

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## How is YouScience different from other assessments?

The YouScience Profile is NOT a self-report measure like many current assessments. These other assessments make you do the work by asking directly “How interested are you in teaching/business/interior design/science”. These assessments can only tell you what you already know about yourself. Often the reason you take an assessment is because you don't know what you want and need new information and insights. Self-reports are subjective, and your current mood and attitude can affect how you respond to these assessments. If you just had a really great day at work, you might respond to questions about how much you enjoy working in your field differently than you would if you just had a really bad day.

YouScience gets past what you already know about yourself and gets under the hood to identify your natural strengths and underlying potential.

The YouScience Profile uses engaging exercises, (or ‘brain games’ as some students call them), to deliver real data about students' aptitudes or natural abilities that are set around the beginning of high school and remain stable throughout their lifetime. Our exercises are based on over 90 years of research behind the science of aptitudes. We then combine that aptitude information with their passions to show them where they are most likely to find satisfaction in education and their career.

YouScience uses a proprietary algorithm to match student's aptitudes and interests with over 500 careers and many more supporting educational paths. The student's unique personal aptitude profile is shown in tandem with the aptitude profile for that career, so they can learn about their fit with that choice, and about themselves. The YouScience Profile can be accessed from any computer, smart phone, or tablet, making it a resource that is available anywhere, anytime. Available for 10 years, YouScience is a consistent personal and career development resource that goes with them as they embark on their journey to a fulfilling career.

## How to Explain an Aptitude

Each of us is made up of a combination of innate qualities, or aptitudes. Think of it as our hard-wired potential. Some people call these talents or strengths. Aptitudes reflect how quickly and easily one can learn skills and abilities in particular areas. When we say that aptitudes are natural abilities, we mean that they do not seem to be acquired simply through training or experience. Anyone can improve with practice, but one's speed and ease in improving is reflected in their aptitude level. Having a high aptitude means it's easy to learn tasks that rely on that aptitude, and once they do, they'll be able to perform them faster and more accurately. Aptitudes can also reflect one's tendency to approach projects one way or another. Research shows that these aptitudes form a definable pattern and are stable around the time a student starts high school.

It is important to understand that abilities are distinct from interests, skills and personality traits, all of which can change over time. Because of their stable nature, aptitudes serve as a reliable navigational tool throughout a lifetime of decisions. When we are using our aptitudes we are most happy and satisfied as we feel we are 'in the zone' rather than engaged in a frustrating, uphill battle.

Understanding our aptitudes arms us with special knowledge to confront an ever-changing set of circumstances and challenges. For instance, how easily and quickly do you discern relationships between seemingly unrelated objects? How easily can you arrange information in a logical order? Do you make plans in your head or do you need pen and paper to see things clearly? How do you translate two-dimensional pictures into three dimensions to conceptualize problems? In a team environment do you best add value as a specialist with specific skills, or as a generalist who can manage the big picture? All of these questions and many more can be answered when you are offered a scientifically valid evaluation of your innate abilities.

Pursuits for which we do not possess a strong aptitude are still achievable. Nothing trumps motivation and effort. Understanding where your natural abilities lay however, is a blueprint for maximizing one's chances for satisfaction and success in many of life's endeavors.

## The Stability of Aptitudes

Research shows that by the beginning of high school, our aptitudes are generally stable. Over a lifetime aptitudes fluctuate slightly, but typically don't change in relation to others in the same age range. This is in contrast to interests that usually change over short timeframes based on exposure to information, experiences, and the people who influence

us. Interests tend to shift frequently - especially in the formative years of high school and college.

## Why High doesn't mean Better or Best

We live in a culture obsessed with tests and ranks, grades and scores. Top 10 Colleges, Top 10 Best Movies, Top 10 Best Dressed, even the Top 10 Internet Cat Videos (Yes, there's a rank for that!).

So it's no surprise we have developed very sensitive ears for the terms Low, Medium, and High. We often unconsciously translate those terms to mean 'Bad', 'Better', and 'Best'. After all, isn't a 'high' ranking college better than a 'low' ranking college? Aren't 'high' grades are better than 'low' grades?

