

How Career Tests Can Help

How do people decide what career is right for them? Some people think they know what career they want to pursue, but they may find out later that they do not have the interest or aptitudes they need for that career. Fortunately, there are tests that people can take to help identify their interests and aptitudes. These tests can help people narrow their career choices and avoid wasting time working toward a career goal that is not a good “fit” for them.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS

If you are trying to choose a career, the first step you may want to take is a self-assessment. There are many free self-assessment guides on the Internet. Some are specifically designed for teens.

Self-assessments help you learn more about yourself. Are you a risk taker or are you cautious? Are you a team player or do you prefer to work alone? Answers to questions such as these help you better understand your personality type and what types of careers might suit your personality.

APTITUDE TESTS

If a self-assessment does not provide enough information, the next step may be to take a career aptitude test. These tests help determine what strengths and talents a person may have. They can also predict how well a person might acquire new skills in a certain area. Career counselors offer these tests to people who are making career decisions. Then they analyze the results of the tests to help people make good career choices.

Most aptitude tests evaluate a person’s aptitude, or natural ability, in fifteen different areas. Typical categories include:

- Reading
- Interpersonal

- Language
- Leadership
- Numerical/Mathematical
- Musical/Dramatic
- Clerical
- Organizational
- Technical/Mechanical
- Persuasive
- Spatial
- Social
- Manual
- Artistic
- Scientific

The main purpose of aptitude tests is to identify the kind of work that would make the test-taker feel the most satisfied. If you choose a career that is not well suited to your personality, skills, and interests, you may eventually feel that your work is unfulfilling.

USING THE RESULTS

After taking career assessments and aptitude tests, the next step is to evaluate the results. You may be surprised by the results of the tests. They may indicate that you would be a good “match” for careers that you have never considered before.

Make a list of the careers that were recommended by the tests and research them. Find out about educational requirements, job responsibilities, working hours, average starting salaries, advancement opportunities, and the outlook for jobs in the future. Think about the kind of life you hope to lead and whether each career is a good

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match for your preferences and life goals. Remember that tests can help narrow your choices, but they should not be used as the sole indicator of what career is best for you.

OTHER USES OF CAREER TESTS

Sometimes you may be asked to take a test when you are being considered for a new job. Businesses have various reasons for giving tests:

- The primary reason, of course, is that they want to make sure that they hire the right person for the job. Hiring the wrong person can be costly to an employer.
- Businesses may also use tests to determine who has the leadership qualities that may be needed for higher positions in a company.
- Even if a person is applying for a lower-level job, employers may be interested in the person's leadership qualities for the future.
- A business may ask a potential employee to take an intelligence test in order to evaluate the person's problem-solving and higher-level thinking skills.
- Some businesses may ask job candidates to take work simulation tests. These give candidates examples of situations that they might encounter while performing the actual job.
- Another type of test is for specific skills. This kind of test asks detailed questions about a specialized field. Such tests are most common in technical fields.
- Finally, some employers may ask new employees to take an honesty test. These tests are often given to people who will be working in a place with high security or in jobs that have information that must be kept confidential.

Taking Action

Use the Internet to find a free career assessment. Take the assessment and then summarize what you learned from it. Were you surprised by the results? What strengths did it reveal? How might the results of the assessment help you narrow your career options?

Applying for Jobs

Finding a job depends not only on your education and skills, but also on your job-research skills. For most jobs, you will need to prepare a résumé summarizing your qualifications. Résumés are usu-

ally sent or e-mailed with a short cover letter expressing your interest in a job. Applicants also fill out an application form.

Give your name, address, and phone number.	<p>WHITNEY WINSTON 5678 Brighton, Detroit, MI 43210 (055) 555-1234</p>	The résumé should be prepared on a computer or typewriter and printed neatly on clean paper. Limit your résumé to one page.
	Position desired: Child Care Assistant	State what position you are looking for.
	CHILD CARE EXPERIENCE	Give special importance to any experience you have that is directly related to your job objective.
	Volunteer, Harper Head Start Program (April 2007-Present) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized play groups for preschool children. Maintained bulletin boards in main hall. Helped lead teacher with small groups on field trips. 	
	Babysitter (June 2003-August 2007)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cared for neighbors' children ages two to five. Gave lunches and snacks. Supervised children's play and read them stories. 	
	OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE	Identify each job you have had, the place you worked, and the months you worked there. Briefly describe the work you did in each job.
	Counter Worker: Burger Place (September 2005- May 2007) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared and served fast-food meals. Cleaned and maintained equipment. Handled cash and balanced register at close of day. 	
	EDUCATION	Describe your schooling and any relevant course work. Include honors or awards you have won.
	Senior at East High School, graduating in June. Three courses in Family and Consumer Sciences, two in Child Care. Grade point average: 3.2	
	REFERENCES	Contact at least two or three people who can provide information about your character and abilities and ask permission to use them as references. Include their information on your résumé or prepare a separate list.
	Available upon request.	

Taking Action

Imagine that you are Whitney Winston. You are applying for a position as an assistant in a child care center. Write a cover letter to send with your résumé. Then complete the application for employment on page 128, using information from the résumé. Remember to write neatly, be truthful, and fill in as much information as possible when completing the application.

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Position applying for: _____

Full-time or Part-time: _____

EDUCATION

School	Location	Year Completed	Course of Study	Degree
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1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List other classes or skills you have that are applicable to this position:

WORK EXPERIENCE

Company/Organization	Dates	Position	Responsibilities
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1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Desired Salary:

Date of Availability:

REFERENCES

Name	Phone	Years Acquainted	Relationship
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1. _____

2. _____

3. _____