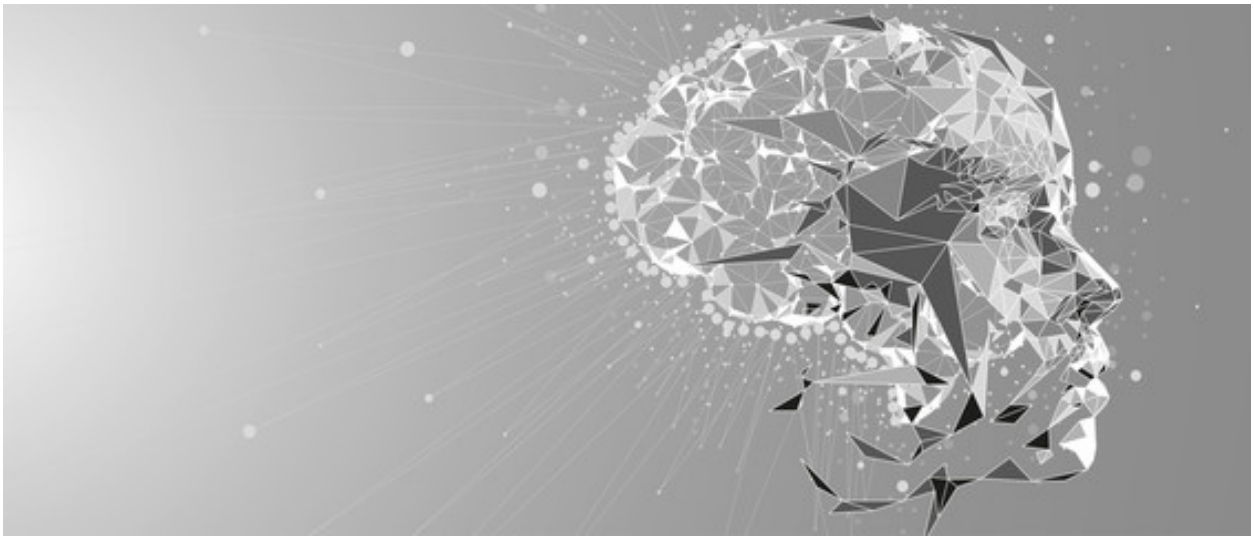


Your Natural Abilities: What the Research Reveals and How They are Measured

Ever wonder why some things seem to come so easily to you, but not to others … or the other way around? The short answer is: Everyone has a unique pattern of innate abilities which influence just about every aspect of academic and work life.

Understanding how *your* brain is naturally “hardwired” significantly enhances your self-awareness, the foundation for career success. Knowing your relative strengths can boost your confidence as you make important decisions throughout the turning points and transitions in your career and life.

Regardless of how well you think you know yourself, learning about your natural talents through the Highlands Ability Battery (HAB), an objective human aptitude assessment, can be a gamer changer for discovering what you do best.

THE HIGHLANDS ABILITY BATTERY

Gold Standard Among Human Assessment Tools

A Scientific Approach to Assessing Aptitudes

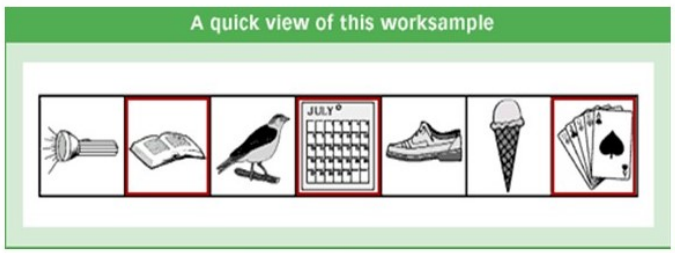
The Highlands Ability Battery (HAB) is rooted in over a century of research. First administered by the Highlands Company in 1992, the instrument was founded on the work of Johnson O'Connor, a Harvard graduate and research scientist who devoted his life to the study of human engineering.

Johnson O'Connor determined that every individual is born with a unique pattern of natural abilities that stabilize around the age of 14 and remain relatively unchanged over time. Through the Human Engineering Laboratory that he created in 1922, O'Connor developed a battery of tests or worksamples designed to identify specific aptitudes related to certain characteristics on the job.

