What are psychometric tests?

These are formal, structured exercises designed by psychologists to measure psychological qualities such as reasoning ability and personality factors. They are carefully researched and tested to ensure that they are fair, reliable and valid. They are administered and scored in a standardised way, allowing your results to be compared with people who have taken the tests before.

It is a very useful tool used to assess different areas of competency in a group of people. Periodic assessments are also used as a means of assessing the student or workers competency development. Comparison groups used will often be other colleagues in the same workplace or workers in the industry.

The most common types of psychometric assessment used in job selection are ‘aptitude’ (or ‘ability’) tests and ‘personality assessment’.

Why do employers use this type of assessment?

All employers aim to select someone who has the skills, abilities and personal qualities to do their job well. Some selection methods are better than others at gathering different types of evidence about your suitability. For example, application forms provide information about your qualifications, work experience and written communication skills; interviews allow you to show your oral communication skills; while psychometric tests offer insight into whether you have the specific abilities and personal qualities required.

Aptitude or Ability Tests

These are designed to test your logical reasoning or thinking. There are a variety of tests but the most commonly used are:
- ‘Verbal Reasoning’ - assessing your ability to reason with written information.
- ‘Numerical Reasoning’ - assessing your ability to reason with numbers, charts and graphs.
- ‘Diagrammatic’ or ‘Spatial Reasoning’ - assessing your ability to reason with abstract figures and to think logically.

There are other more specified tests depending on the job specifications and skill set required. Examples are ‘programming aptitude’, or ‘mechanical aptitude’.

Aptitude tests are administered under examination conditions and are strictly timed. You are normally asked to select the correct answer from a range of alternatives. Do not worry if you cannot complete all the questions in the time allowed (few people do so). What counts is the number of questions you get right, so work as quickly and accurately as you can.

Your score is compared with a ‘norm group’ such as students/graduates/colleagues who have taken the test before. This allows selectors to assess your reasoning skills in relation to others and to make judgements about your ability to cope with tasks involved in the job applied for.

Tests are often used alongside other selection or periodic assessment methods, either as part of an assessment centre or at the same time as the interview. In this case, it is your overall performance which is important and the test scores do not carry more weight than any other element of the process.

Personality Assessments

Personality questionnaires are designed to explore the ways in which you typically react to and deal with different situations. They are not tests as such; there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers and they are not timed.

These self-report questionnaires allow a profile to be drawn up from your responses to a large number of questions or statements. The questions focus on factors such as how you relate to other people, your work style, your ability to deal with your own emotions and those of others, your motivation and determination and your general outlook.

Some characteristics are more appropriate for particular jobs (e.g. social confidence and independence are important for sales). Personality measurements provide only a guide to your true personality and are used only as supplementary information. You may be given feedback on the profile resulting from your answers or occasionally this may form the basis for a subsequent interview.

The best way to approach these questionnaires is to answer in an honest and straightforward manner. Guessing what the employer is looking for could be counter productive.
English language test examples

These tests assess your vocabulary and your accuracy in using English.

1) Spelling - circle which is the correct spelling of the words listed below.

License  Lisense  Lisence
Recieved  Received  Resieved
Analise  Analyse  Analyze
Separate  Seperate  Separate
Persue  Pursue  Pirsue
Counselling  Councilling  Counseling
Defenate  Definate  Definite
Curriculum vitae  Curriculum Vitae  Curriculum Vitae
Employmant  Employment  Employment
Liased  Liaised  Liasied
Fulfill  Fullfil  Fulfil
Referred  Refered  Reffered
Accurate  Accurrate  Acurate

2) Grammar and punctuation - correct the grammar, punctuation and spelling in the text below.

I have decided next year to study Education in great detail for my dissertation and study the concerns around boy's underachievement in school. I have also studed Education and gender and Education and Race, this year which has given me some important insights into the issues surrounding education. I have also completed a volunteering module that allowed me to analyses the workings of a school and to evaluate my experiences here in regard to wider society, for example funding, safety, ofsted and evaluations.

3) Synonyms - on every line there is a word highlighted in bold. Choose which of the three words on the same line has the same meaning by circling your choice.

