

RIASEC INVENTORY™

Quickly Match Your Interests to Careers

The Editors @ JIST

ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE

Overview

The *RIASEC Inventory* is designed to help people identify their most dominant work interests and then use this information to explore career options. It uses the RIASEC coding system developed by John Holland and is based on an assessment researched and developed by the U.S. Department of Labor. It is designed primarily for ease-of-use, and it contains the latest government data drawn from the Department of Labor's O*NET (Occupational Information Network) database.

The assessment is useful to anyone involved in career exploration, including students deciding on a career or educational direction, unemployed adults identifying alternative job objectives, and individuals in the middle of a career transition. Its ease-of-use makes it suitable for individuals with lower reading capabilities and its brevity makes it particularly well suited to programs where time is limited. Care has been taken to make the device easy to read and simple to interpret with little or no input or guidance from the administrator. The instrument is ideally suited for both group and individual administration.

The assessment is designed to be self-scored and self-interpreted and takes approximately 10–15 minutes to complete, though more time may be needed to research job titles of interest and engage in further career exploration activities.

This *Administrator's Guide* is designed to accompany the *RIASEC Inventory* (ISBN 978-1-59357-653-0). © 2009 by JIST Publishing. Published by JIST Works, an imprint of JIST Publishing, 7321 Shadeland Station, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46256-3923. Phone: 800-648-JIST. Fax: 877-454-7839. E-mail: info@jist.com. Web site: www.jist.com. All rights reserved. Duplication of this document is permitted for internal distribution to staff using the *RIASEC Inventory*. No other use is permitted without written permission from the publisher. For additional career resources, please visit www.jist.com. For a JIST catalog, call 800-648-JIST or visit www.jist.com.

Background and Development

The *RIASEC Inventory* consists of 72 items representing work, learning, and leisure activities such as “Build kitchen cabinets” or “Play a musical instrument.” These activities are scored as either *like*, *unsure*, or *dislike*. Results are totaled in six dimensions corresponding to the six interest areas of the Holland scale as described below:

- **Realistic:** People with Realistic interests prefer practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They like dealing with plants, animals, and real-world materials such as wood, tools, and machinery. They do not like occupations that mainly involve paperwork or working closely with others.
- **Investigative:** People with Investigative interests enjoy thinking, analyzing, and exploring more than physical activity. They prefer to do research and figure out problems mentally rather than persuade or lead people.
- **Artistic:** People with Artistic interests like work activities that involve creativity and that deal with forms, designs, and patterns. They appreciate self-expression in their work. They prefer settings where work can be done without following a clear set of rules.
- **Social:** People with Social interests want to assist others and promote learning and personal development. They prefer to work more directly with people than with objects, machines, or data. They like to teach, to give advice, to help, or to otherwise be of service.
- **Enterprising:** People with Enterprising interests enjoy starting and carrying out projects, especially business ventures. They like persuading and leading people and making decisions. They are comfortable taking risks for profit.
- **Conventional:** People with Conventional interests like work activities that follow set procedures and routines. They prefer working with data and detail more than with ideas. They like work in which there are precise standards and guidelines to follow.

A high score indicates a high interest in that area and a potential starting point for career exploration and research. The assessment also lists sample occupations for each of the six interest groupings. These job titles come from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O*NET). The inventory also tells users where to go to get more information on jobs that interest them.

The *RIASEC Inventory* is based on work and research done by the U.S. Department of Labor, particularly in the development of its *O*NET Interest Profiler*, made available for the first time in 2001. Because JIST based the *RIASEC Inventory* on the *O*NET Interest Profiler*, much of the information the DOL provides will directly relate to the *RIASEC Inventory* as well. The U.S. Department of Labor maintains an Internet site at www.onetcenter.org that provides information on its *O*NET Interest Profiler*. Among other things, this site offers free downloadable copies of the user's guide for the *Profiler*. Following are some topics covered in the user's guide provided by the DOL that you may find relevant to the *RIASEC Inventory*:

- Reading level and age appropriateness of items.
- Procedures for interpreting the assessment.
- Background information, including the theory behind work interests and the use of interests in occupational exploration.
- Development of the instrument, including revision history and reliability and validity data.