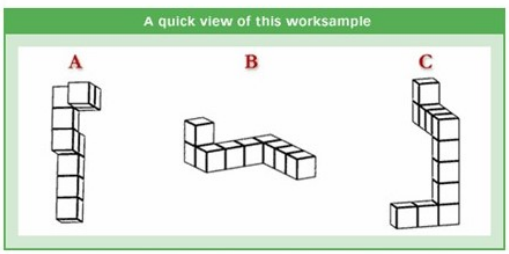
A commitment to ongoing research continues today through the Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation (JOCRF) which established and maintains the reliability and construct validity of the internal characteristics of the battery of tests- i.e., that the worksamples measure the aptitudes they are intended to measure and how they apply to specific career paths.

Unlike many other assessments and inventories, the HAB does not rely on self-reporting. Rather, through a series of worksamples, it measures a person's innate abilities based on performance using objective rather than subjective measures—a distinction worth noting as one's perception of self (or desired perception of self) can render responses easy to manipulate and therefore, less reliable.

Worksamples or exercises, like the examples shown below, must be completed in a set amount of time to isolate what comes naturally rather than executing a skill. Thus, the time limit facilitates a true indication of innate abilities.



Classification



Spatial Relations Visualization

Natural Abilities vs. Skills

Natural abilities (or aptitudes) strongly influence which tasks and activities you find relatively easy and enjoyable as well as the type of work environment where you're most likely to thrive.

At work and in life, natural abilities are complemented by skills. Skills can be acquired at any time. You might choose to gain a new skill for fun or be required to learn a new skill as dictated by the demands of your job.

It's not that you *can't* do things outside the range of your natural abilities; rather, that acquired skills will call for more time, effort and energy to engage. Unlike natural abilities which typically remain accessible throughout your lifetime (barring accident, injury or other triggers of cognitive decline), skills will decline with disuse.

When your career aligns with your natural abilities, it feels "right." You perform at your best, experience less stress and feel more fulfilled.

A Description of Natural Abilities

Natural abilities measured by the Highlands Ability Battery are divided into three categories: *Personal Style*, *Driving Abilities* and *Specialized Abilities*.

Following is a list of these abilities, along with their basic definitions:

Personal Style

Generalist and Specialist

The Generalist-to-Specialist continuum reflects your preference for assuming singular versus shared responsibility for work outcomes and the natural breadth and depth with which you approach information.

If you are a Generalist, you are likely drawn to roles that involve working through or with others to achieve a shared goal. You typically take a big-picture perspective and are usually comfortable sharing responsibilities and recognition.

If you are a Specialist, you prefer taking a deeper dive into your area of interest and becoming a subject matter expert. Roles that allow for autonomy or ownership of your work will be most satisfying to you. You may be drawn to careers in the sciences, law, engineering, music and other fields where you can develop a specific area of expertise.

Extrovert and Introvert

Extroversion and Introversion suggest the amount and type of people interaction you find energizing versus depleting. It also reflects the optimal way for you to think through ideas, problems, and plans.

If you are an Extrovert, you may prefer work environments where you can work in the presence of others, process information by thinking out loud, and take breaks to be around others when working on projects or studying on your own.

If you are an Introvert, you likely prefer environments that afford periods of solitude. You are more apt to reflect, process information and generate solutions to problems internally before discussing them with others.

(Note: This is the one self-reported worksample on the HAB.)

Time Frame Orientation

Time Frame Orientation (TFO) reflects the time frame within which you naturally plan or envision the future (i.e., whether things come into clearer focus in the immediate, intermediate or long term). It also reflects the length of time you are typically most comfortable between accomplishments and rewards.

If you score in the high range for TFO, you are probably comfortable working toward goals that may take years to develop to fruition. You will likely enjoy work roles that focus on distant targets and involve strategic planning, trend analysis or extended negotiations.

If you score in the low range, you will likely thrive in work roles that involve reaching goals over a relatively short (up to one-year) horizon, preferring environments that focus on the here and now. You are motivated by seeing immediate rewards as a result of your actions—and by completing shorter-term projects and moving on to the next.

Driving Abilities

Classification

Classification, one of two convergent reasoning abilities measured by the HAB, indicates your ability to solve problems diagnostically (moving from the specific to general), and to evaluate and critique. It also influences a preference for the structure and pace of your work environment.

