



Psychological Assessment

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- how and why personality is assessed
- objective and projective assessments
- aptitude, achievement, and interest tests

In the ancient world, people were selected for various positions in government on the basis of physical tests, mental abilities, and their knowledge of the law and the world. The practice of using tests for hiring is still alive and well. Today, tests are used for everything from diagnosing mental disorders to college admissions to choosing a career.

Other methods used for psychological assessment include interviews and behavioral observations. Interviews may be either informal or highly structured, in which the interviewer asks a specific list of questions in a particular order. With behavior-rating scales, observers can identify behaviors that a person frequently or rarely uses.

Test taking sometimes causes anxiety. You can use a number of methods to improve test-taking ability and reduce anxiety. Because tests are used today for so many purposes, it pays to know how to take them effectively and with relatively little stress.

Psychological Tests

Early in the twentieth century, people believed in predicting the moral character or intelligence of a person by looking at physical characteristics, such as the height of the forehead, the distance between the eyes, or body weight. Since then, we've come a long way in testing intelligence, personality, potential achievements, and interests.

History of Assessment

Although some psychological testing was done in the early 1900s, most of it focused on intelligence, aptitudes, achievements, and interests, with little attention paid to personality traits. In the mid-1940s, psychologists at the Menninger Foundation promoted a different approach through a group of tests designed to determine various personality factors. Using these tests was termed *psychodiagnosis*.

Throughout the forties and fifties, clinical psychologists became highly skilled in the use of psychodiagnostic tests. However, a split occurred between those who argued for the study of traits and their relationship to behavior and those who thought of personality as a whole system that couldn't be understood in terms of the presence or absence of one or more traits.

The popularity of behaviorism, which maintained that there was no such thing as personality and, therefore, nothing to be measured, compounded the dispute. Although psychological tests have greatly improved over the years, some psychologists still won't use testing.

Uses of Assessments

A **psychological test** measures an individual's intelligence, feelings, behaviors, cognitive functioning, goals, or aptitudes. Different psychological tests can be used to measure intelligence, achievements, abilities, interests, and various personality traits. Psychological tests are used in a variety of ways, chiefly for clinical assessment of people with psychological problems with self and others or behavioral or mental disorders. Such tests can:

- * Diagnose problems.
- * Uncover causes of problems.
- * Predict the course of symptoms.
- * Suggest treatment.
- * Assess the degree to which the problem has impaired the functions of a person.

Personality assessments are a type of psychological test sometimes used when hiring or considering a person for a promotion. They measure:

- * Problem-solving ability.
- * Job suitability and work style.
- * Values, attitudes, and work ethic.
- * Work behavioral style.

Other types of tests can help identify the type of work for which one is best suited or has the greatest aptitude. These differ, though, from tests that help identify the type of work a person is most interested in. And, of course, there are the various intelligence tests discussed in Chapter 10.



Types of Assessment

Psychological testing may range from informal interviews to observation in familiar settings to standardized testing.

Interviews. Interviews may be informal, allowing conversation to flow freely and comfortably for the interviewee. Information about the person's background, upbringing, family relationships, schooling, and career may be discussed. Emphasis is placed on any problems the person may have had in these contexts.

Some interviews are much more structured, with the psychologist asking a specific list of questions in a particular order.

Behavioral Observations. Interesting behavioral information can be collected by observing people in their typical surroundings. For example, if a teacher were being observed, the observer might count the

number of times that the teacher asks questions, how long he or she waits for the answers, and how the teacher behaves toward particular members of the class. This type of observation is often used to help people be more aware of their own behavior and personality style.

Standardized Testing. As you'll see in this chapter, some of the most common tests are written. Test takers might answer a variety of true/false statements, complete sentences, rank themselves on a scale of how likely they are to engage in a behavior, or do other tasks.

Ethical Concerns

Your grade on the next math or history test may worry you, but it isn't likely to have a long-term effect on your life. The result of a psychological test carries that possibility. It is therefore important to understand and assess the circumstances of any such test. Some of the ethical issues that surround the taking of psychological tests include:

- * You (or a parent or guardian if you're a minor) must give permission for the test. You should always know the reason for taking the test.
- * The person giving the test must respect your privacy. It is, however, important to recognize that the law permits access to results of psychological testing in some cases. If you have serious psychological problems, it may be worth this risk, particularly if you have confidence in the person administering the test.