But this interpretation isn't true when it comes to aptitudes. When we describe your YouScience Profile results we mean something completely different, and it has nothing to do with rankings, or with acing the aptitude test. Aptitudes are simply your natural strengths. Not what you've accomplished, or what you've learned in class.

They describe your potential to learn and apply certain kinds of skills quickly and easily, and your tendency to approach projects one way or another. Haven't we all walked out of a test that we thought was super easy and wondered why our friend thought it was super hard? In a lot of cases, that has more to do with your natural abilities than it has to do with how much you studied.

So discovering you have are a 'Brain Stormer' with idea generation (meaning you naturally produce a lot of ideas in a short period of time) isn't necessarily better than being 'Concentrated and Focused' (meaning you are naturally focused on thinking through one idea at a time). Having a propensity for idea generation as a driving aptitude doesn't make you smarter or more talented. It just means you'll likely get more satisfaction from studies, work, and other activities that make heavy use of that idea-generating knack. On the other hand, scoring as Concentrated and Focused might make you the perfect fit for work that rewards concentration and focus, and where the constant impulse to spin out new ideas would just get in the way.

So the terms 'High,' 'Medium,' and 'Low' in relation to aptitudes mean very little by themselves. It's only when you consider an aptitude in action, in a particular kind of project or activity that you can begin to see how being 'high' or 'low' might make a difference in how naturally – and how happily – you'll fit that work.

The YouScience Profile is a tool for self-knowledge, not for ranking. It doesn't tell you if you're 'Bad,' 'Better,' or 'Best'. But knowing your aptitude profile lets you match your own natural strengths to the choices you make about school, work, and activities in between. It lets you invest your energy and passion where they can flourish most profoundly. And, yes, that definitely makes you the smart one.

## The Difference between Aptitudes and Interests

You may be very interested in being an orthodontist, but don't have strong spatial visualization which could limit your ability to do it with ease as a career. Conversely, you may have the natural abilities to pursue a career as an aeronautical engineer, but have absolutely no interest. Interests are highly dependent upon our exposure and worldview, thus they change over time and with life experience. For this reason, interest surveys are a very limited tool for making long-range career plans.

As a part of the YouScience assessment, we include an interest profiler. This is used to understand the individuals' present understanding and thinking about his or her future. Because interests are variable over time, and change with an expanding scope of experience, it serves as only one piece of the puzzle. All YouScience users are welcomed to re-take the interest profiler at any time. Just chat in or email us!

## Why is it important not to cheat?

YouScience aims to identify what your natural strengths are, so that you can find a major or a career that allows you to do your best work in a way that feels naturally easy for you. Wouldn't you want your everyday to feel like you've done great work without stress or frustration? The name of the game is what is the best fit for you.

If you were to fold a real piece of paper during the Spatial Visualization section – sure, you'd probably get a high aptitude score – but would you want it? You'd then be recommended careers that require a high level of Spatial Visualization. If you're not actually high in those aptitudes, those careers would be stressful – and you'd probably not be very happy. So, definitely try your best, but remember – this is about what you naturally do well, and about how you fit with potential majors and career. Knowing what's challenging for you is just as important as knowing what's easy. Let the natural you shine through. Your future self will thank you for it.

## Are Aptitudes different than Personality Traits?

Yes. While personality assessments provide for interesting conversation, they rely on self-reported information. They more often reflect recent experiences, and do not reliably predict one's career fit. Personality inventories are useful in many settings, but should be viewed as a piece of the career puzzle rather than a key to unlock real information and guidance.

## Are Aptitudes different than Skills?

Yes. Aptitude is the potential to acquire a skill. Skills are developed from practice and experience. Aptitudes reflect how much practice and experience it will take to develop those skills. In other words, aptitudes reflect how quickly and easily you can master and utilize particular skills. They also provide a gauge on the ultimate level of proficiency with that skill you are likely to achieve. If you know where your aptitudes lay, you can select career paths that require learning the types of skills that come more easily.

## Are Aptitudes different than Intelligence?

Yes. Two individuals who score the same absolute number on an intelligence test or SAT may score wildly differently on an aptitude assessment. A standardized test score does not provide insight to any given career.

