

FAQ about the MBTI Type Indicator.

What is the MBTI® instrument?

The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®) instrument is a questionnaire designed to make Jung's ideas about psychological type useful in everyday life. It identifies a person's four basic type preferences that combine into one of 16 different personality types. These results help you understand normal differences in the way people think, communicate, and interact—differences that can be the source of much misunderstanding. The MBTI instrument has been used for more than 50 years to establish greater understanding between individuals, and has been translated into more than 15 different languages for use around the world.

What do the letters associated with the MBTI instrument mean?

The MBTI instrument has four sets of letters:

- **E and I** stand for Extraversion and Introversion—indicating whether you get energy from being around people or from time spent alone.
- **S and N** stand for Sensing and Intuition—indicating whether you become aware of specific facts and concrete details or prefer to focus on hunches and the big picture.
- **T and F** stand for Thinking and Feeling—indicating whether you tend to make decisions based on logical analysis and the principles involved or prefer to decide by considering your values and promoting harmony for the people involved.
- **J and P** stand for Judging and Perceiving—indicating whether you prefer your life to be planned and like it when things are decided or prefer to go with the flow and like keeping your options open.

What is psychological type?

The idea of psychological type was developed by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875–1961), who described different patterns of normal behavior. Your psychological type is the pattern of behavior you tend to show. On the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* tool, your psychological type is indicated by your preferences for Extraversion or Introversion, Sensing or Intuition, Thinking or Feeling, and Judging or Perceiving. Jung concluded that these differences in behavior are perfectly normal and result from people's inherent tendencies to use their minds in different ways.

What makes the MBTI instrument different from all the other personality tests I've heard about?

The *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* instrument has been used for more than 50 years and is continually updated through ongoing research to improve its ability to meaningfully identify personality differences. The most recent update included the use of a representative national sample. No other personality test is backed by as much research and as many years of use as is the MBTI instrument, which has been taken by millions of people worldwide.

Is the MBTI tool valid and reliable?

Yes. Research conducted on the MBTI tool has shown that the results it provides are reliable and valid. The MBTI tool's reliability statistics are excellent, and its validity has been firmly established in hundreds of separate studies. Reliability refers to whether the results are consistent: Do people tend to reply to the items in the same way when they take the test later, and do they tend to get the same type? Can you count on the results? Validity refers to the instrument's ability to measure psychological type and apply Jung's theory.

If I already know my personality type, is there any need to take the assessment again?

First, check that your personality type was derived from taking the genuine MBTI tool. Other type instruments are not as reliable and valid.

Second, consider how long ago you took the MBTI assessment and whether your life circumstances have changed dramatically since then. Generally, because the MBTI tool measures inherent preferences, there is no need to take it multiple times. However, if your life has changed significantly, you might find it helpful to take it again. In addition, the newer forms of the MBTI assessment are based on the latest research, so if it has been several years since you took the assessment, you might consider retaking it.

Third, if you have not already done so, consider contacting a professional who can help you take Step II of the MBTI tool, an advanced form that provides more depth to the four-letter type by looking at different facets of each of the four preferences.

Why should I pay to take this test when there are so many free ones on the Internet?

You get what you pay for. The free tests generally do not give reliable and valid results, they are not based on years of research, and they have few or no studies to back up their accuracy. If you are looking for guidance in major life decisions, you will benefit most from the useful and accurate information derived from the MBTI tool.

How will knowing my personality type help me?

Knowing your type will help you understand yourself and your behaviors. Knowing your type may also help you appreciate others' styles and thus enable you to use differences more constructively. You will gain a greater understanding of your strengths and thus be able to look for opportunities to use those strengths for more effective functioning in work and life.

Many individuals have used their understanding of their MBTI type to help them find satisfying jobs, choose academic majors, improve their effectiveness and satisfaction at work, and enhance their interactions and relationships with others.

Is personality type related to emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence generally refers to one's ability to manage impulses, empathize with others, and show resilience in the face of stress or obstacles. Often emotional intelligence is broken down into two categories: intrapersonal (your ability to control yourself internally in a positive way) and interpersonal (your skills in getting along with others). Personality type, as identified by the MBTI assessment, is also concerned with internal and external processes, and thus can be a very useful tool for enhancing and developing emotional intelligence.

How can personality type help me get along better with other people?

The creators of the MBTI assessment came up with the tool to help people appreciate differences and understand themselves and others better. When you take the MBTI assessment and review your results, you learn that there are different ways of interacting with others, accessing information, making decisions, and organizing one's life. That information can help you better understand your friends, co-workers, and family and improve your interpersonal interactions.

What will the MBTI[®] tool tell me that I don't already know?

The MBTI assessment is a self-report tool—it gives you answers based on what you report about yourself—so in one sense, it won't tell you anything you don't already know. But knowing something and being able to use it effectively in your life are two vastly different things. Most people find that taking the MBTI assessment is enjoyable, and when they get their results, they feel affirmed in that they have received an accurate description of their personality. Many go on to get more information, set new goals, and improve their decision making and relationships based on what they learned from taking the MBTI tool and from the extra efforts they put in after taking the assessment.

Will my type tell me what I am good at doing?

The MBTI tool does not measure competencies in the way a math test can measure your math skills, for example. None of the MBTI questions is designed to determine how good you are at a particular task.