

*The IQ Workout Series*

# MORE PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

1000 new ways to assess your personality, creativity,  
intelligence and lateral thinking

Philip Carter and Ken Russell





# **MORE PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING**

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intelligence and lateral thinking

Philip Carter and Ken Russell



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# Introduction

The British Psychological Society defines a psychometric test as: *an instrument designed to produce a quantitative assessment of some psychological attribute or attributes*. A meaning of the word metric is *measure*, and psycho means *mind*.

Psychometric tests are basically tools for measuring the mind and are used frequently by employers, as part of their selection process, because they believe that such tests assist them considerably in providing an accurate assessment of whether an individual is able to do the required job and whether the person's character is suited to the work.

Psychometric tests have existed since the turn of the nineteenth century, although attempts to measure the differences between the psychological characteristics of individuals can be traced back to Hippocrates at around 400 BC, who attempted to define four basic temperament types as optimistic, depressed, irritable and sluggish.

In the last 25–30 years, psychometric tests have been brought into widespread use in industry because of the need by employers to ensure that they place the right people in the right job from the outset. One of the main reasons for this in today's competitive world of tight purse strings, cost-cutting and low budgets is the high cost of errors, including the need to readvertise and reinterview new applicants, and reinvest in training. There can also be serious difficulties involved in dispensing with the services of someone who has just been hired, especially if a contract has been signed. Furthermore, if a new recruit causes personality conflicts within a team or department this may lead to unrest between other members of staff with the result that the team may underperform.

## 2 More Psychometric Testing

Although an organisation will not found its entire decision on the basis of an individual's test results, the use of psychometric testing in selection is now well established, and can be used to provide objective information about different areas of a candidate's skills, for example, the extent of their knowledge, motivations, personality and potential.

The two main types of psychometric tests used are personality questionnaires and aptitude tests. Aptitude tests are designed to assess a person's abilities and personality questionnaires help to build up a profile of an individual's characteristics. It is important that such tests are evaluated in tandem with each other since it does not necessarily mean that if a person scores well on an aptitude test, then they will be suited to the job. While you may be good at doing something, you may dislike it intensely, and success in most tasks depends on your personal qualities and your attitude.

Personality refers to the patterns of thought, feeling and behaviour that are unique to every one of us, and these are the characteristics that distinguish us from other people. Our personality implies the predictability of how we are likely to act or react under different circumstances.

In reality, of course, nothing is that simple and our reactions to situations are never so predictable. In many ways the word personality defies a simple definition, so broad is its usage.

Although through the years theorists have emphasised different aspects of personality, and have disagreed about its development and effect on behaviour, it is accepted generally that heredity and development combine and interact to form our basic personality.

In addition to heredity, many psychologists believe that critical periods exist in personality development, and these periods are when we are most sensitive to a particular type of environmental event, for example, when we are developing our understanding of language and, how well our basic needs are met in infancy, which can leave a permanent mark on our personality.

Very loosely, therefore, a **personality test** is any device or instrument for assessing or evaluating personality.

Although personality questionnaires are usually referred to as tests, this can be misleading since they do not have pass or fail scores. They are designed to measure attitudes, habits and values, and are not usually timed. Sometimes these questionnaires are incorporated into the employer's application form and sometimes they are used during the second-stage procedure.

The personality tests in this book are designed to measure a range of aspects of your character and make-up in a fun, lighthearted and entertaining way. Although preparation or practice does not affect the outcome of this type of questionnaire, it is, nevertheless, helpful to familiarise yourself with typical questions and typical test structure, and it is always a useful, and often revealing, exercise to use these tests to analyse yourself from time to time, and also have fun analysing your friends and family.

There is no requirement to read through these tests first before attempting them, just the need to answer them intuitively, and without too much consideration. There is no right or wrong response.

Whenever you are faced with a personality questionnaire, it is necessary to answer the questions correctly. Any attempt to guess what you think is the correct answer, in other words the answer that you think your prospective employer wants to hear, is likely to be spotted when your answers are being analysed since tests often guard against such manipulation by posing the same question more than once, but in a different way. At all times, simply follow the instructions and be honest with your answers.