## How should I think about Fit between my Aptitudes & Career Aptitudes?

FIT is the name of the game. You'll be happiest when you are matched with the aptitude level that is required by the job. If your aptitude level is lower, that's not an ideal fit. Same if your aptitude level is higher. Let's think about what this might mean.

Let's say you have a job as a copy editor, and you have to proofread writing all day long. This job is easiest for those who are Visual Scanners when it comes to Visual Comparison Speed. Let's say you're a Fact Checker. You can definitely still do the job, but it makes take you longer than others, and you might feel stressed by having to constantly work and focus harder to do your job.

Now let's consider your aptitude for Sequential Reasoning. In your job as a copy editor, you are given instruction manuals to proofread. As you are proofreading, it becomes

obvious to you as a Sequential Thinker that these instructions are not sequenced in the best way. However, it's not in your job description to suggest a better order. Wouldn't that be frustrating? You have the aptitude, but your position does not require you use this strength of yours. This is why having a higher level of an aptitude also means that the career isn't an ideal fit for you.

While you can definitely work around your fit to do a career you love, being at a lower level might leave you stressed, and being at a higher level might leave you frustrated. Aim for the sweet spot for maximum enjoyment.

## I'm a Fair Fit for a Career, is this something I really can't do?

No. The great benefit of the YouScience Profile that it does not tell you what you can and cannot do for your career pursuits. It is geared toward revealing a range of careers from strong fit to fair fit for your profile. If you are interested in a career that has been identified as a fair fit, we encourage you to look very closely at the 'How You Fit' graph for that career - so you see where you might struggle a little or need extra efforts. You have all the information you need to go into your career with your eyes wide open. Determination and effort can take you a long ways in a career. But it is a great advantage to know what will come easily to you and what might challenge you in the workplace for that career path before you begin it.

## If I work really hard can I improve an Aptitude?

You can work really hard to 'overcome' a lack of aptitude to develop a skill, but it won't come easily and you will be left feeling exhausted and like you are climbing uphill. Additionally, you will likely never get as good at the skill as those who begin with a good aptitudinal fit. Focusing your energy on careers that are a natural fit for you will provide an inherent ease and satisfaction in your day-to-day work life. An aptitude is a natural ability or 'gift' that you are born with. Why not make excelling a little easier?

## If my Aptitudes are higher than required, why isn't a job a Strong Fit?

The job that is the perfect fit for you is one where you match up closely to the aptitudes required. If your aptitudes are higher than what is required of the career, you will often find yourself bored and restless. Or the high aptitude may be the opposite of what the job needs. The Personal Approach and Core Driver aptitudes are important aspects of who you

are. If you are in a job that does not take advantage of those aptitudes you will not be exercising some of your key innate ‘muscles.’ For example, if you are a ‘Brainstormer’ and in a career such as Accounting that is steeped in rules and protocol, you would likely become frustrated because the satisfaction of infusing new ideas into your work can actually be counter-productive in that position. If you have high core driver aptitudes, it is especially important that you use them in your career. If you do not, they’ll find other ways to peak out, perhaps through hobbies or other activities. However, you might as well maximize your career success by using your high aptitudes to shine!

## What if all my Aptitudes are midpoints?

So you’re hanging in the middle. That’s ok! You’re in good company – thousands of people are at every level of each aptitude, not just the extreme ends. Since your fit with majors or careers is the most important, and not your absolute levels, being in the midrange is just as good as being anywhere else.

If your student is hesitant about their midpoint results, advise them to go back and reflect on their results. Have them read each aptitude description and decide if it is really describing them. If the student really doesn’t think the description for a particular aptitude is reflective of them, ask about when they took the assessment. Is it possible they were distracted? Tired? Maybe they misunderstood the task or lost focus. If a student is sure their performance was way off, contact us at YouScience. We can reset a particular aptitude test to allow the student to take it again if necessary.

It is typical for students with learning differences to have midlevel profile results. For more information, please see ‘How does this work for individuals with learning differences?’

