

## Psychometric Methods: Theory into Practice (Methodology in the Social Sciences)

Why do employers use psychometric tests?

Employers commonly receive an extremely high number of applications for any one role. Quick and easy to administer at scale, psychometric tests are an excellent way to reduce the size of the applicant pool.

The tests enable employers to confidently siphon the top 5-10% of candidates, who have displayed that they possess key transferable skills. This streamlining speeds up the recruitment process, providing a logical candidate shortlist of manageable length and reducing HR costs.

The online tests are considered to be reliable indicators of candidate potential and suitability, as a strong correlation between a high score and subsequent high-quality performance in role has been identified.

Verbal and numerical reasoning tests tend to be most popular with employers, as they test key transferable comprehension and arithmetic skills. The testing of accuracy under pressure gives an indication as to how the candidate will cope in a demanding everyday role.

Although prospective employees may be inclined to loathe the impersonal nature of standardised testing, it does bring objectivity back into the recruitment process.

Whilst psychometric testing may be an initially daunting prospect, remember that - unlike some recruitment stages - it can be comprehensively prepared for to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

Practising the psychometric tests you are likely to encounter will ensure that, come assessment day, you achieve the high scores that reflect both your ability and potential.

The main types of psychometric tests

Here at Practice Aptitude Tests, we have broken down the structure and content of the different types of psychometric tests commonly encountered in the recruitment process. Explore the detail of each by reviewing the list below, so you know exactly what to expect from each type of ability test.

Numerical reasoning tests demonstrate your ability to deal with numbers quickly and accurately. The questions are not testing high-level ability, but your capacity to use simple mathematical concepts to analyse data and draw conclusions. They assess your knowledge of ratios, percentages, number sequences, data interpretation, financial analysis and currency conversion.

Mechanical reasoning tests challenge your understanding and application of mechanical concepts. You will be required to deduce the elements at work in a particular scenario and answer a directly related question. Usually specific to the sector, they require an element of background knowledge and experience.

## P

Common topics include forces, energy, electrics and gears.

Made up of non-verbal content, logical reasoning tests assess your ability to interpret shapes, numbers and patterns. Candidates must identify the next figure in the sequence from a selection of possibilities. These tests commonly encompass elements from both diagrammatic and numerical reasoning assessments.

Verbal reasoning tests assess your comprehension and interpretation of written passages. A short excerpt of text is provided for review and candidates are then asked questions relating to its content. Typically, you will be presented with a series of statements which make certain inferences and tasked to deduce whether each statement is "True", "False", or if you "Cannot Say".

Testing pure logical reasoning, diagrammatic tests involve the analysis of sequences of shapes and patterns. You will be required to identify the rule that governs the sequence in order to choose the next correct element from a provided selection, or to correctly apply the rule to a new scenario.

Abstract reasoning tests measure your ability to deduce the relationships between shapes and within patterns. They do not require any numerical or verbal analysis, but test your logic and lateral thinking, alongside your accuracy and speed.

A spatial reasoning or awareness test is used to assess your ability to identify patterns, visualise movements and mentally manipulate 2D or 3D objects. Common questions include identifying which image is a rotation of a given shape and which net corresponds to a certain 3D image.

Situational judgement tests are used to assess how you would approach different practical situations that may arise in the workplace. Your response to a series of hypothetical scenarios helps employers to judge whether your behaviour and attitude aligns with company expectation and ethos.

What to expect when taking a psychometric test

Any type of psychometric test will require you to answer multiple-choice questions within a given time limit (though sometimes personality tests have no time limit). Both test length and time provision will vary depending upon test

type and provider.

As psychometric tests are an assessment of mental agility, you will need to be prepared to answer the questions rapidly without compromising accuracy.

If the number of questions seems overly ambitious in the given time, it may be that the test is intended to be ambitious. Focus on correctly answering the questions rapidly, but do not rush in order to finish the test.

It is common for multiple psychometric tests to be administered in the same session. For example, you may be required to sit a verbal reasoning test, followed by a numerical reasoning and a situational judgement assessment. Knowing as much as possible about the test structure beforehand will help you pin down the specifics of what to expect.

Once you find out that psychometric testing forms part of the job application process, enquire with your prospective employer as to the number and type of tests, along with the provider used. While they may not be able to reveal the provider to you, it is worth an ask given the variation between tests of the same type.

Whilst a select few employers may still administer paper versions, expect to sit your psychometric test(s) online. This will either be remotely (in your own home) or as part of an assessment centre (most common for graduate scheme applications). For tests that are sat at home, you will be provided with a time window (usually around 48 hours) in which to take the test.

Adaptive questioning algorithms are used by some test publishers. This means that question difficulty is dependent upon the number of correct answers logged. Do not be too surprised, therefore, if your questions increase in difficulty as you progress through the test.

How to prepare for your psychometric test

A high score on your psychometric test means a greater chance of securing a coveted chance to impress at interview, so adequate preparation is key. For all psychometric tests, the best form of preparation is a copious amount of practice.

Once you have found out all you can about the type of test being set and the way it is being administered, settle into

targeted question practice. This will reveal your strengths and weaknesses, allowing you to focus more time on improving your weakest areas.

Working through sample questions and answers will help you to understand the logic of the test and the method of thinking required to rapidly identify the correct answers.

Online practice will help you to become accustomed to the timing of the test. This will enable you to become better at achieving the right pace, ensuring full completion of the test with both speed and accuracy.

An initial number of our online psychometric tests of all types can be accessed for free, so you can start practicing with only a time investment. Our test catalogue can be browsed according to aptitude test type, publisher, employer or industry.

If you'd prefer to practice offline, you can download our Psychometric Tests: Questions & Answers booklet.

If you wish to take your practice to the next level and gain access to over 150 different psychometric tests, publisher and employer packages and full solution explanations, we offer a great value All Tests Package with 12-month access.

If you put in the hours, avoid the all too common mistakes made by candidates and take stock of our top tips, you will feel calm, confident and fully prepared on the test day.

## Reference

[Research Methods, Design, and Analysis](#)

[Principles-Focused Evaluation: The GUIDE](#)