- * If tests are given for scientific research, you should be fully informed not only of the purpose of the test but also of how the results will be handled and who will have access to them.
- * Recently, the use of computer-scored and- interpreted tests has become a cause of concern. In some cases, computer interpretations have not been adequately tested. Furthermore, people with insufficient training may use these interpretations.

In general, people should make sure they know and trust the psychologist performing any assessment.

The Results of Testing

If you take a psychological test that could have significant impact on your life or on your future, and you feel that there is some doubt about the results or interpretation of the test, ask to be retested. Some tests, such as an IQ test, may be attached to your permanent school records and will follow you through your schooling.

In some cases, test questions might make test takers feel as if there is really something wrong with them. Keep in mind that there is a very wide range of “normal” psychological behaviors. Further, if a psychologist tells you that you have a problem, there’s nothing wrong with consulting someone else. While training in the use and correct interpretation of psychological assessments is extensive, psychologists are human, too. Answers to test questions, particularly those

that must be interpreted, are open to misinterpretation. Under certain circumstances, even standardized tests aren’t accurate.

Results of a single test are less valuable in understanding psychological problems than the results of a **battery** of tests—a set of tests that assesses information about a variety of behaviors and cognitive processes in different ways. For serious psychological problems, a battery of tests administered by a highly qualified professional can be extremely beneficial.

Arguments for Testing

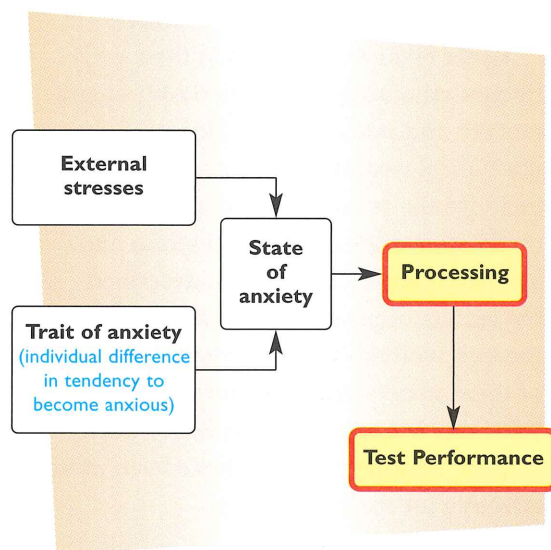
John Exner conducted a survey of several hundred psychologists to gather information about the use of assessments. Of those who responded, a full 25 percent didn’t use standard assessments in diagnosing their clients. Exner suggested that assessments would lead to better treatment.

Exner cited two women in their early thirties who both complained of frequent anxiety and panic attacks. He claimed that the typical treatment for this complaint includes the prescription of anti-anxiety medication and some sort of stress management control. Exner then described the results of psychological assessment of the two women. The underlying causes of their anxiety were remarkably different. With this information, it is likely that *different* treatments might have been more effective for the two women.

States and Traits

When selecting a test, it is important to distinguish between a trait, a relatively stable personality characteristic, and a **state**, a person's present mental and physical condition. How, for example, can we know if a person demonstrating anxiety on a test is reacting to certain factors that caused test anxiety in that situation or actually has the trait of anxiety?

The diagram below shows how external anxiety-producing factors might cause an anxious state that affects mental processing and test performance. Even a person with a low anxiety trait can grow anxious if external pressures become great enough. It is critical, therefore, to be certain a test is measuring traits, not states. How is this done?



Testing the Test

Although there are a variety of available psychological tests, any test that is truly diagnostic must meet certain conditions.

Reliability

The consistency of a test is called its reliability. This means that the results on a test should be replicable. There are several different types of reliability:

- * **Test-Retest Reliability.** A high correlation between the scores a person gets on the same test taken at different times is called test-retest reliability. This type of reliability can be an indication of whether someone's state affected his or her score. If the results vary greatly, either the test is not reliable or the person's state affected the results.
- * **Internal Consistency.** An estimate of the degree to which each item or subpart of a test measures the same thing as the rest of the test items or subparts is called internal consistency. Items or subparts that are designed to measure the same characteristic should yield similar results.
- * **Equivalent-Forms Reliability.** Sometimes, when a test is retaken, a person will remember something from the first test. This can affect the score, so different forms of the test are used. With equivalent-forms reliability, each test yields the same results when administered to the same individual at different times.

