

## PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS

### What are they and what are they used for?

Most recruiters will use a form of psychometric testing at some point in their application process. This could take the form of an online test right at the start of the recruitment process, or a written test at an assessment centre. The tests are an objective way for recruiters to measure the potential of candidates to perform well in a role and, as they are conducted in standard conditions, they don't place any particular candidate at an advantage. The term psychometric test is an umbrella term which covers ability testing and personality profiling. It is essential that you prepare for these tests in advance as you cannot afford a few minutes during each test to work out what is being asked of you. We've included some further information below which is designed to help you do this.

### Personality Profiling

- These profiles are not really tests as there are no right or wrong answers. Instead they attempt to predict the way in which you might react to certain situations.
- They help recruiters see how you will fit into a particular team, or how easily you could be integrated into the company's culture.
- They will not be used in isolation i.e. they will be used alongside other parts of the recruitment process before anybody comes to any conclusions about whether you are right for a role.

### Top Tips

- Answer honestly but with the company and position in mind. The employer is mainly interested in how you might perform at work, so try to keep your responses in keeping with your work personality. This approach will also help you imagine yourself in the scenarios presented and decide on your response.
- Don't sit on the fence. Try not to answer too many questions with the response 'Neither Agree nor Disagree' otherwise you will be in danger of appearing to be indecisive or lacking conviction.
- Be consistent. Personality questionnaires deliberately ask the same question more than once but phrased slightly differently. They do not necessarily do this to check if you are answering truthfully, but more to measure just how strongly you feel about something.

## Ability Tests – Numerical Reasoning

- Numerical ability tests are used by employers to measure your ability to perform tasks involving numbers. The questions range from simple arithmetic operations like addition and subtraction to more complex questions where you need to interpret numerical information presented as tables, diagrams, and graphs.
- Most roles, even if not immediately noticeable, will involve competency around numbers – although required standards will vary from company to company. For example, roles in Financial Services will have a higher pass rate than creative roles in PR organisations.

### Top Tips

- It's important to be able to quickly digest and interpret presented data – such as graphs, histograms and tables. You can improve your data interpretation skills by reading figure-based news in publications like The Economist or the Financial Times.
- One of the most common areas of confusion (and sources of mistakes!) in numerical reasoning questions is understanding how to apply percentage calculations to information given in a question. Make sure that you are comfortable with how to work out percentages!
- Some tests will allow calculators, some will not. Make sure that you refresh your mental arithmetic just in case.

## Ability Tests – Verbal Reasoning

- These are designed to test your ability to take a series of facts and understand and manipulate the information to solve a specific problem. It often involves extracting and understanding the key points within large passages of writing.
- Most roles require good communication skills but some more so than others. If you perform particularly well in the verbal reasoning tests, then a company may prefer to place you in a communicative type role – perhaps in Sales, Legal, Marketing or HR.

### Top Tips

- Practice picking out key points from large tracts of information – from papers or academic books.
- Brush up on your vocabulary and grammar! It shows attention to detail as well as demonstrating the depth of your communication skills.
- For 'True or False' style questions - take every word literally and remember that you are being asked to answer the questions based on only what is given in the passage. Think to yourself "am I being told this statement is absolutely 100% true or being told this is absolutely 100% false?" If neither, the correct answer must be 'Cannot Say'. The statements are true or false only if the information in the passage tells you as much.

### General tips to help you prepare

- Practice practice practice! Familiarity with the style and format of aptitude tests will help calm your nerves and will allow you to focus all of your attention on answering the questions.
- If you get stuck on one of the questions, move on! There will be plenty of questions to be getting on with and you can always return to fill in the gaps at the end.
- Ask for feedback – it is essential so that you can adapt and improve your performance.
- Some practice example tests can be found [here](#).