Summary writing test

Read the following text and summarise it in 50 words. Show your answers to someone. If you are in one of my classes, e-mail the diagram to me.

**Ways of Investigating Stereotypes**

There are experimental ways of investigating stereotypes. One of the most obvious is to ask a group of people what traits characterize the Germans, the Italians, the Americans and so forth. Results of such studies on the whole agree fairly well with what might have been expected; there is considerable agreement between different people in any one nation regarding the most characteristic traits of other nations. There is even agreement between different nations; for instance, the Americans and English agree with respect to other groups, and even, though less markedly, themselves. The Germans, for instance, are regarded as scientifically minded and industrious by English and Americans alike; they are also considered solid, intelligent, mathematical, extremely nationalistic, efficient and musical by the Americans, and arrogant, aggressive and over-nationalistic by the English. Italians are regarded as artistic, impulsive, passionate, quick-tempered, musical, religious, talkative, revengeful, lazy, unreliable and dirty by both. Negroes fare even worse. They are considered to be superstitious, lazy, happy-go-lucky, ignorant, ostentatious, musical, slovenly, unreliable, dirty and religious by both Americans and English.

The Irish do rather better. While they too are religious and happy-go-lucky, they are also supposed to be quick-tempered, witty, industrious, nationalistic, quarrelsome, aggressive and pugnacious. Jews are believed to be shrewd, mercenary, industrious, intelligent, loyal to family, grasping, ambitious, sly and persistent. They are also credited with being very religious. The Chinese, as one would have expected, are looked upon with more favour by the English, who consider them industrious, courteous, meditative, intelligent and loyal to their families, than by the Americans, who consider them superstitious, sly, conservative, ignorant and deceitful. The Japanese stereotype seems to have altered considerably as a result of the war. Where pre-war they were considered intelligent, progressive, industrious, shrewd and meditative, they are now considered cruel, fanatic, treacherous, though still imitative and industrious. Perhaps a few more years will serve to restore them to their previous status. Turks do rather badly; apparently they are cruel, treacherous, sensual, dirty, deceitful, sly, quarrelsome, revengeful and superstitious. They make up for this by being very religious. The French, needless to say, are sophisticated, talkative, artistic, passionate and witty, whereas the Russians are industrious, tough, suspicious, brave and progressive. The English consider themselves sportsmanlike, reserved, tradition-loving, conventional and intelligent; astonishingly enough, Americans agree, adding, however, that the English are also sophisticated, courteous, honest, industrious, extremely nationalistic, and, I hardly dare put this down, humourless! The Americans consider themselves industrious, intelligent, materialistic, ambitious, progressive, pleasure-loving, alert, efficient, straightforward, practical and sportsmanlike; the English agree that Americans are materialistic and pleasure-loving, but also consider them generous, talkative and, most widely used adjective of all, boastful.

The close agreement found in English and American groups is probably due to the fact that these stereotypes derive from books, films and other cultural media shared by both groups. It is unlikely that a comparison between stereotypes held by Spaniards, Turks or Russians would show much agreement with those given here. To judge by German writings, it appears that, to the Germans, the average Englishman is ' a clever and unscrupulous hypocrite; a man who, with superhuman ingenuity and foresight, is able in some miraculous manner to be always on the winning side; a person whose incompetence in business and salesmanship is balanced by an uncanny and unfair mastery of the diplomatic wiles; a cold-blooded, prescient, ruthless opportunist; a calculating and conceited egoist. There is little resemblance between this picture of the Englishman, quoted from an account by Harold Nicolson, and another one given by him. The French portrait of the Englishman is a picture of an inelegant, stupid, arrogant and inarticulate person with an extremely red face. The French seem to mind our national complexion more than other things. They attribute it to over-consumption of ill-cooked meat. They are apt, for this reason, to regard us as barbarians and gross. Only at one point does the French picture coincide with the German picture. The French share with the Germans the conviction of our hypocrisy.

H. J. Eysenck: *Uses and Abuses of Psychology,* (Penguin Books, 1953)