Validity

Validity is whether a test measures what it is supposed to measure. As with reliability, there are several forms of validity:

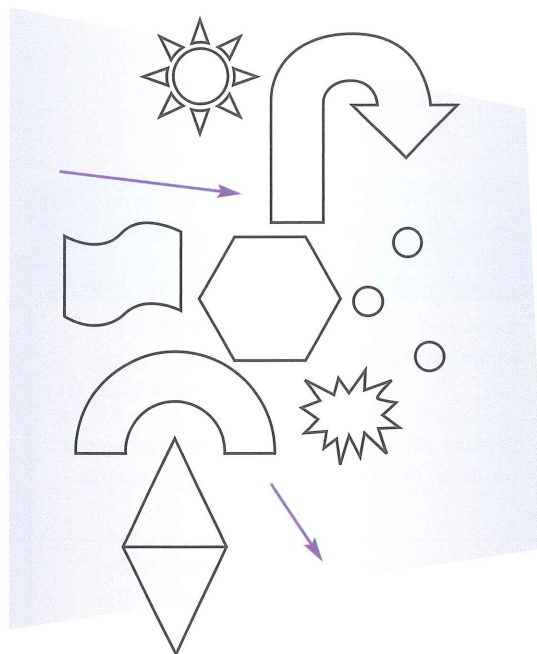
- * **Content Validity.** To be valid, the words and ideas used in a test must have the same meaning across cultures, ages, and genders. What one culture might identify as normal behavior, another might call aggressive. Tests must be validated across a representative cross-section of the population. This is called content validity.
- * **Construct Validity.** The extent to which a test accurately identifies the presence or absence of a quality or characteristic is called construct validity. If you design a test to measure a person's aptitude for learning a foreign language, you might give this test to a group of students entering a foreign language class. Then you would wait until they had completed the class and compare their results on the test with their achievement in the class. If there was a high correlation, your test would have construct validity.
- * **Predictive Validity.** Once your test has been shown to be valid in measuring foreign language aptitude, it might be used to predict the success of a particular student in a language class. This use of a test to predict the success of someone in a particular situation is called predictive validity.

Sometimes a number of related questions are interspersed through the test. The answers to these questions should be

consistent if the test taker is answering honestly. If he or she is not, the test administrator might question the rest of the answers.

This is another way of measuring the validity of test results—this time, in terms of the honesty of the test taker's answers.

Standardization



Suppose that these figures appear, each on a separate card, on a psychological test. Person A is told to "Copy these figures, placing them all in some pattern," while person B is told simply, "Copy the figures the best you can." It would be impossible to tell how much of each of the final drawings is the result of the instructions and how much is due to intellectual abilities, perceptual-motor skills, or personality differences between the test takers. To avoid such problems, many tests are standardized.



Reliability and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a test that attempts to identify a person's "type" based on his or her preferences in four different bipolar dimensions of personality. Those dimensions are shown in the table.

MBTI Personality Dimensions	
Preference	Person chooses to
Extrovert (E) vs. Introvert (I)	Focus energy on the outer world (E) or the internal world of ideas (I)
Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N)	Perceive using the senses (S) or through intuition or "hunches" (N)
Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F)	Reach conclusions by objective thinking (T) or subjective feeling (F)
Perception (P) vs. Judgment (J)	Use his or her mind primarily to become more aware of things, people, etc. (P) or to come to conclusions about what has been perceived (J)

Standardization is the administration and scoring of tests according to established rules. By ensuring that each person who took the test heard or read the same set of instructions and that the tests are all scored in the same manner, one can rule

The preferences are interpreted as suggesting other aspects of personality. For example, a *judger* (J) prefers order and structure, and a *perceiver* (P) tends to be more spontaneous and flexible.

The test includes questions such as "Are you more logical or intuitive?" "Do you prefer being alone or with other people?" These are called "forced choice" questions because you must choose one or the other, even if you feel that both are true during different situations or contexts in your life. From your answers, you are placed in one of 16 personality types. Each type supposedly indicates the primary and secondary strengths that people bring to different situations in their lives.