**Aptitude tests**, or as they are perhaps better known, cognitive, ability or intelligence tests, do not examine your general knowledge, but are designed to give an objective assessment of the candidate's abilities in a number of disciplines, for example in verbal understanding, numerical, logic, and spatial, or diagrammatic, reasoning skills. Unlike personality tests, aptitude tests are marked and may have a cut-off point above which you pass, and below which you fail or need to be assessed again. Intelligence tests, or intelligence quotient (IQ) tests are standardised after being given to many thousands of people and an

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average IQ (100) established. A score above or below this norm is used, according to a bell curve, to establish the subject's actual IQ rating.

While it is accepted that IQ is hereditary and remains constant throughout life, and, therefore, it is not possible to increase your actual IQ, it is possible to improve your performance on IQ tests by practising the many different types of question, and learning to recognise the recurring themes. The aptitude tests in the second part of this book are typical of the type and style of question you are likely to encounter in actual tests and will provide valuable practice for anyone who may have to take this type of test in the future.

Employers use aptitude tests to find out whether the candidate has the ability to fit the required vacancy and they can also be used to identify suitable jobs for people within an organisation. These tests can be helpful to both the employer and the candidate in identifying strengths and weaknesses, and thus help to find the job for which the person is most suited.

Psychometric testing is likely to become even more popular and widely used by employers in the future. In the United States, The Graduate Record Examination for graduate entry into universities is being replaced over the next few years by a Computer Adaptive Test, which is an interactive form of testing where the questions are set in relation to the ease with which questions have been answered.

The latest trend in psychometric testing is ever more towards online testing. This will enable, or even require, candidates to complete and submit their test in advance of being short listed, thus enabling the employer to have the results in advance of the interview. Candidates will have ample opportunity to practise on similar tests in the coming months and years as sample tests proliferate on the Internet.

# **Section 1**

## **Personality tests**



# Part one

## Introduction

Part One consists of 20 tests designed to assess different aspects of your personality, including your creative and perceptual skills.

There are three different types of questionnaires in the first 18 of these tests, as shown below. In each of these you are presented with a statement or question relating to some aspect of your personality and are asked to respond to it in one of several ways according to the instructions given at the start of each test:

- 1 Respond on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the most applicable to yourself, down to 1 being most untrue.
- 2 Answer a question or statement by choosing which one of the three alternative responses given is most applicable to yourself.
- 3 Rank four statements in a group according to which is most true to your character down to which is most unlike your character.

The procedure for completing each of these is to answer the questions as truthfully and realistically as possible, in other words, be true to yourself at all times in order to obtain the most accurate assessment.

There are no right or wrong answers and there is no time limit for completing the tests.

# How well do you cope under pressure?

- 1 How important to you is the need to succeed?
  - a) quite important
  - b) very important
  - c) it is not something I think about a great deal
- 2 How often have you taken time off work due to stress?
  - a) twice or less
  - b) more than twice
  - c) never
- 3 Do you believe you are a person who is thought of by others as someone who is able to keep a cool head in a crisis?
  - a) sometimes, but often someone who keeps a cool head in a crisis has not got a grasp of the situation
  - b) not really
  - c) yes, that is how I believe others rightly perceive me
- 4 Which of the following would you say would be most beneficial to reducing stress and enabling you to relax after a particularly busy day at the office?
  - a) a couple of hours sleep in my favourite armchair
  - b) a nice stiff whisky or other spirit
  - c) eat a bar of chocolate