## How does YouScience find a match between my Aptitudes and Careers?

YouScience suggests careers based on the best fit between your aptitudes and the aptitudes important for that career, with the aptitudes that are most important for success in that career taken into consideration.



To determine which aptitudes are most important for each career, we partnered with experts in job performance and utilized the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration's O\*NET Career Database. What are the common tasks within each career path? What do people do each day? What are characteristics of successful people in this career? Combining several different sources of information, we translated the tasks or requirements of each career into an aptitude profile that reflects a successful person in that career. This aptitude profile is then matched against a student's aptitude profile to suggest best-fit careers where the student will likely be most successful.

## I want to be a doctor, and it's not in My Careers. Why should I believe my results?

So you want to be a doctor. Great! Maybe your mother is a doctor, maybe you love watching medical dramas on TV, maybe it's just something you've always known. What YouScience does is takes the tasks that different careers need to do day-in and day-out to be successful, and aligns them with your own personal strengths. It might be the case that the fit between your strengths and being a doctor aren't the best fit, only because there are other options out there. Maybe there are a bunch of other careers out there that play on your natural strengths that you might not have ever heard of. And who knows, once you learn about them, you might love them!

We're not saying you shouldn't be a doctor (not at all!). We're just arming you with knowledge about yourself and your alignment with different jobs, so that you can make a well-informed choice about your life. Look at your fit between your aptitudes and those for a doctor – what can you learn from the places where you aren't highly aligned? What could you do to work around some of the areas that aren't highly aligned? What do you like about the idea of being a doctor? Could you see any of those ideas within the other careers as well? What are some of the other strong fit careers? YouScience is about self-discovery – go explore!

Remember that being a doctor is only one career within the broad category of Healthcare. Perhaps there are other careers within healthcare where you'd be successful. Maybe you'd make a great radiologist, or medical and health services manager, or medical and clinical laboratory technician. There are many different ways one can contribute professionally to a field of practice.

Remember, the YouScience Profile is not telling you you have to do any of these careers – it's just saying you can do some of these.

## I don't think I did my best. Can I take the test over again?

Your natural abilities or aptitudes reveal themselves in a subtle but powerful way when you are performing under pressure and stress. While you might feel pressure and stress during the assessment, know that it's a result of your aptitudes being worked. Part of the science of the YouScience Profile is the ordering of the assessments within the Profile to ensure the tasks are delivered in the best way to measure your abilities. You may be surprised to find that your results are different than you think.

## What if my student underperforms? Is this a 'dream killer'?

No, and there is no such thing as 'underperforming' in our assessments. The profile results are all about affirmation and options. No amount of measurement of aptitudes can trump a person's motivation and will to pursue a dream. We offer real information to enable a person to get there whatever the advantages or obstacles. This information is completely private and is to be used by a young adult and shared at his or her discretion with parents, counselors, or other collaborators.

## My student is a high achiever. Do they need YouScience?

Absolutely. Many times, young adults that have the highest aptitudes and are the best performers have the toughest time deciding what career to pursue. They have a litany of choices! YouScience will give a talented young adult real information and a framework for exploring career options.

## How does this work for individuals with learning differences?

Our aptitude assessments require some motor skills, good vision and intense focus for each 5-10 minute assessment. If a student can perform standard high school work, most likely he or she will find it useful. If your student has a learning difference that may prevent this level of work, we encourage setting up the experience for the student. Use your personal knowledge of the student to maximize their confidence and ability. Discuss how this is supposed to be difficult at times, in order to find the level at which the student performance best. It is completely normal to feel frustrated or anxious. Yes, there are time limits, but if a student does not finish a section, that is completely ok. Reinforce that this is not an achievement test – it is simply determining where the student's natural strengths are. Encourage the student to take as many breaks between assessment sections as they

need. So long as the student is focused within each assessment set, they can use as much time as they'd like to complete the whole thing.

If you would like to discuss your individual situation, please give us a call. As always, professionals with expertise in learning differences are always the definitive resource.

## I didn't learn anything new from my YouScience Profile.

Congratulations on your high level of self-awareness! Even confirming your own opinions of your abilities, the YouScience Profile gives you a language to help express that to others, and deep information about how those traits are relevant in the workplace.