Corroborate  Ascertain  Confirm  Prove
Contingent  Aim  Purpose  Group
Manifest  Obvious  Supreme  Dazzling
Enigmatic  Compelling  Ambiguous  Unique
Surreptitious  Secret  Fortunate  Sensuous
Supercilious  Pompous  Flamboyant  Diligent
Verbal reasoning example

This test looks at your ability to understand and reason with written information. The test consists of a series of passages, each of which is followed by several statements. Your task is to evaluate each statement in the light of the passage, which precedes it, and to tick in the appropriate boxes, following the rules given below.

Read the following passages of text and statements. For each statement say whether:

- The statement is **TRUE** or follows logically, given the information or options contained in the passage.
- The statement is **FALSE** or the opposite follows logically, given the information or options contained in the passage.
- You **CANNOT SAY** whether the statement is true or false without further information.

The test is not a test of general knowledge; base your answers on the information contained in the passage.

**Passage 1**

‘Culture’ is a notoriously difficult concept to pin down. It is all too easy to assume that differences among societies may be attributed to culture per se, with no attempt to delve into reasons which lie behind these differences. Robbins notes that ‘most people are unaware of just how their culture will affect them. Culture is like fish to water. It is there all the time but the fish are oblivious to it.’ This does not mean that culture is an irrelevant concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Cannot say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) People can be made aware of how their culture might affect them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) According to Robbins most people are unaware of the culture they belong to and its impact.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Culture is the main reason why there are differences in societies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Culture is a relevant concept but is impossible to study objectively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Passage 2**

The business organisation is an open system. There is continual interaction with the broader external environment of which it is part. The systems approach views the organisation within its total environment and emphasised the importance of multiple channels of interaction. Criticisms of earlier approaches to organisation are based in part on the attempt to study the activities and problems of the organisation solely in terms of the internal environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Cannot say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Adopting a systems approach can result in an increased awareness of the multiple channels of communication that a business may have.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Businesses have a continual interaction with the broader external environment, meaning that they are open systems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Studying an organisation in terms of the internal environment is a useful way to understand its activities and problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Understanding the broader external environment of an organisation can enable consultants to resolve problems more effectively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagrammatical reasoning example

This test assesses your ability to think logically and to recognise patterns. Have a look at the diagrams below and then decide whether option A, B or C completes the series.

Diagram 1

```
A   B   C
```

Diagram 2

```
A    B     C
```

Diagram 3

```
A    B    C
```
Numerical reasoning example

Look at the table below and then answer the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Labour costs per 100</th>
<th>Electricity costs per 100</th>
<th>Packaging costs per 100</th>
<th>Raw materials costs per 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>£54</td>
<td>£25</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>£18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>£23</td>
<td>£10</td>
<td>£8</td>
<td>£18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>£25</td>
<td>£29</td>
<td>£10</td>
<td>£4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>£40</td>
<td>£50</td>
<td>£4</td>
<td>£45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>£30</td>
<td>£15</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>£23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) What are the production costs per 100 units of product D?

£129  £139  £145  £125

2) Which is the least expensive product to produce?

A  B  C  D  E

3) How much would the labour cost be in £ per 100 if a company were to order 50 of the most expensive product, 200 of the least expensive product and 100 of all other products?

£822  £455  £567  £687

4) If the company produces 200 of each product a month, what would the weekly labour costs be?

£324  £344  £389  £425

5) If the company is able to reduce production costs of product A by 10%, what would the new production cost be per 100?

£91.80  £78.60  £112  £87.50
Personality questionnaire examples

Do people know what you are interested in:

A right away or,
B after they get to know you?

Do you tend to:

A start things early, well before the deadline or
B last minute, immediately before the deadline?

Do you prefer:
A routine or,
B variety

Which words in this pair appeals to you?
A theory
B experience

Situational questionnaire examples

Look at the situations and the 4 responses below. Rank the responses from 1 – 4 according to how you tend to behave in that situation. 1 is the response that you are most likely to adopt and 4 is the response that you are less likely to adopt.