- 5 Does working to deadlines give you a buzz?
- a) no, but working to deadlines is a necessary evil most of us have to cope with
  - b) no, I find working to deadlines quite a worry and much prefer being able to set my own pace
  - c) yes, I believe I work well under pressure
- 6 Do you believe that modern living creates much more pressure than, say, 40 years ago?
- a) perhaps
  - b) yes
  - c) no
- 7 You are suddenly asked to look after your nephew's three unruly children for the weekend due to a family crisis. How would you feel about doing this?
- a) it would worry me
  - b) I would find the thought of it so horrendous that I would probably try to get out of doing it
  - c) I would relish the challenge
- 8 Have you ever damaged anything due to *feeling the pressure*?
- a) not actually damaged anything although I have done such things as slamming down the phone on occasions
  - b) yes
  - c) no
- 9 Do you find that little, almost insignificant, things occasionally upset you?
- a) yes, occasionally
  - b) more than occasionally
  - c) rarely or never

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- 10 What do you feel about having to get to grips with new technology?
- a) quite indifferent about it. If I have to get to grips with it because of my job, for example, then it is usually something I am able to cope with
  - b) it worries me somewhat
  - c) it is something I enjoy and find of interest
- 11 What do you think, for you, is the main purpose of weekends?
- a) a time when I can spend more time with my friends and family
  - b) a time when I don't have to work quite as hard as I do the rest of the week, however, I am not in a position where I can completely switch off
  - c) a time for giving myself a mental and emotional break
- 12 When your house is being decorated, or when you are having other alterations carried out, how do you feel?
- a) it does not bother me in particular as these things have to be done
  - b) somewhat on edge until it is completed, especially as it disturbs my routine
  - c) quite happy about it and sometimes quite excited depending upon what is being done
- 13 Do you have friends who you trust completely and can talk to in turbulent times?
- a) maybe
  - b) not really
  - c) yes
- 14 Do you feel that more than ever we are living today in a competitive world?

- a) I would say that the modern world is perhaps a little more competitive than a generation or so ago
  - b) yes, very much so
  - c) no more competitive than it ever was
- 15 Do you ever discuss your feelings with other people?
- a) occasionally
  - b) rarely or never
  - c) more than occasionally
- 16 Do you believe in pushing yourself harder and harder?
- a) sometimes
  - b) yes, that is the best way to make a success out of life
  - c) no, life's too short
- 17 How do you feel about having several tasks on the go at the same time?
- a) it does not bother me
  - b) I prefer one job at a time
  - c) I prefer having several tasks on the go at the same time
- 18 How often do you get angry and upset with yourself if you make a mistake or things do not go the way you expected?
- a) occasionally, as I suppose do most people
  - b) probably more than the average person
  - c) probably less than the average person
- 19 Have you ever taken any sort of medication, including pills, in order to relieve stress?
- a) occasionally
  - b) more than occasionally
  - c) never

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- 20 Has your own health ever suffered due to the death or illness of a loved one?
- a) no, but maybe it would do in the future, I just do not know
  - b) yes
  - c) no, I have coped with, and have suffered, grief and upset, as have all of us, but my own health has never suffered as a result
- 21 Have you ever suffered from stress due to the pressure of taking examinations?
- a) perhaps I find taking examinations a little stressful but no more than the average person
  - b) yes
  - c) no
- 22 What are your views on alternative therapy such as acupuncture in order to relieve stress?
- a) not sure, perhaps it is something I might consider if the need arose
  - b) it is not something I would consider
  - c) it can be very beneficial
- 23 Do you ever get stressed out by the thought of doing small household chores such as washing up or cutting the lawn?
- a) not stressed although such tasks can sometimes be something of an annoyance
  - b) yes
  - c) never
- 24 How easy is it for you to switch off completely, put everything completely out of your mind, and totally relax?
- a) sometimes it is more difficult to switch off than at other times

- b) it is almost, if not, impossible
  - c) I am in the fortunate position of finding it reasonably easy to switch off completely
- 25 How often have you felt the pressure of one thing and another is simply *doing your head in*?
- a) occasionally
  - b) more often than I would like
  - c) rarely or never
- 26 You are sitting in a traffic jam. Which of the following is likely to be your strongest feeling?
- a) anger
  - b) frustration
  - c) boredom
- 27 Do you feel more, or less, pressure the older you get?
- a) about the same
  - b) more
  - c) less
- 28 What would be your feelings on removing to another house?
- a) well, I quite like the house we live in now but perhaps a move at this time could have its advantages
  - b) an overwhelming task to be avoided if at all possible
  - c) a lot of hard work, but generally something to plan for, and look forward to
- 29 How often has your sex life ever suffered due to stress or pressure of work?
- a) on no more than a couple of occasions