In 2002, JIST developed its own version of the *O*NET Interest Profiler* in an attempt to build upon the efforts of the Department of Labor and make the assessments more user-friendly. The *O*NET Career Interests Inventory* was an adaptation of the *O*NET Interest Profiler*. It used the *Profiler's* work activity items, scoring system, and cross-references to job titles but combined them into one device. Directions were simplified and additional content was added to help users further their career research. However, many users still felt that the *O*NET Career Interests Inventory*—while an improvement on the DOL's version—was still too long and complicated. Therefore JIST created the *RIASEC Inventory* to serve the needs of professionals seeking a quick but powerful interest assessment.

In choosing the items for the *RIASEC Inventory*, a team of experts in the fields of career counseling and career assessment development was assembled to narrow the number of items from the 180 originally included on the *O*NET Interest Profiler* to the 72 included in the *RIASEC Inventory*. Items were screened for congruency with the Holland scales, as well as redundancy, specificity, reading level, and relevance to today's world of work. In addition, items were screened to eliminate any references to age, race, or gender.

Because it draws its items from the same item pool, scores into the same interest categories, and shares the same theoretical background, the *RIASEC Inventory* is comparable to the DOL's assessment in terms of validity and reliability. Holland's RIASEC interest categories are widely accepted within the career counseling and development field, and they form the basis of many other popular and heavily researched career interest inventories, including the *Self-Directed Search* and the *Strong Interest Inventory*. However, the *RIASEC Inventory* offers considerable advantages when compared to these other career interest inventories, namely in terms of cost, time required, and ease-of-use.

Administering the *RIASEC Inventory*

The *RIASEC Inventory* can be used by many professionals, including counselors, instructors, trainers, and job coaches. The *RIASEC Inventory* was designed for self-administration and interpretation. Here are some suggestions to help you adapt the materials for use in your situation.

Using the Inventories in a Group Setting

The *RIASEC Inventory* is designed so that most people can simply read the instructions and get started. Even so, you may find it helpful to review the steps involved in taking the inventory and answer any questions. Here are some points to cover:

- Give a brief overview of the inventory's purpose: It is a tool to help users explore career options based on their interests.
- Discuss the value of identifying interests as part of the career exploration process—namely that knowing how one's interests apply to and are incorporated in specific occupations can help that person focus their career plans or introduce occupational choices that person may not have been aware of.
- Emphasize that the inventory is not a test in the traditional sense and that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Explain that low scores are not bad and high scores are not good. The scoring is simply a way to help users identify areas they want to explore in more detail.
- Inform participants in advance if you have a time limit for when they will have to stop working. Tell them what to do if they get done early. Explain to those who do not complete the inventory in the allotted time that you will make arrangements for them to complete it after the session.
- Review the basic step-by-step elements of the inventory, explaining each step and answering questions as you go.

Due to its brevity and ease-of-use, the *RIASEC Inventory* is well suited for use in a class or group setting. Following are some tips for using the *RIASEC Inventory* as part of a career exploration curriculum.

Small group discussion: After participants finish completing the inventory and scoring their responses, you can divide the large group into small discussion groups. Give these groups a specific task. For example, ask that each person in the group tell the others his or her highest three scores, whether the scores make sense to the person, and why. Alternatively you could ask each person in the group to discuss possible jobs or job tasks that might satisfy his or her interests to get an even clearer understanding of what he or she wants in a career.

Homework: You can assign one or more of the inventory's steps or activities as homework. The results or experiences can be discussed when the group meets again. For example, group members might be asked to research one or more job descriptions that interest them and report back to the group what they learned. Small groups can be formed on the basis of highest interest so that group members are sharing information that is of value to other members.

