

PERSONALITY TESTS

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Social categorization is an excellent tool for people to predict attitudes and beliefs of others. For that reason, personality tests like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator are convenient ways to label traits. Websites like 16Personalities.com offer tests and detailed reports that some may find surprisingly accurate.

"They say ENFPs are the most introverted of the extroverts," said junior Anjali Kalyanakrishnan. "I feel like that a lot. I can't spend too much time with other people, but I need social interaction too ... Personality quizzes give you a lot of introspection. 'What actually is this question? What do I actually think of that?'"

The MBTI test can help with recognizing personal advantages and flaws, helping people gain additional insight on what improvements they can make.

"I use personality tests as a way to get to know myself better and also see how I progress as a person throughout the years," said freshman Cora Johnson. "I [am] an ENTP, which [has] a lot of [traits] like [being] very strong-minded. [My personality type is] definitely a reminder to mellow a little bit and let other people share their ideas, instead of just arguing for my opinions."

Some students have used the test to discover new traits of their friends.

"I had all of my friends take the [MBTI] test, and that's when I realized how accurate it was," said senior Ethan Guo. "Their personality types

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a self-report assessment

based on Carl Jung's theory of cognitive function, testing four categories: extraversion/introversion, Sensing/Intuition, Feeling/Thinking and Perceiving/Judging. Each combination presents a different personality type for a total of 16 different types, which are grouped into analysts, explorers, diplomats and sentinels.

- **Analyst** (ENTP, ENTJ, INTP, INTJ): Rational, logical, curious
- **Explorer** (ESTP, ESFP, ISTP, ISFP): Spontaneous, carefree, observant
- **Diplomat** (ENFP, INFP, ENFJ, INFJ): Empathetic, generous, compassionate
- **Sentinel** (ESTJ, ESFJ, ISTJ, ISFJ): Practical, self-motivated

explain so much about them, like certain traits or habits that I noticed they had before. It allows me to make a lot of other conjectures about them that are accurate 90% of the time."

Personality tests have sparked criticism over the years. Some claim distinctions between types are trivial or overly flattering. Others say some people become fixated on their results. As revealed by Tyler Shapland's 2023 dissertation "Misinformation Alters Personality Assessment Scores," prior test results have some amount of effect on future tests when false feedback is more positive than negative.

"A lot of people can take [their results] the wrong way ... [and] try to put people in a box," said sophomore Gabriella Pate. "You'll [think], 'You're an introvert. You must be only like this.' [Or,] 'You're an extrovert. You must like these things and do these things.' It makes you question, 'Am I really [this personality type], if I'm doing this stuff?'"

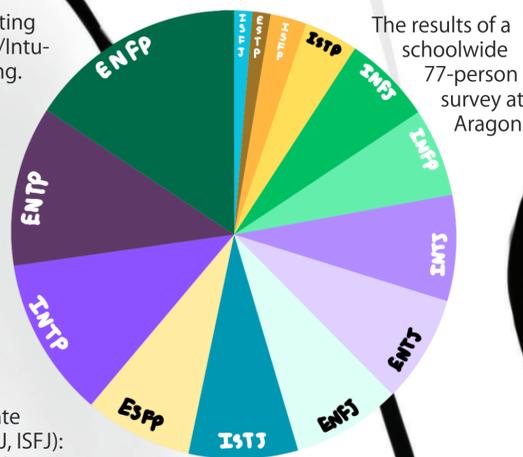
There are some key issues with the design of personality tests. Typically, creators write questions about select traits with answer options on a scale of one to five, from "completely disagree" to "completely agree." The underlying algorithm then adds and standardizes the points using statistical methods.

"Take one element of them, like openness to new experiences," said Advanced Placement Psychology teacher Giancarlo Corti. "[A quiz] might ask, 'When you go on vacation, do you like going to places that are totally new and different, or do you like going to the same place over and over again?' What if I like both of them? What the test will say is, 'Oh, you don't have a strong preference.' How is that a personality trait then?"

Personality tests claim to reveal essential, in-born traits, but personality is too complex to capture in a few measures. Environmental factors, cultural context and lived experience shape how people respond to questions just as much as biological predisposition.