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- b) more than a couple of occasions
  - c) never
- 30 Have you ever suffered from stress due to having to give up something such as caffeine or nicotine?
- a) not apart from a few withdrawal symptoms
  - b) yes
  - c) no

### Analysis

All of us experience different degrees of pressure and stress at some time in our lives but we deal with it in different ways.

Some causes of stress are perhaps easier to deal with than others. The taking of school examinations, for example, is a common cause of stress. However, because we know for a number of years in advance that these exams will take place we have time to prepare ourselves both mentally and by taking mock examinations and revising.

The real examinations of life are, however, not so predictable. The following is a list of some common events and experiences which can cause stress. It is when these events occur unexpectedly and simultaneously (the double or triple whammy) that we are at our most vulnerable to stress.

Death of a partner

Divorce/separation/break up of a relationship

Death of a close relative or friend

Personal illness

Illness of a loved one

Moving house

Redundancy

Large mortgage/debts

Children leaving home

Changes at work – new job, boss, responsibilities

Common responses to stress include loss of sleep, irritability, short temper, worry and stress-related ailments.

Dealing with responses to stress can be difficult since what one person finds stressful or pressurising, another may not, and we all react to different stressful situations in different ways.

Nevertheless, a good starting point is increasing your awareness of the main causes of pressure and stress since this at the very least could help you in trying to see what you can do about it.

There are several suggested steps that you can take to combat stress or the effects of pressure.

Sometimes, the best cure is prevention and an analysis of the type of situations that you have found pressurising in the past should enable you to look out for similar situations that may occur in the future, and to recognise any warning signs that you are about to enter into a similarly stressful period.

It is, of course, desirable to maintain some sort of exercise to keep yourself in good shape, especially in times of stress.

It is also desirable to try to get a good night's sleep, and, if possible, especially when you cannot sleep because of the number of negative thoughts racing through your head, confront the cause of the pressure by writing down the thoughts that are occurring to you and then attempting to analyse and evaluate them.

It is also necessary to talk to people about the pressures that you are experiencing. In other words, do not bottle things up inside you. Confide in a friend, partner or relative, even, if necessary, a professional counsellor. It may be that after talking things through in this way, your fears may be put into perspective and the pressures no longer feel so great.

When the pressure is work related it is necessary to discipline yourself to switch off from the situation that is causing the pressure. This may be achieved by reserving weekends for yourself and your

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family in order to give yourself an emotional and mental break. If this is not possible, then try to organise a longer break. If this does not seem possible due to the pressures and workload which have built up, then remember that no one is indispensable and that the most important thing is your health and mental well-being.

### Assessment

Award yourself 2 points for every 'c' answer, 1 point for every 'a', and 0 points for every 'b'.

#### *45–60 points*

Your score indicates that you cope with pressure extremely well. You are likely to be thought of by others as someone who is extremely laid back and almost totally relaxed, and you are able to keep things in proportion almost at all times.

The only word of caution about being in the fortunate position of having this temperament and attitude is that you should still be prepared for potentially pressurising situations which inevitably will occur. You should, in other words, have the ability to plan for pressures and build in a leeway for the unexpected.

It is also worth remembering that a certain amount of tension is positive since people do respond to, and are encouraged by, challenges.

#### *31–44 points*

While you do find yourself pressurised and stressed out on occasions, this tends to be the exception rather than the rule, and, more importantly, such situations are never long-lasting.

As a result, you are able to switch off somewhat where necessary and not push yourself too far.



You appear to be in the fortunate position of being able to look after yourself when you are facing pressure and you have the ability to say *no* if someone is making unreasonable demands.