Action activities: Action activities encourage participants to use the knowledge they've gained from taking the assessment and to physically go out and act on it. For example, you can ask group members to make one or more personal contacts to learn more about an occupation, training option, educational program, or leisure activity that is related to their interests. Alternatively, ask each group member to select a particular job that interests him or her and to find someone who works in this or a related job. Outside the session, group members should interview these persons about their work. They can document what they learn and share it with the group.

Individual or cooperative presentations: Individuals or small groups can make a large-group presentation on a topic of your or their choice. For example, they might present what they learned about a specific career area, community education

resources, the results of visits to local training programs, available financial aid, reviews of occupational information books or software, or any other career exploration topic.

Field visits and guest presenters: You can take your group to a public library and have the librarian explain the career resources that are available there, including any computerized systems or Internet resources. You can also have a vocational counselor, employer, or other person come to a session to make a presentation or to answer questions.

In addition, the worksheet at the end of this guide can be used to help structure an individual's career research. Feel free to make as many copies of this worksheet as necessary. Users or administrators looking for a more comprehensive list of occupations for each career interest area can find one at www.jist.com/shop/web/assessment-guides.

Suggestions for Additional Research

The *RIASEC Inventory* is an ideal starting point for career exploration. However, it represents only one important step in that process. Further career research requires learning about the job titles that individuals found to match their interests. Because of their correlation to the O*NET database, there is a wide variety of career reference materials and other resources individuals can use to further their exploration. Users may find the following resources especially helpful for researching occupations:

- **O*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles:** This book includes thorough descriptions of the 950 jobs in the O*NET database. Descriptions feature information on earnings, projected growth, education and training, knowledge and skills, and other helpful details. In addition, a Web site maintained by the U.S. Department of Labor at <http://online.onetcenter.org> provides complete data on all O*NET jobs.
- **Occupational Outlook Handbook:** Published by the U.S. Department of Labor and available from JIST, this book describes 270 major jobs covering about 90 percent of the workforce. Descriptions offer details on pay, working conditions, training or education required, related jobs, projected growth, and additional information sources, including Internet addresses for further research. An easy-to-use and more accessible version titled the *EZ Occupational Outlook Handbook* is also available from JIST. OOH information can also be found online at www.bls.gov/oco/.
- **Best Jobs for the 21st Century:** This book includes lists of O*NET jobs with high pay, numerous openings, or fast growth, plus descriptions for the O*NET jobs on these lists.
- **50 Best Jobs for Your Personality:** This book offers job descriptions and other useful information for each of the six interest areas used in this assessment.

Step 3 of the *RIASEC Inventory* provides lists of sample occupations to match each of the six interest areas. Users should be made aware that these lists represent only a sample of the jobs available for each cluster, and that doing more career research will lead to more job possibilities that match their interests. To aid in the career exploration

and research process, a more exhaustive list of occupations by RIASEC code is provided as part of this guide.

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Restrictions for use: The *RIASEC Inventory* and any other form of the *O*NET Interest Profiler* should be used for career exploration, career planning, and vocational counseling purposes only, and no other use has been authorized or is valid. Results should not be used for employment or hiring decisions or for applicant screening for jobs or training programs. Please see the DOL's separate Special Notice: User's Agreement at <http://online.onetcenter.org> for additional details on restrictions and use. The word "O*NET" is a trademark of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Occupational Exploration Worksheet

This worksheet can help you collect additional information on specific jobs. The more you know, the more likely you are to make a good decision. Use one or more of the following references to find details on specific jobs. Complete one worksheet for each job that interests you.

*O*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (available online at <http://online.onetcenter.org>)

Occupational Outlook Handbook (available online at www.bls.gov/oco/)

Best Jobs for the 21st Century

50 Best Jobs for Your Personality

Job title _____ **Interest area** _____

Information source(s) used to research this job _____

What do people in this job do (job description)? _____

What skills and abilities are required for this job? _____

What are the general working conditions? _____

What training, education, and other qualifications are needed? _____

Job outlook/growth _____ **Average earnings** _____

Related jobs _____

What more do you need to know about this job before you can make a decision? _____

What barriers do you face in getting this job, and how might you overcome them? _____