Although many people like the MBTI, it does not pass the test-retest reliability standard. Some people's choices have changed depending on their state at the time of the test. For this reason, some psychologists refuse to use the test in professional settings until more research is done.

out those factors as affecting the results of the test. The Scholastic (or Standard) Assessment Test (SAT) is a written standardized test used by many colleges to help them select applicants. Both the Stanford-Binet and Wechsler intelligence

tests are given individually. The test administrators are trained to ask the questions and to interpret the answers in a standard manner. If a test contains essay questions, graders are trained to score the answers based on the presence or absence of specific information.

Norms

Once you have developed a test and given it to many different people of various ages, genders, cultures, and socioeconomic groups, you will have a sense of how most people in each of those groups typically answer each question. These standard patterns of test answers are called **norms**. When a person's score on a psychological test is compared to the norms of a similar group of people, it can be judged as average, high, or low. A high score isn't always positive. Whereas a high score on an intelligence test would suggest higher than average intelligence, a high score on a test of aggressive behavior might indicate a psychological problem.

Scoring well off the norm doesn't always indicate a problem. It may reveal a unique personality or particularly creative characteristics.

Objective Tests

The two main types of psychological tests used in test batteries are objective and projective tests. **Objective psychological tests** are objective in the sense that the scoring of the test requires no interpretation and can, in fact, be done by computer. These tests often take the form of a questionnaire com-

posed of standardized test items. Because the items limit the test taker to specific choices, such as true/false or multiple choice, the test results can be compiled by computer, but a highly trained examiner must do the final interpretation.

The first important objective personality test—the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)—dates to the 1940s. The California Psychological Inventory (CPI) is another frequently used objective personality test.

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

The MMPI is the most frequently used measure of personality traits. It was designed to help diagnose psychological disorders such as depression, paranoia, schizophrenia, hysteria, and intro/extroversion. A newer version of the test, the MMPI-2, replaced the original test in 1989. Gender biased and out-of-date language was replaced.

The test consists of 567 true/false items that can be scored by computer and compared to norms stored in the computer's memory. Most psychologists believe that the results of the test should be verified and enriched by observation and interviews.

What the MMPI Measures

The MMPI is a self-report test. That is, the person provides personal information about symptoms, experiences, and behaviors. Statements are along the lines of "My head hurts a lot of the time," "I think shoplifting is okay," or "I hear things that other people don't hear."

Items are criterion-keyed. That is, for scoring they are grouped according to the way people answer them, not by their content. If a certain question is typically answered “true” by “normal” people and “false” by people with a certain psychological disorder, it can be used to distinguish the two, regardless of the reason why the difference occurs.

Criterion-keying produces 13 primary scales on the MMPI, three of which are used to determine if the person appears to have answered the questions honestly, has exaggerated complaints or answered items carelessly, or has denied potential problems. The scales are not foolproof, because some people with serious psychological disorders may have highly distorted self-perceptions.

Why Would People Lie?

There are several reasons why people might not answer test questions honestly or why the results may be misleading. If, for example, the test is being given as part of a child-custody case, a person might lie to look like a better parent. Someone might claim excessive problems if he or she were taking the test as part of a personal injury lawsuit.

The California Psychological Inventory (CPI)

While the MMPI and MMPI-2 diagnose psychological and behavioral disorders, the California Psychological Inventory is designed to measure “normal” traits such

as sociability and responsibility. Like the MMPI, the test contains three validity scales for measuring “faking good,” “faking bad,” and careless test taking.

The CPI has a higher degree of validity than the MMPI-2 because a much larger group was used for the norms and there was greater concern for controlling age, socioeconomic, and geographical factors. The CPI also has higher test-retest reliability. The CPI is often used to predict management potential, reactions to stress, and success in school and work.

The 16 Personality Factor Test (16PF)

The fifth edition of Cattell’s 16PF test of 16 primary personality factors is a multiple-choice test designed to describe personality as a whole rather than diagnose psychological problems. The 16 traits are grouped into five global factors: extroversion, anxiety, tough-mindedness, independence, and self-control. This test, published in 1994, is widely used by human resources professionals in many companies worldwide to measure the aspects of personality related to career development.

The NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI)

A relatively new test, the NEO-FFI has 60 five-point rating scale items based on the Big Five personality traits described on page 271.

CRITICAL THINKING



Should MMPI Test Results Be Used in Diagnosis?

The MMPI is among the most widely used psychological diagnostic tests, not only in the United States, but also in other countries. Yet, some claim that it contains major faults. To what extent should the results be used?