### ***Less than 30***

Your score indicates that you are affected by pressure in a negative way.

Since society's code of conduct prevents many of the natural ways to release pent-up emotions such as by violent means or by running away from the situation, pressure can, therefore, build up inside you and this is when you are at your most vulnerable to stress.

It is at these times that you may have a tendency to build things up in your own mind out of all proportion. However, it is worth remembering that most of the things that we worry about never happen, that most of the pressures which build up are short-term events and that if we deal with these pressures in a measured and structured way, then we should not be affected by them quite so badly. After all, these types of pressures are not restricted to just ourselves, they are the same pressures that are felt, at some time, by all people throughout the world.

You should also be conscious of the fact that pressure does lead to stress and many illnesses are stress related.

It is, therefore, essential that in pressurised situations you try to take one step back and reflect on your current situation, and your life in general and the positive things – there will be many – that exist and are occurring.

In general, try to develop a more positive attitude when dealing with what are termed modern-day pressures, but are, in fact, the same pressures which have always existed in some form for past generations. In fact, modern research should enable us to cope with these pressures better than we ever did in the past. At least now we recognise the danger of such situations.

Such a positive approach may include analysing and recognising the cause or causes of the pressure, your reactions to this pressure and

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your ways of coping with the pressure. It may also include changing your way of thinking about the pressure, improving the way you do things, for example, in a work situation, and knowing the best source of help and the right people to talk to when necessary.

It is also essential that you look after yourself when facing pressure, not just for your own well-being but for the benefit of those closest to you. This can be achieved in several ways, for example:

- As well as doing the things that are absolutely necessary, do the fun things that you and those close to you most enjoy
- Try not to be too self-critical, since we all make mistakes
- Give yourself a break
- Try to relax and sleep more
- Keep yourself fit
- Eat and drink sensibly
- Cultivate other interests

# Are you a people person?

In each of the following, choose from a scale of 1–5 which of these statements you most agree with or is most applicable to yourself. Choose just one of the numbers 1–5 in each of the 36 statements. Choose 5 for most agree/most applicable, down to 1 for least agree/least applicable:

- 1 To get the best out of people you need to drive rather than support them

5      4      3      2      1

- 2 I am not a very good listener

5      4      3      2      1

- 3 I would prefer to go for a long walk on my own rather than in an organised group

5      4      3      2      1

- 4 I do not have a great deal of patience when listening to other people's problems

5      4      3      2      1

- 5 Winning is better than enjoying

5      4      3      2      1

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6 I do not suffer fools gladly

5      4      3      2      1

7 I am much more comfortable talking to people on a one-to-one basis rather than in a group discussion

5      4      3      2      1

8 I would describe myself as more determined than cheerful

5      4      3      2      1

9 I am a great believer that people should stand on their own two feet

5      4      3      2      1

10 I do not believe in giving money to beggars on the street

5      4      3      2      1

11 There are things more important to me than success in my personal relationships

5      4      3      2      1

12 I prefer to work alone rather than as part of a team

5      4      3      2      1

13 I am more dominant than sociable

5      4      3      2      1

14 I like to think of myself as something of a perfectionist

5      4      3      2      1

- 15 I would describe myself as someone who keeps themselves to themselves rather than someone who goes out of their way to get to know people

5      4      3      2      1

- 16 I prefer to plan my own holiday than go on a pre-arranged group holiday with a set itinerary

5      4      3      2      1

- 17 I dislike social gatherings

5      4      3      2      1

- 18 I prefer individual sports rather than team sports

5      4      3      2      1

- 19 I need to be in control rather than going with the flow

5      4      3      2      1

- 20 I prefer to celebrate my birthday quietly and would not be very happy if someone threw a surprise party for me

5      4      3      2      1

- 21 I do not believe I would make a very good personnel officer

5      4      3      2      1

- 22 I rarely or never take part in charity fund-raising events

5      4      3      2      1

- 23 It does not worry me unduly that when I speak my mind it may upset people

5      4      3      2      1