to p_d for a Duo-Trio Test

NOTE 1—This table is specified for the Duo-Trio test. If one wishes to perform similar conversions for a different test method, this table is not appropriate. To obtain p_d for a specific value of δ , locate the cell in the row and column corresponding to the unit value and tenths place, respectively, of the desired δ value.

δ	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9
0.0	0.000	0.002	0.007	0.016	0.029	0.045	0.064	0.085	0.110	0.136
1.0	0.165	0.195	0.227	0.260	0.293	0.327	0.361	0.395	0.428	0.461
2.0	0.494	0.525	0.555	0.585	0.612	0.639	0.665	0.689	0.711	0.733