



Do Personality Tests Reveal The Real You?

A) Warm up

1. Do you think that your personality is fixed throughout life, or can people change their personality over time?
2. How important do you think that personality is when applying for a job position?
3. Have you ever taken a personality test? Do you think that the results were accurate?

B) Adapted Text - Do Personality Tests Reveal The Real You?

Do Personality Tests Reveal the Real You?

Would you rather have strong willpower or strong emotions? If you had to choose between being lost on a desert island or lost in the jungle, which would you prefer?

Today, personality testing is a multi-billion dollar industry used by individuals, schools and companies, but do they really reveal your true personality? In this article, I aim to find out for myself!

As humans, we have always possessed a strong desire to know more about ourselves. In spite of the relative sophistication of society today, our personalities remain a mystery to many of us — and we are always curious to gain insights as to what we're really like. Personality tests offer exactly that. The popularity of such tests could also be explained by the world we live in today - the anonymity of such tests makes them a well-suited self-discovery vehicle for our **alienated** tech age, ever more **devoid of** face-to-face interaction.

More importantly, people like confirmation of their qualities, particularly strengths. Therefore, tests really focus on giving positive results and putting us all neatly into different categories. Moreover, **the premise** that there is a perfect job, a perfect partner, and a perfect you is certainly an attractive one, and personality tests draw us in with the promise that these will all materialise simply by unlocking our inner-selves. For the first time, we might feel as if we are **in the driving seat** in our lives.

For the purposes of research, I decided to try out one of these tests for myself. At one particular site, I spent 40 minutes diligently recording my reaction to a series of ink blots - as seen in the picture on the right. (Is the mood of this picture sad, happy, violent or neutral? Can you find the chicken in this picture? Can you find your wife's/ husband's mother?)



I discovered I am mainly motivated by peace. A conclusion which I believe was very

slightly **wide of the mark** considering I had just had a huge argument with my partner only minutes before. (My fault entirely).

The most popular personality test in the world is the “Myers-Briggs Type Indicator”, or MBTI. Widely used for recruitment in major global corporations, it is based on the theory that we are born with a predisposition to one personality type which stays more or less fixed throughout life. You answer 88 questions and are then given your 'type': Introvert or Extrovert, Thinking or Feeling, Sensing or Intuitive, and Judging or Perceiving. If you're Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling and Perceptive, you'll probably find it harder to do work where you're required to entertain, or persuade lots of people, such as a job in sales or public relations.

One **flaw** of the Myer's Briggs Type indicator, and indeed personality testing in general, is the **premise** that personality may not even be a stable, measurable feature of an individual at all. One study found that nearly half of people who took the Myers-Briggs test a second time, only five weeks later, got assigned a different type! Though certain features of a person's behaviour may remain stable over time, others are **malleable**, influenced greatly by our upbringing, life experiences, and age.

Perhaps the most obvious **flaw** of personality testing is people's tendency to rate themselves according to what they want themselves to be, rather than what they actually are. This is a natural predisposition even if you are doing a test just for fun, so it becomes even more exaggerated when your future employment is **at stake**. It's easy to lie and give answers according to what your potential boss might prefer. If you do wish to cheat in order to land your dream job, a whole industry on cheating personality tests has **sprung up**, ready to help you give the 'right' answers. However, trying to fake it as an ambitious extrovert at work when you are really a more thoughtful introvert will likely **come back to haunt you** when you start in your new position. Work can be **draining** enough as it is, without having to fake your entire personality!

Institutions may also fall **wide of the mark** on traits that they are screening for. When the Myers Briggs test is used to screen job candidates, the hiring team will prioritize traits based on intuition. For instance, the hiring team may believe that a salesperson needs to be extroverted, and exclude a candidate who does not receive an 'E' for extroverted result in the assessment. However, research has found that extroversion is not always important for sales roles. Similarly, a personality inventory might indicate that you would make a great accountant, but you might find the work **draining** and unfulfilling.

There are also some negative side-effects to **the notion of** personality testing. For example, someone who is labelled an extrovert might reject things that are typically considered solitary or quiet activities, thus missing out on experiences that you might truly enjoy. **Clinging to** ideas about who you are can keep you from trying new things or **inhibit** your relationships.

It appears that the advantages and disadvantages of personality testing seem fairly balanced, but what is certain is that personality tests are here to stay. If you wish to dive into one yourself, it may be advisable to take the results **with a pinch of salt**. Don't make any crucial life decisions based on a test result, and never dismiss things that seem like they would not be a good fit for someone with your “type” because you never know what you might be missing out on!

