

## HOLLAND'S OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY TYPES

John Holland, Ph.D., professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins University, is a psychologist who devoted his professional life to researching issues related to career choice and satisfaction. He developed a well-known theory, and designed several assessments and supporting materials to assist people in making effective career choices. His theory and assessment tools have helped millions of people worldwide and are supported by hundreds of research studies.

### *Holland's Theory*

Holland found that people needing help with career decisions can be supported by understanding their resemblance to the following six ideal vocational personality types:

- Realistic (R)
- Investigative (I)
- Artistic (A)
- Social (S)
- Enterprising (E)
- Conventional (C)

Work settings can also be categorized by their resemblance to six similar model work environments. Because people search for environments that allow them to express their interests, skills, attitudes and values, and take on interesting problems and agreeable roles, work environments become populated by individuals with related occupational personality types.

### *Holland's Six Personality Types*

The descriptions of Holland's personality types refer to idealized or pure types. Holland's personality types are visually represented by a hexagonal model. The types closest to each other on the hexagon have the most characteristics in common. Those types that are furthest apart, i.e., opposites on the hexagon, have the least in common.

Listed below are the six Holland Occupational Personality Types. The descriptions of "pure types" will rarely be an exact fit for any one person. Your personality will more likely combine several types to varying degrees. To get a better picture of how your interests and skills relate to the types and to identify your dominant type, you can highlight the phrases in each description that are true for you.

#### **Realistic (R)**

Realistic individuals are active and stable and enjoy hands-on or manual activities, such as building, mechanics, machinery operation and athletics. They prefer to work with things rather than ideas and people. They enjoy engaging in physical activity and often like being outdoors and working with plants and animals. People who fall into this category generally prefer to "learn by doing" in a practical, task-oriented setting, as opposed to spending extended periods of time in a classroom. Realistic types tend to communicate in a frank, direct manner and value material things. They perceive themselves as skilled in mechanical and physical activities but may be uncomfortable or less adept with human relations. The preferred work environment of the realistic type fosters technical competencies and work that allows them to produce tangible results. Typical realistic careers include electrician, engineer, veterinarian and the military.

## **Investigative (I)**

Investigative individuals are analytical, intellectual and observant and enjoy research, mathematical or scientific activities. They are drawn to ambiguous challenges and may be stifled in highly structured environments. People who fall into this category enjoy using logic and solving highly complex, abstract problems. Because they are introspective and focused on creative problem solving, investigative types often work autonomously and do not seek leadership roles. They place a high value on science and learning and perceive themselves as scholarly and having scientific or mathematical ability but lacking leadership and persuasive skills. The preferred work environment of the investigative type encourages scientific competencies, allows independent work and focuses on solving abstract, complex problems in original ways. Typical investigative careers include medical technologist, biologist, chemist and systems analyst.

## **Artistic (A)**

Artistic individuals are original, intuitive and imaginative and enjoy creative activities, such as composing or playing music, writing, drawing or painting and acting in or directing stage productions. They seek opportunities for self-expression through artistic creation. People who fall into this category prefer flexibility and ambiguity and have an aversion to convention and conformity. Artistic types are generally impulsive and emotional and tend to communicate in a very expressive and open manner. They value aesthetics and view themselves as creative, non-conforming and as appreciating or possessing musical, dramatic, artistic or writing abilities while lacking clerical or organizational skills. The preferred work environment of the artistic type fosters creative competencies, and encourages originality and use of the imagination in a flexible, unstructured setting. Typical artistic careers include musician, reporter and interior decorator.

## **Social (S)**

Social individuals are humanistic, idealistic, responsible and concerned with the welfare of others. They enjoy participating in group activities and helping, training, healing, counseling or developing others. They are generally focused on human relationships and enjoy social activities and solving interpersonal problems. Social types seek opportunities to work as part of a team, solve problems through discussions and utilize interpersonal skills but may avoid activities that involve systematic use of equipment or machines. Because they genuinely enjoy working with people, they communicate in a warm and tactful manner and can be persuasive. They view themselves as understanding, helpful, cheerful and skilled in teaching but lacking in mechanical ability. The preferred work environment of the social type encourages teamwork and allows for significant interaction with others. Typical social careers include teacher, counselor and social worker.