THE ISSUES

Proponents of the MMPI point to its long history of use and recent changes to upgrade language and remove gender bias. Some suggest that computer scoring of the test can produce more reliable reports and diagnoses. They maintain that problems arise because people are not sufficiently trained in interpreting the many scales and subscales available in test reports.

Opponents say that psychologists are so in awe of computerized results that they fail to question if the results are sufficiently supported by research. The computer gives an impression of scientific precision to test data that unfairly impresses the lay public, especially in court cases.

Critic Peter Merenda points to the following:

1. In test-retest reliability trials at intervals of one day to one week, as few as 50 percent of the questions are answered the same.
2. The characteristics listed on the 10 scales are obsolete and misleading.
3. The use of true/false items is highly questionable.
4. No provisions for cultural differences are made when the test is translated into other languages. Statements such as "I prefer to work with women" may be meaningless in some cultures.
5. The norms are skewed so that only extremely different results are interpretable.

THE PROCESS

- 1 **Restate the issues.** In your own words, state the nature of the disagreement.
- 2 **Provide evidence.** From your own experience and from the information above, list the evidence *for* using test results to diagnose psychological problems.
- 3 **Give opposing arguments.** From your own experience and from the information above, list the evidence *against* using test results to diagnose psychological problems.
- 4 **Look for more information.** What else would you like to know before you decide? Make a list of your questions. On the Internet, in the psychology section of the library, or in the index of psychology books, research *psychological assessment, reliability and validity of testing, and computer scoring.*

- 5 **Evaluate the information.** Make a chart with two columns:

Using Test Results in Diagnosis	
For	Against

Record the arguments in each column and rank each column of arguments in importance from 1 to 5, with 1 as the most important.

- 6 **Draw conclusions.** Write one paragraph supporting your answer to the question "To what extent should MMPI results be used in diagnosing psychological problems?" Be sure to state reasons, not just opinions.

Projective Tests

Projective psychological tests have no specific answers. The simplest form of such a test might ask the test taker to state, “My greatest fear is . . .” Other projective tests ask people to interpret drawings of vague shapes, inkblots, or pictures of people engaged in various tasks. In some cases, answers are simply used as a point of discussion in informal interviews, but some projective tests are much more sophisticated.

The term *projective* comes from the belief that people will project their internal thoughts, feelings, problems, or personality traits onto relatively meaningless external objects such as inkblots. From the way the client interprets the object, the psychologist attempts to determine underlying processes.

Can Projective Tests Be Objective?

It is important to recognize that, although a projective test is open-ended, it can still be standardized and normed. One of the earliest projective tests—the Rorschach or inkblot test—uses images like the one shown.



What does this figure look like to you?

Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach first used inkblots such as this when he became curious about whether mentally ill patients would interpret them differently from normal people. In the 1920s, Rorschach published a set of 10 cards that are still used today.

Because this test has been given to so many people and has been the subject of so much research, it has become highly standardized and normed. Norms are determined by:

- * The region of the card to which the person responds—to the whole picture or some detail.
- * Whether the person responds to texture, color, or shading.
- * The actual content of the interpretation—animal, human, or bizarre, and whether this is typical of the way most people would perceive the figure.
- * Recurrence of interpretation across cards.

While the test is a good predictor of a person's current emotional state, it would never be used alone to diagnose or treat a person's problems, in part because of questions about its reliability and validity.

The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

Originally developed in the 1930s for studying achievement motivation, the TAT consists of a number of illustrations of people and things. The test taker is asked to tell a story with a beginning and an end about each illustration. The stories are then informally analyzed for content and quality.

What story might you tell about this picture? You may find it interesting to compare stories with your classmates.



Although the TAT is not standardized for clinical use, it is often used in conjunction with other clinical or vocational assessments. The stories can also be used as interesting starting points for discussing problems.

As stated earlier, the TAT was first used to measure achievement motivation. Psychologists who use the TAT are trained to identify motivation scores from the stories.