C) Key Words from Context

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

alienated	devoid of	premise/notion	wide of the mark
malleable	at stake	in the driving seat/driver's seat	flaw
to spring up		to come back to haunt you	draining
to cling to		to take something with a pinch of salt	to inhibit

1. A fault or weakness in a plan/strategy/philosophy/personality which can cause it to fail: _____

"There were several _____ in the strategy."

"He had a few _____ in his personality, which held him back in his career."

2. Completely lacking in something: _____

"I joined the company completely _____ any experience."

"We left the meeting _____ any practical ideas."

3. To believe that something is exaggerated and not fully true: _____

"Despite the fact that the business plan has predicted significant growth over the next quarter, it's probably best to _____ those figures _____, considering the volatile market conditions we are currently facing."

4. To be in control of a situation: _____

"It is clear that we have an advantage in these negotiations. I believe we are _____."

5. To appear suddenly (this is often used in relation to businesses): _____

"Many new restaurants have _____ in the area, which is becoming one of the most trendy parts of the city."

6. At risk: _____

"Management are talking about downsizing due to the current economic situation, and many jobs are _____."

7. Incorrect or inaccurate: _____

"Some of projections for last year were really _____. The company's performance fell very short of expectations."

8. Causing you to lose a lot of energy, extremely tiring: _____
"We had 6 meetings today, which was incredibly _____."
9. Easily influenced, or easily trained: _____
"We like to hire young employees, because they are _____, and they can grow according to our company values."
10. To obstruct something, slow something down or prevent something from developing: _____
"Budget problems are really _____ progress in the project."
11. To cause problems for you in the present or future based on something that you did in the past: _____
"If you don't listen to your customers' feedback it might _____ one day."
12. To be unwilling to let something go, unwilling to move on from something: _____
"We cannot keep _____ our old ways of doing things. We need to embrace new strategies and new technologies.."
13. The concept or belief about something: _____
"Different board members have different ideas about the _____ of sustainability and what it means for our company moving forward."
14. Feeling isolated or feeling as if you are not part of a particular group: _____
"After changing our brand image, some of our most loyal customers are starting to feel _____."

D) Comprehension

Can you answer the questions below about the text?

1. Can you list 4 potential reasons the author gives as to why personality tests are popular today?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. What did the author think about the results when she took a personality test for herself?

3. What are 2 potential flaws of personality tests?

4. What could happen if you decide to cheat on a personality test?

5. What mistakes do recruiters make when using personality tests with job candidates?

6. What conclusion does the author draw about the validity of personality tests?

E) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You will need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence. You may also need to change some nouns to the plural form if necessary

alienated	devoid of	premise/notion	wide of the mark
at stake	to spring up	to inhibit	to cling to
	to come back to haunt them		

The “New Coke” Failure of the 1980s

In the mid-1980s, the world witnessed one of the most dramatic and unexpected shifts in the drinks industry – the introduction of New Coke by Coca-Cola.

Coca Cola was starting to lose significant market share to Pepsi, and the brand was starting to worry about the future. Their market leader position in the carbonated drinks industry was _____, and something had to change because they didn’t want to lose to Pepsi. The assumption from the board was that the Coca Cola had to stop _____ the traditional recipe that the company had had for so many decades. The branding team believed that the strong, rich tradition of Coca Cola’s branding

and taste was actually starting to _____ company growth, as profits were falling.

It was at this point where Coca Cola made their biggest mistake. They failed to consult customers on what changes they would like to see with the brand, and they went ahead with a complete recipe change, driven by the _____ that a new recipe would revitalise the brand and solidify its position at the top of the carbonated drinks market.



When Coca Cola launched “New Coke” in 1985, loyal customers were left in shock. The recipe tasted unrecognisably different, and many felt that the new recipe was completely _____ any taste at all. Coca Cola’s biggest fans felt totally _____ by the rebrand, and were left angry that they had been left out of any consultations on potential recipe changes. Furious consumers expressed their discontent through petitions, boycotts, and even protests.

Coca Cola’s failure to recognize the emotional attachment people had to the original product _____ spectacularly.

Realizing that their assumptions about their recipe and their modernizing rebrand had been completely _____, Coca-Cola had to act swiftly to rectify the situation. The company decided to bring back the original formula under the name "Coca-Cola Classic" in 1985. Since then, new Coca Cola recipes have _____, but only as side-lines, and the traditional recipe has always remained the flagship product.