## **Enterprising (E)**

Enterprising individuals are energetic, ambitious, adventurous, sociable and self-confident. They enjoy activities that require them to persuade others, such as sales, and seek out leadership roles. They are invigorated by using their interpersonal, leadership and persuasive abilities to obtain organizational goals or economic gain but may avoid routine or systematic activities. They are often effective public speakers and are generally sociable but may be viewed as domineering. They view themselves as assertive, self-confident and skilled in leadership and speaking but lacking in scientific abilities. The preferred work environment of the enterprising type encourages them to engage in activities, such as leadership, management and selling, and rewards them through the attainment of money, power and status. Typical enterprising careers include salesperson, business executive and manager.

## **Conventional (C)**

Conventional individuals are efficient, careful, conforming, organized and conscientious. They are comfortable working within an established chain of command and prefer carrying out well-defined instructions over assuming leadership roles. They prefer organized, systematic activities and have an aversion to ambiguity. They are skilled in and often enjoy maintaining and manipulating data, organizing schedules and operating office equipment. While they rarely seek leadership or “spotlight” roles, they are thorough, persistent and reliable in carrying out tasks. Conventional types view themselves as responsible, orderly and efficient, and possessing clerical, organizational and numerical abilities. They may also see themselves as unimaginative or lacking in creativity. The preferred work environment of the conventional type fosters organizational competencies, such as record keeping and data management, in a structured operation and places high value on conformity and dependability. Typical conventional careers include secretary, accountant and banker.

## YOUR CAREER PERSONALITY

Check all of the statements that describe you most of the time.

### REALISTIC (R)

**Are you:**

- practical
- athletic
- straightforward
- mechanically inclined
- a nature lover
- curious about the physical world?

**Can you:**

- fix electrical things
- solve mechanical problems
- pitch a tent
- play a sport
- read a blueprint
- operate tools and machinery?

**Do you like to:**

- tinker with machines
- work outdoors
- be physically active
- work with your hands
- build things
- work on cars?

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

### INVESTIGATIVE (I)

**Are you:**

- inquisitive
- analytical
- scientific
- observant
- logical
- precise?

**Can you:**

- think abstractly
- solve math problems
- understand physics theories
- do complex calculations
- use a microscope
- interpret formulas?

**Do you like to:**

- explore ideas
- use computers
- work independently
- perform lab experiments
- read scientific or technical magazines
- analyze data?

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

### ARTISTIC (A)

**Are you:**

- creative
- intuitive
- imaginative
- innovative
- sensitive
- an individualist?

**Can you:**

- sketch, draw, paint
- use intuition
- play a musical instrument
- write stories, poetry, music
- develop new ideas, approaches
- design fashions or interiors?

**Do you like to:**

- solve problems in original ways
- read fiction, plays, poetry
- use verbal abilities to speak, act, entertain
- take photographs
- use visualization abilities
- express yourself creatively?

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

## SOCIAL (S)

### Are you:

- friendly
- helpful
- idealistic
- insightful about people
- outgoing with others
- understanding?

### Can you:

- teach or train others
- express your feelings clearly
- lead a group discussion
- mediate disputes
- cooperate well with others
- work well in groups or teams?

### Do You Like To:

- use social and interpersonal skills
- help people with their problems
- lead groups
- use communication skills
- teach or train others
- provide support, empathy?

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

## ENTERPRISING (E)

### Are you:

- self-confident
- assertive
- sociable
- persuasive
- enthusiastic
- energetic?

### Can you:

- initiate projects
- convince people to do things your way
- sell things or promote ideas
- give talks or speeches
- organize activities and events
- lead a group?

### Do You Like To:

- make decisions affecting others
- use energy or drive
- give speeches or talks
- use skills in argument or debate
- take risks
- organize and lead others?

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

## CONVENTIONAL (C)

### Are you:

- well-organized
- accurate with details and numbers
- interested in number crunching
- methodical
- conscientious about facts
- efficient?

### Can you:

- work well within an authority system or organization
- write reports
- keep accurate records
- use a computer terminal
- perform calculations
- gather, organize and report data?

### Do You Like To:

- follow defined procedures
- make charts, tables and graphs
- work with numbers
- type or do word processing
- classify and organize information
- be responsible for details?

