

PART 1: Read the article and choose the correct answer

Finding the career that fits your personality

'If you've finished your exams and have absolutely no idea what to do next, you're not alone,' says Sheridan Hughes, an occupational psychologist at Career Analysts, a career counselling service. 'At 18, it can be very difficult to know what you want to do because you don't really know what you're interested in.' Careers guidance, adds Alexis Hallam, one of her colleagues, is generally poor and 'people can end up in the wrong job and stay there for years because they're good at something without actually enjoying it.'

To discover what people are good at, and more fundamentally, what they will enjoy doing, Career Analysts give their clients a battery of personality profile questionnaires and psychometric tests. An in-depth interview follows, in which the test results are discussed and different career paths and options are explored with the aid of an occupational psychologist. Career Analysts offers guidance to everyone, from teenagers to retirees looking for a new focus in life. The service sounded just what I needed. Dividing my time as I do between teaching and freelance journalism, I definitely need advice about consolidating my career. Being too ancient for Career Analysts' student career option guidance and not, unfortunately, at the executive level yet, I opted for the career management package. This is aimed at people who are established in their jobs and who either want a change or some advice about planning the next step in their careers.

Having filled in a multitude of personality indicator questionnaires at home, I then spent a rather gruelling morning being aptitude-tested at Career Analysts' offices. The tests consisted

of logical reasoning followed by verbal, mechanical and spatial aptitude papers. Logical reasoning required me to pick out the next shape in a sequence of triangles, squares and ovals. I tried my best but knew that it was really a lost cause. I fared rather better when it came to verbal aptitude - finding the odd one out in a series of words couldn't be simpler. My complacency was short-lived, however, when I was confronted with images of levers and pulleys for the mechanical aptitude papers. My mind went blank. I had no idea what would happen to wheel X when string Y was pulled.

At home, filling in questionnaires, I had been asked to give my instinctive reaction (not an over-considered one) to statements like: 'It bothers me if people think I'm being odd or unconventional', or 'I like to do my planning alone without interruptions from others.' I was asked to agree or disagree on a scale of one to five with 'I often take on impossible odds', or 'It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.' I was told to indicate how important I consider status to be in a job, and how important money and material benefits.

The questions attempt to construct a picture of the complete individual. Using aptitude tests alongside personality profiling, occupational psychologists will, the theory goes, be able to guide a client towards a rewarding, fulfilling career. Some questions are as straightforward as indicating whether or not you would enjoy a particular job. Designing aircraft runways? Preparing legal documents? Playing a musical instrument? Every career going makes an appearance and, as I was shown later, the responses tend

to form a coherent pattern.

Having completed my personality and aptitude tests, I sat down with Sheridan Hughes, who asked me fairly searching personal and professional questions. 'What do my parents and siblings do for a living? Why had I chosen to do an English degree? I need to get a picture of you as a person and how you've come to be who you are,' she explained. 'What we do works because it's a mixture of science and counselling. We use objective psychometric measures to discover our clients' natural strengths and abilities and then we talk to them about what they want from life.'

There were no real surprises in my own test results, nor in the interview that followed it. 'We're interested in patterns,' Mrs Hughes explained, 'and the pattern for you is strongly verbal and communicative.' This was putting it rather kindly. I had come out as average on the verbal skills test and below average in logic, numerical, perceptual and mechanical reasoning. My spatial visualization was so bad it was almost off the scale. 'A career in cartography, navigation, tiling or architecture would not be playing to your strengths,' she said delicately.

Mrs Hughes encouraged me to expand the writing side of my career and gave me straightforward, practical suggestions as to how I could go about it. 'Widen the scope of your articles,' she said. 'You could develop an interest in medical and psychological fields.' These latter, she said, would sit comfortably with an interest in human behaviour indicated on my personality-profiling questionnaires. She suggested that I consider writing e-learning content for on-line courses, an avenue that would never have occurred to me.

1 Which of the following is mentioned in the first paragraph?
A people underestimating their own abilities
B people accepting inappropriate advice
C people being unwilling to take risks
D people constantly changing their minds 1

2 What does the writer say about Career Analysts in the second paragraph?
A It is about to offer a service for people at executive level.
B The range of services it offers is unique.
C She was initially doubtful that it could be useful to her.
D Only one of its services was relevant to her. 2

3 What happened when the writer took the aptitude tests?
A She found two of the papers extremely difficult.
B She put in very little effort on any of them.
C She didn't understand what she was required to do on one of them.
D The papers were not what she had been expecting. 3

4 What does the writer say about the statements on the questionnaires?
A She thought about them for longer than she was supposed to.
B She found some of them rather strange.
C One of them focused on her attitude to risk.
D One of them concerned her current situation only. 4

5 The writer says that the idea behind the questionnaires is that
A people will find some of the questions quite hard to answer.
B the answers to them and the aptitude tests will provide all the necessary information.
C they will encourage people to have new ideas about possible careers.
D they will give a more accurate picture of people than the aptitude tests. 5

6 Some of the questions Sheridan Hughes asked concerned the writer's
A opinions of the tests and questionnaires.
B relationships with family members.
C main regrets.
D progress through life. 6

7 The writer felt that during the interview, Mrs Hughes
A was keen not to upset her concerning her test results.
B seemed surprised at how badly she had done in the tests.
C was being honest about her strengths and weaknesses.
D preferred to avoid talking about her test results. 7

8 The advice Mrs Hughes gave to the writer included the suggestion that she should
A think about taking a course on writing.
B concentrate only on writing and not on any other kind of work.
C increase the number of subjects she writes about.
D do something she had previously considered unappealing. 8

PART 2: Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one, using the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

35 Because of what you advised me, I did the right thing.

ADVICE

Thanks _____ me, I did the right thing.

36 In my opinion, they're the best band in the world.

CONCERNED

They're the best band in the world, as _____

37 Her behaviour tends to be bad when she is under pressure.

TENDENCY

She _____ badly when she is under pressure.

38 My brother earns half of what I earn.

TWICE

I earn _____ my brother.

39 I got angry because of the assistant's attitude.

MADE

The assistant's attitude _____ temper.

40 He plays so skilfully that nobody can beat him.

MUCH

He plays with _____ that nobody can beat him.

41 They were late because they got stuck in traffic.

RESULT

They were late _____ stuck in traffic.

42 Yesterday I met one of my friends by chance in the supermarket.

RAN

Yesterday I _____ mine in the supermarket.

