



Guide to helping students prepare for psychometric tests

This resource is a brief guide to help students prepare for psychometric tests. There are many different types of tests and this resource covers the most common ones.

1. Preparing for psychometric tests

- Familiarise yourself with online tests - they are not usually tests of knowledge and therefore it is not about revision (although you might have to brush up on some school level maths)
- Start practising early so that you can identify and work on weaker areas where appropriate
- Start with the refreshing core skills before familiarising yourself with test questions
- Remember that any practice tests won't replicate the real thing but they will help you to get a feel for a test situation
- Improve skills, research question types, practise, reflect and practise again until your personal optimal score is reached
- Create space in how you practise by taking a break between tests
- If you keep practising without improving reflect on where you are going wrong and seek help via your Careers Service
- If you are offered a practice test by the recruiter, use it!
- **If you are an international student-**
 - Contact employers to let them know your first language isn't English, as the employer may give you the option to take the test in your mother tongue instead. (However, feedback from test publishers indicates that students will not necessarily find taking a verbal reasoning test in their first language easier than in English). It's worth asking the employer if they would be willing to provide some sample questions in your mother tongue language, as well as in English, so that the you can then decide on your preferred language for testing. Some employers, e.g. PwC, will only test in English.
 - Make good use of the time given before starting any test to check that you've understood the instructions fully.
- **If you have a disability**
 - Tell the employer as early as possible and they are more likely to be able to help
 - For further advice speak to your careers service

2. Taking psychometric tests

- Think about what will help you perform at your best. This might be a good night's sleep, eating beforehand and using calming techniques
- Find a place and time that you can complete the tests quietly and without interruptions
- Consider ways that you can control any nerves or anxiety
- Be prepared with blank paper, pen, calculator and anything else you might need
- Before starting the test, take a deep breath, focus and check that you are ready to begin
- Read and understand each set of instructions and read each question very carefully
- Use elimination techniques on multiple choice questions
- Your percentile score is based on a combination of speed and accuracy, work on both areas to improve - the practice test websites often give this feedback
- Avoid guessing answers as many tests include negative scoring and you may reduce your overall percentile score
- If you are completing more than one test try take a break between each one
- If an individual question or whole test hasn't gone as well as you would like don't put too much emphasis on it. Move on!



3. Test specific advice

Numerical reasoning

- Read the instructions carefully so you know what the employer is looking for
- Read the question first so you know what information you are looking for
- Pay attention to detail in the question and answer (e.g. units, decimal places, percentages)
- Think about practising core maths skills including percentages, ratios, percentages, reading graphs and multiplication. The quicker you are at the basics, the quicker you will work on the answer. Some useful resources to improve your maths include [BBC Bitesize](#) and [mathcentre](#)
- Don't panic, most tests will be no more difficult school level maths
- Manage your speed versus accuracy – you will need to work quickly but methodically to achieve a good percentile score. This is something that can be improved by practising
- Have a calculator with you and know how to use it
- Improve your performance by doing mental calculations when you are shopping or working with numbers

Verbal reasoning

- Read the instructions carefully so you know what the employer is looking for
- Read the question first so you know what information you are looking for
- Base your answer on the information provided rather than using existing knowledge and take everything literally unless it states otherwise (inference)
- Practice reading under pressure by setting a time limit to read a piece of writing
- Read broadsheet newspaper articles and look for ambiguous statements
- Complete crosswords and word puzzles

Situational Judgement

- Research the organisation and read the job description/ person specification thoroughly to help you understand the competencies needed for the job and what the organisation expects
- Knowing the organisation's culture, what decision or action might they be looking for ?
- Try and imagine yourself in the shoes of one of their employees, what might they do ?
- Be clear on what is expected of you. There are different ways an SJT can be presented (best/worst, ranked answers, most likely, least likely, etc.)
- Consider the consequences of each answer (if I answer this what would the effect be on ...)
Some answers might seem similar but think about how they differ
- Take time to make a judgement if the test isn't timed
- Draw on any work experience in your answers
- Be yourself – answer honestly - SJTs are working to get the best fit of applicant to role
- Whilst these are harder to practise than other tests, familiarisation will still help

Game based assessments

- Research the organisation and read the job description/ person specification thoroughly to help you understand what the organisation expects
- Look at online video explanations to learn about how they work e.g. Artic Shores and Pymetrics
- Treat as an assessment and not as a game
- Practice games and brain teasers to improve reaction times
- Being optimistic, relaxed, focused and free from distractions in your environment will help you concentrate and get the best score