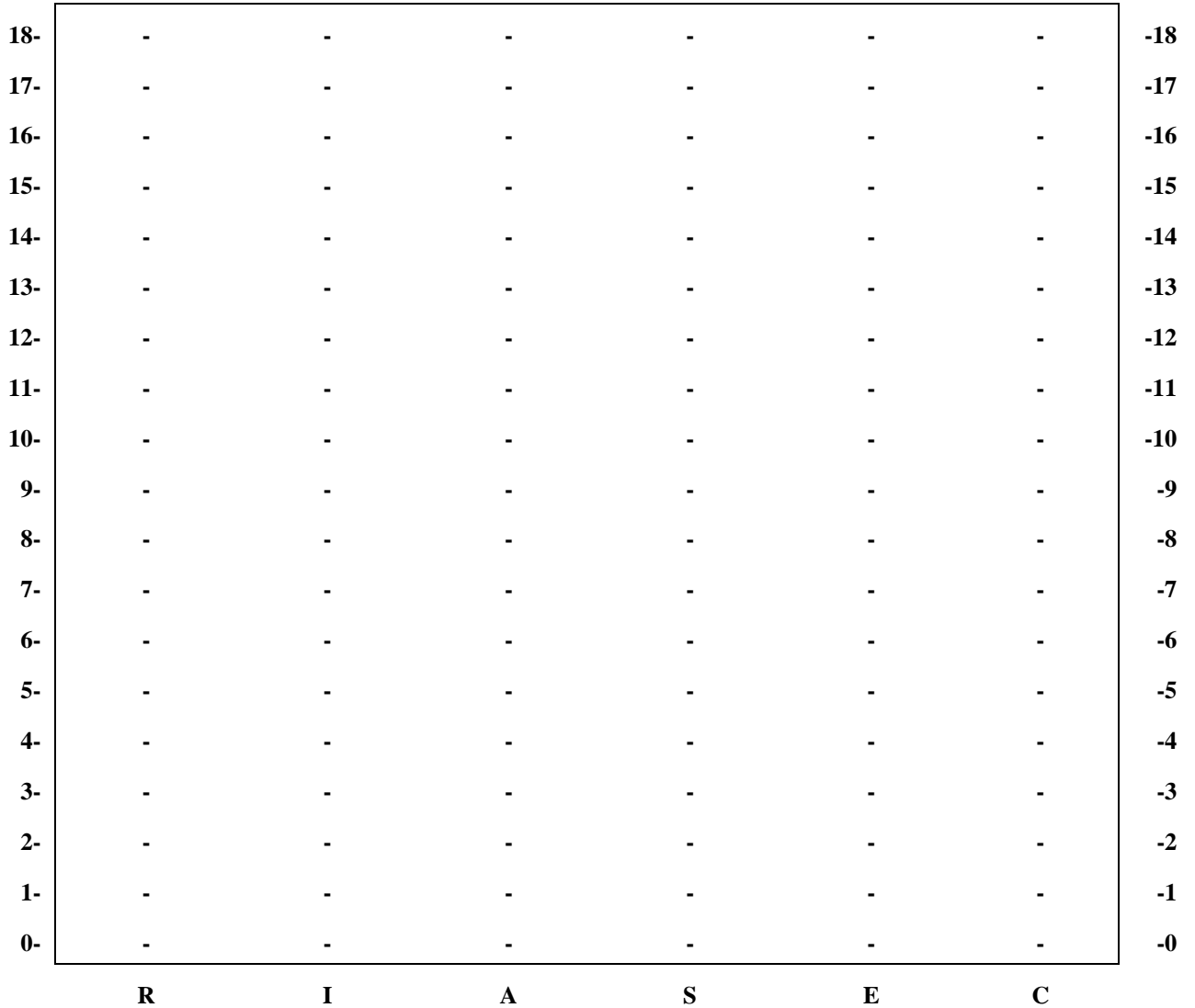
**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from A. Sadoris, 1985 & based on J. Holland's "Making Vocational Choices."*

## YOUR CAREER PERSONALITY PROFILE

**Directions:**

Plot you scores for your Career Personality and connect the dots with a solid line.



*Adapted from The Position Classification Inventory Professional Manual; Gottfredson & Holland, 1991*