

Questions and Answers About the *Ability Explorer*, Second Edition

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Before administering the *Ability Explorer*, you can benefit from reading and discussing the following information with your students, job seekers, or clients.

What Are Abilities?

What do you do well? Are you good in math? Science? English? Are you a good athlete? Do you listen well? Are you well organized?

There are many kinds of abilities. Some people say that we're born with certain abilities. Others say that abilities are developed through experiences. Probably both of these points are true, but it is definitely true that each of us has abilities. And for each of us, some abilities are stronger than other ones.

What do you do well? When you answer that question, you're talking about your abilities.

Why Is It Important to Think About Abilities?

People are usually happiest when they have the chance to do the things they do well. If you're in school, this means taking the courses in which you do best. If you're working, it means having a job that uses as many of your abilities as possible. Thinking about what you do well leads to choices in school and for careers that can make you happier. Do you play a musical instrument? Do you work well in groups? Are you good at fixing things?

Maybe the most important question is, What kind of career do you want? Think about what you do well.

How Can I Know What My Abilities Are?

If you ask people who know you to tell you what your abilities are, they might be able to answer you. But you might hear different things from different people. That's not only because you have various abilities, but also because people have different opinions. When it comes down to it, you're probably the best judge of what your abilities are. You know yourself better than anyone else.

That's the idea behind the *Ability Explorer*. It's a self-measure that asks you to rate yourself in different ability areas by marking how well you think you could do certain things if you were given a chance. In this way, the *Ability Explorer* helps you zero in on your strongest abilities.

Maybe you already know what your best ability is, but what about other abilities you might have?

What Abilities Can I Learn About Through the *Ability Explorer*?

The *Ability Explorer* lets you rate yourself in 14 different ability areas. Why so many? For one thing, no two people are alike. People are strong in different abilities. Some people have many abilities; some have a few. The *Ability Explorer* gives you a chance to find out which ones are your best abilities.

The 14 ability areas in the *Ability Explorer* are

- Artistic
- Clerical
- Interpersonal
- Language
- Leadership
- Manual
- Musical/Dramatic
- Numerical/Mathematical
- Organizational
- Persuasive
- Scientific
- Social
- Spatial
- Technical/Mechanical

Why Do I Need to Know About All 14 Ability Areas of the *Ability Explorer*?

If your career choice matters to you, it is important to know about all 14 ability areas of the *Ability Explorer*. That's because the jobs available today and in the future call for many of these abilities. For example, there are more and more jobs in customer service. These require interpersonal, persuasive, and even leadership abilities. There are many jobs, and there will be more, in information technology. These require computer skills and language, organizational, and technical/mechanical abilities. What if you want a job in the media? Do you like sales? Do you see yourself as a doctor, a teacher, or a counselor? Do you think you would be good at working with computers or with the Web? All of these jobs, and many others, require different abilities. That's why the *Ability Explorer* measures not 6 or 7, but 14 important workplace abilities.

What is the *Ability Explorer*?

The *Ability Explorer* not only asks you to rate yourself in different ability areas by marking how well you think you could do certain things if you were given a chance, but it has two other parts. One of these asks you to consider how well you think you've done certain activities in the past; the other asks you to consider how well you've done in school courses you've taken. Both of these parts, activity statements and school courses, relate to the 14 ability areas. Together, the three parts of the *Ability Explorer* let you see how your past involvement in the ability areas compares with your self-rating on the abilities. Maybe you think you could do better in the future than you have in the past in certain ability areas. Maybe you've actually done better in the past than you self-rate yourself now. In any case, this *Ability Explorer* information can help you plan for the future when you think about courses, training, and career choice or career change. It's up to you to decide which abilities you want to develop and how you want to develop them.

Can I fail the *Ability Explorer*?

Because the *Ability Explorer* isn't a test, it's impossible to fail. However, it is possible to rate yourself low on any number of abilities. But even if you do that, the *Ability Explorer* will give you information on what you can do to develop abilities that you might be interested in. It tells you which courses you can take, what activities you can get involved in, and what careers you can explore for each of the 14 ability areas. The *Ability Explorer* lives up to its name: It's great for exploring your abilities.

What information will I receive after I take the *Ability Explorer*?

After taking the *Ability Explorer*, you will score it according to a few simple directions. Your scores will tell you how you rated yourself on all 14 abilities. The *Ability Explorer* will also give you specific information on your highest-rated abilities. This will include information about school

courses, activities, and careers you may want to get involved in to develop these abilities more. The *Ability Explorer* also has a highly recommended next step that helps you explore specific occupations in the Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

For more information about the Ability Explorer, Second Edition, call 1-800-648-JIST or visit www.jist.com.