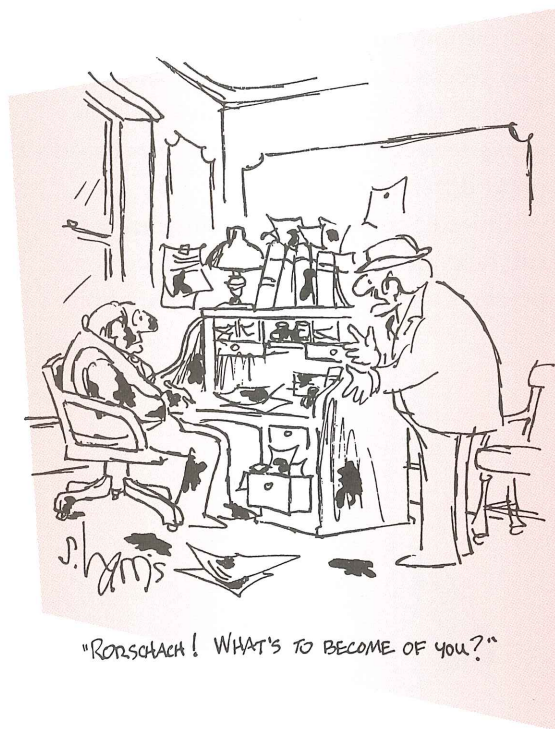
Limits of Projective Testing

Some psychologists criticize the interpretation of projective tests because of the unfortunate eagerness of some test administrators to assume psychological problems and assign diagnostic labels. Critics maintain that one tends to find what one is looking for and question whether the projection is that of the client or the psychologist.

Who Uses Which Tests?

Not surprisingly, the types of tests a psychologist chooses to use are determined by the theory to which that psychologist subscribes.

- * Trait theorists tend to select objective tests of traits such as MMPI-2, CPI, or 16PF.
- * Psychoanalytic theorists tend to select projective tests such as TAT.
- * Behavioral theorists tend to observe behavior in natural settings.
- * Humanistic theorists use questionnaires that ask people to describe their real self and their ideal self. Descriptions that are similar indicate a healthy personality.



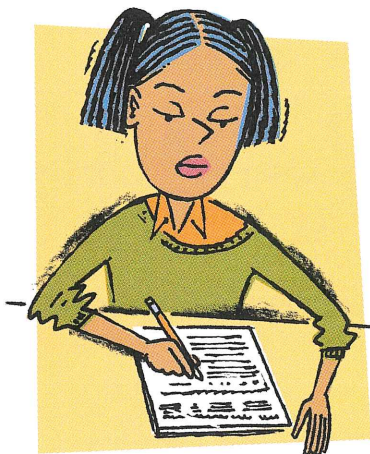
Aptitude and Achievement Tests

You are probably more familiar with aptitude and achievement tests than with projective or objective psychological tests. For many people, a test is a test. You've taken plenty of them in your years in school. But all tests are not created equal. An **aptitude test** attempts to *predict* your ability to learn something new. An **achievement test** is designed to assess what you have already learned.

Intelligence Tests

Intelligence tests are among the most famous aptitude tests. The Stanford-Binet gives you a score based on your performance compared to the average performance of others of the same age. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale—Revised (WAIS-R) scores individuals on separate verbal and nonverbal tests based on 11 different subtests.

If used appropriately, intelligence tests can help teachers or employers focus on a person's strengths rather than limitations.



College Aptitude Tests

The SAT and ACT are familiar tests for most college-bound students. A person's score on the SAT, or Scholastic (or Standard) Assessment Test, is used by many colleges and universities to predict academic performance. The test includes separate scores for verbal and mathematical aptitudes. Colleges also use the American College Testing (ACT) exam score to predict academic success. The ACT tests "educational development" in English usage, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

Aptitude or Achievement?

Although the SAT and ACT are called aptitude tests and are used to predict future academic success, they are, to a large extent, achievement tests. Both assume significant achievement in the use of the English language and grammar and a working knowledge of algebra and geometry. Other countries rely on a student's academic record, which demonstrates both aptitude and the student's motivation to succeed.

Some people argue that it is impossible to test aptitude without testing achievement of some type. Others claim that it is possible to test for aptitudes such as mechanical ability, motor skills, or clerical accuracy without testing achievement.

Achievement Tests

In general, the tests you take for your classes are achievement tests. They measure the amount of material you have learned (or, more accurately, remembered) from your classes.

The Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) must be taken for admission to medical schools. Other tests include the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) for business schools and the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) for law school admission. Passing the General Educational Development (GED) test gains a high school diploma for those who haven't completed high school.

Vocational Interest Tests

Many people take the most popular tests of vocational interest and/or aptitude, and studies demonstrate that the tests have high validity and reliability ratings. As such, they are very useful in predicting success in various careers. With so many occupational choices, you can get a head start in deciding upon a career by taking a vocational interest test.

The Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory

Although some of the questions on interest tests seem obvious—"Would you rather design a building or teach students?"—many others are much subtler. Questions range from items where the test taker

indicates a "like" or "dislike" for a behavior or activity to statements with which the test taker must agree or disagree. A computer will compare the choices you have made on the test with choices made by thousands of people who are successful in many different professions. It is just as important to know what you don't want as what you do.

For example, if it turns out that the majority of teachers who took the test would also like to be a librarian, and you would hate that profession, that is important even if many of your other choices agreed with teacher choices. From the test results, you can judge in what professions your interests are most likely to serve you well.

The Kuder Preference Record

Another widely used vocational interest inventory is the Kuder Preference Record. This is a forced-choice test, where you must choose one of the answers, even if all or none of them seem to apply. You might be asked if you would rather a) plant a garden; b) sing a song; or c) read a book. Results on this test indicate how interested a person is in such areas as literature, art, music, science, engineering, or nature.

Interest inventories don't predict a person's success in a given occupation. They just indicate the areas in which the person demonstrates the greatest interest.

Taking Tests

Students may have trouble on tests because they don't understand the material or don't know how to study or because they have **test anxiety**—difficulty retrieving what they know in a test environment. This anxiety increases with the relative importance of the test. Here are a few tips for test taking:

- * Learn everything you can about a test beforehand. Ask the teacher or students who've taken the class before what the tests are like. Ask to see earlier versions and examples of good answers to essay questions.
- * Make up test questions for yourself similar to those that might be on the test.
- * Use practice tests for "big" tests such as the ACT and SAT.
- * Begin studying well in advance of the test. Study a limited amount before going to sleep at night so that memories can consolidate.
- * Study until you know everything really well. You will be more confident about your ability.
- * Be prepared. Don't add to your worries by forgetting your pencil or a calculator.
- * Think positive thoughts. Instead of telling yourself that you will fail, remember times that you've succeeded. Focus on your strengths.

Tips for Various Test Types	
Multiple Choice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Answer the question before looking at the choices.2. Read all the choices.3. Rule out obvious wrong answers.4. Choose the best of the remaining choices.
True/False	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do not mark TRUE unless every part of the statement is true.2. Watch out for statements containing <i>always</i>, <i>never</i>, or <i>all</i>. They are usually false.3. Longer items with more information tend to be true—but not always!
Short Answer	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Answer in brief, complete sentences.2. Include relevant and important terms.3. Select the most important points for discussion.
Essay	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Read the key word, such as <i>compare</i>, <i>evaluate</i>, or <i>prove</i>.2. Be sure that your answer does that.3. Organize your thoughts on a separate sheet of paper before beginning to write.4. Support your statements with examples where possible.

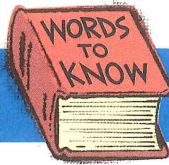
Chapter 17 Wrap-up

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Psychological tests are used to diagnose problems, for hiring and promoting workers, and to assess abilities, achievement, or interests. The major types of tests are objective, projective, intelligence, aptitude, achievement, and vocational interest tests. Interviews and behavioral observations are also used to assess personality and other psychological factors. Various tests are chosen depending on the theory a psychologist prefers. A battery of tests is of more value than any single test.

Every formal test must possess four factors: it must be standardized, normed, and have been tested for reliability and validity. A person can use a number of methods to be more at ease during tests and to have a better chance of test-taking success.

Psychology



achievement test—test designed to assess what one has already learned or can do. p. 292

aptitude test—test that attempts to predict ability to learn or do something new. p. 292

battery—set of tests that assesses information about a variety of behaviors and cognitive processes in different ways. p. 283

norm—standard pattern of results on a test given to many people. p. 287

objective psychological tests—tests that can be scored without interpretation. p. 287

projective psychological tests—open-ended tests that ask a person to interpret ambiguous drawings or to complete sentences. p. 290

psychological test—measurement of personality factors such as intelligence, feelings, behaviors, cognitive functioning, goals, or aptitudes. p. 281

standardization—the administration and scoring of tests according to established rules. p. 286

state—person's present mental and physical condition. p. 284

test anxiety—state in which a person in a test environment has difficulty retrieving what he or she knows. p. 294

validity—test standard in which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. p. 285