

I remember the first time that I took a student aptitude test in high school. At first, I was tempted to turn it sideways and scribble on it like my friends were doing, but curiosity got the best of me. Was there anything to these aptitude tests, I wondered? I figured that there was really only one way to find out. I answered all of the career interest questions diligently. I am sure that you remember how idiotic these things are. The questions are so idiotic and simplistic that it is really hard not to fudge all of the answers. After all, if that aptitude test does not tell you something that you already know, you probably do not know yourself all that well.

It is strange, then, that years later, I find myself in the position of designing skills aptitude tests for several different business clients. It is one of those strange jobs that you wander into accidentally. Few people wonder about where all of those standardized test questions come from. I know that I never even thought about it until I saw the job posting on the local community bulletin board. It was for a national testing company, looking for people to write questions on spec. it sounded like it might be a scam, but I figured that I would give it a go. To my surprise, they accepted all of my questions and game me a per article contract job.

At first, I was designing scholastic aptitude test questions, focusing primarily on English language comprehension. It did not take long, however, for me to get into other areas as well. You may not realize it, but a great proportion of the standardized tests printed in this country are in the hands of a very few large businesses. Once you get into the loop, the jobs keep pouring in for as long as you want them. At first it takes too long to be really lucrative, but once you get the hang of it, you can make good money.

The money is so good, in fact, that I was able to pay my way through college on it. I still had to take out a few student loans, but for the most part I made my money writing testing questions. I now know one of the dirtiest secrets of the professional world: half of the business aptitude test questions are written by college undergraduates.