"My results are only a fraction of who I am," said junior Francez Santos. "I find it funny how they quantify our personality with percentages. 'You're 64% extroverted and 36% introverted.'"

... How can you use math to determine what kind of person someone is?"



Therefore, while personality tests can offer insight or a sense of belonging, they ultimately may only provide a simple snapshot rather than a fixed identity.

Additionally, the tests are not scientifically proven. For example, although MBTI is based on the ideas of psychologist Carl Jung, there is no evidence to back up the 16 personalities the test promotes. Another pseudoscientific test is the Big Five personality quiz, considered to be the most accurate by psychologists. When Scientific American had 559 people take both a Big Five and MBTI test, they found the Big Five test to be only 25% accurate, while the MBTI test was 16% accurate.

Personality tests are often used in workplaces as icebreakers or to predict employee compatibility, though their effectiveness is debated.

"It can be a good surface level way of understanding someone," Santos said. "You can use it as a way to introduce yourself and understand people and socialize, but I don't think it should be a way to make friends with someone based on if you're compatible or not."

At Aragon, students take at least three personality tests, on Naviance and California Colleges, both of which are related to career planning.

Although there is no survey to determine how students have been affected by the tests, counselor Josephine Ho has seen some instances of the career tests inspiring students.

"I had a former senior who was at a loss [with] whether or not they wanted to go to a four-year college or not, and they had no idea what they wanted to do," Ho said. "All they knew [was] they really liked to walk their dog and skateboard ... They did [a career] test during his senior year and one of the options for him [was] to be a park ranger. That piqued his interest, [as] he never thought of being a park ranger as being a career."

However, there are examples that demonstrate the opposite.

"Career doesn't depend on your personality; it depends on what you actually want," Kalyanakrishnan said. "[I got] farmer [last year, which is inaccurate, though] you get independence, which ENFPs enjoy, from running my own farm."

The Jungian Archetypes test,

similar to character archetypes like the hero, mentor and villain taught in English classes, takes into account human behaviors and characteristics. Based on universal thought patterns, the user is sorted into one of nine archetypes; examples include the Jester, Lover and Orphan. Underlying these archetypes are the four cardinal orientations — ego, order, social, freedom — which respectively represent the desire to accomplish goals, to maintain structure in society, to make genuine connections with others and to break free from limitations.

The Big Five model illustrates human personality based on five components: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

- **Openness** corresponds to one's ability and willingness to explore new possibilities.
- **Conscientiousness** describes a person's level of self-discipline and organization.
- **Extraversion** is the standard "introversion versus extraversion" test.
- **Agreeableness** is the ability to empathize and compromise with others.
- **Neuroticism** is a person's likelihood for dramatics and mood swings.

Buzzfeed is a website with various user-created quizzes that match characters or items to a user's personality using pop culture references. Some examples include "Find Your Disney Husband," "What is Your Mental Age?" and "Which Wicked Witch are You?" Many of these tests have very little scientific backing and are thus used recreationally.

Just like the Sorting Hat from Harry Potter, there are

various websites that sort people into one of four Houses at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw or Slytherin.

- **Gryffindor**: Daring, determined, upstanding, rebellious, impulsive, class clown
- **Slytherin**: Ambitious, shrewd, deliberate, sardonic, image-conscious, prideful, closed off
- **Ravenclaw**: Wise, witty, adaptable, eccentric, inventive & innovative, analytical, overachieving, carefree, individualist
- **Hufflepuff**: trustworthy, clever, humble, principled, hard-working, loyal

The Enneagram personality

test categorizes people into one of the following dominant personalities: reformer, helper, achiever, individualist, investigator, loyalist, enthusiast, challenger and peacemaker. The results reflect the user's lifelong fundamental motivations, encompassing the totality of one's genetics and childhood that affect their development involving personality and habits.

Enneagram wings represent the interconnectedness of the different personalities, allowing for a more holistic view of one's personality. Wings can be determined by the personality directly on the left and right sides of the most dominant personality.