Think about times when you have worked with other people who have had different ideas to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A I listen to the group carefully before putting forward my own ideas. If I am challenged, I usually see the other person’s point of view and amend my idea accordingly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B I put forward my ideas and listen to those of other people. I may modify my ideas, depending on their contribution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C I forcefully argue to ensure that my view is accepted and is taken forward by the group. I rarely find the need to change my own ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D I listen to the ideas of others because it is important to acknowledge their point of view and to affirm them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about times when you have been managed by someone else and how you would like to be managed in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A I like my manager to tell me exactly what to do step by step and to frequently check up on me. That way, I know I’m doing my job correctly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B I do what is asked of me and need minimum supervision to continue with my role; once I’ve learnt a routine, I don’t need any more instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C I prefer my manager to leave me to get on with my work. I don’t need to be told what to do and I can figure things out on my own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D I like my manager to give me a broad overview of the team’s main goals and challenges so I can figure out what to do and come up with my own plans and ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Answers

English Language: Spelling

License          Curriculum vitae
Received         Employment
Analyse          Liaised
Separate         Fulfil
Pursue           Referred
Counselling      Accurate
Definite

English Language: Grammar and punctuation

I have decided, next year, to study education in great detail for my dissertation and to study the concerns around boys' under-achievement at school. I have also studied ‘Education and Gender’ and ‘Education and Race’ this year, which has given me some important insights into the issues surrounding education. I have also completed a volunteering module that allowed me to analyse the workings of a school and to evaluate my experiences in regard to wider society, for example, funding, safety, Ofsted and evaluations.

English Language: Synonyms

Corroborate = Confirm
Contingent = Group
Manifest = Obvious

Enigmatic = Compelling
Surreptitious = Secret
Supercilious = Pompous

Verbal reasoning:

Passage 1          Passage 2
A = Cannot say     A = Cannot say
B = True           B = True
C = False          C = False
D = Cannot say     D = Cannot say

Diagrammatical reasoning

Diagram 1 = B, Diagram 2 = A, Diagram 3 = B

Numerical reasoning

1 = £139
2 = B (£59)
3 = £567
4 = £344
5 = £91.80

Personality and situational questionnaires

There are no absolute right or wrong answers for the personality or situational questionnaires. Based on the way you answer the questions, employers / human resources department will build up a profile of whether you suit the role, team and organisation for which you are being assessed.
Pre Test Advice advice:

- Try to get a good night’s sleep to ensure that you are bright and alert on the day. Plan to arrive in good time.
- Ensure that you know exactly what you have to do before you start each test.
- Work as quickly and as accurately as you can.
- Avoid spending too long on one question. If you get stuck, leave it and move on.
- If unsure of an answer, try to eliminate as many wrong answers as possible and opt for a reasoned guess. Some tests only award marks for correct answers, while others also penalise wrong ones. Ask how the test will be marked.
- Don’t worry if you do not finish the test in time (most people don’t), but go back and check your answers if you have spare time.
- Remember you can only try your best. Not everyone is great at tests but this does not mean that you are not intelligent or that there is any reason why you will not have a successful career. If you do not get this job or good appraisal marks there will be other opportunities!

Good luck!

Free online practice tests

Saville and Holdsworth
http://www.shldirect.com/practice_tests.html
(verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, inductive reasoning, personality questionnaire, motivational questionnaire)

PreVisor
www.previsor.co.uk/products/certifications
Provides free, short aptitude tests and an occupational motivation test.

Morrisby Organisation
www.morrisby.com
Site includes advice on taking psychometric tests, sample questions and links to other tests on the web.

Psychometric Success
www.psychometric-success.com/
Provides 16 free downloadable aptitude tests in numeracy, literacy, abstract reasoning and special, technical and clerical ability.

Cubik
http://practicetests.cubiks.com/ Provides free verbal and numerical practice tests with instant feedback. Also provides a diagrammatical reasoning practice leaflet.

Aptitude Tests Online
www.aptitudetestsonline.co.uk/
Provides free aptitude sample questions.

Keirsey
www.keirsey.com
Provides personality assessments including a free assessment with temperament report.

HumanMetrics
www.humanmetrics.com