If you score in the high range for Classification, you'll likely enjoy and thrive in a work environment that moves at a continuous, rapid pace and provides few parameters for finding solutions. You may be drawn to fast-paced, crisis-like roles that require continuous troubleshooting as in politics, marketing, emergency medicine, litigation, and counseling.

If you score in the low range, you might find a frenetic work environment that requires constant rapid-fire problem solving to be stressful and draining. Instead, you'll probably prefer
work situations that are organized, somewhat stable and offer some structure/ predictability. You have the capacity to be patient with individual development (an important asset for executive and managerial roles) and will enjoy roles that emphasize quality over speed and/or require accurate, deliberate decision-making.

Concept Organization

Concept Organization, another convergent reasoning ability measured by the HAB, refers to your ability to take a logical, linear approach to your work. It influences your orientation toward process, decision-making time, and communication.

If you score in the high range on the Concept Organization continuum, you likely prefer responsibilities that emphasize creating processes and procedures, careful analysis and thoroughness, or easy-to-follow communications and explanations often found in careers in law enforcement, writing, training or computer programming.

If you score in the low range, you may be more comfortable being provided or following structure. You likely cut to the bottom line with little hesitation, especially in areas where you have prior experience. You can appreciate—but don't need to see—every step in a solution.

Idea Productivity

Idea Productivity reflects your ability to generate a given number of ideas at any one time. A divergent reasoning ability, it influences how you self-manage multiple tasks and the type of contributions you make to group decisions. This ability measures quantity—not quality or originality—of ideas.

If you score in the high range for Idea Productivity, you likely enjoy brainstorming, identifying new approaches to persuading, selling or explaining information to others.

If you score in the low range, you likely prefer responsibilities that involve focus and follow-through. You might remain relatively quiet during team meetings—but when you do speak up, offer the best solution. You tend to be the implementor in the group, taking the best ideas and putting them into action.

Spatial Relations Theory

Spatial Relations Theory indicates your ability to engage in theoretical reasoning, recognizing the interrelationships between entities ("systems thinking"). It influences the way your mind envisions current and potential interactions and whether you take a pragmatic or practical versus a theoretical or hypothetical approach to tasks and projects.

The stronger this ability, the more you can naturally theorize about and study interactions in a subject for a future or hypothetical solution.

Spatial Relations Visualization

Spatial Relations Visualization refers to three-dimensional structural reasoning. It influences the types of work and results that feel "real" to you, as well as the degree of need for tangible/concrete examples and outcomes.

If you score in the high range on the Spatial Relations Visualization continuum, you likely prefer responsibilities related to the tangible world, working with your hands or with concrete facts.

If you score in the low range, you likely prefer working in the intangible world, for example, with people, ideas, policies, and relationships.

Specialized Abilities

Design Memory

Design Memory is the ability to recall overall graphic patterns or two-dimensional designs and influences visual learning. The stronger your Design Memory, the more easily you recall overall graphic patterns or designs.

Observation

Observation is the ability to notice and remember small visual details. The stronger your Observation, the more naturally you make visual comparisons quickly or automatically, recall details, or notice nuanced body language and facial expressions.

Verbal Memory

Verbal Memory is the ability to take in and recall information through the written word. It does not reflect comprehension.

The stronger your Verbal Memory, the more you can rely on reading to learn and master the vocabulary of foreign languages and other specialized vocabularies such as medical terminology, legal terminology, and scientific terms.

Tonal Memory

Tonal Memory is the ability to listen to and remember sounds, including verbal content, tunes, and tonal sequences—in other words, to learn through listening.

High Tonal Memory renders you able to quickly learn the sounds of a foreign language; it is also the foundation for a strong musical ability.

If you have low Tonal Memory, you might have difficulty remembering tunes and tonal sequences and should be encouraged to translate aural stimuli into written notes or diagrams.

Rhythm Memory

Rhythm Memory is the ability to remember the cadence, beat, or rhythm of what you hear. It also influences kinesthetic learning and a preference for movement-based work roles.

The stronger your Rhythm Memory, the more naturally you learn kinesthetically, by large muscle movement and going through the motions. If you score high in Rhythm Memory, you may do well in athletics or job roles that require physical activity, like firefighting.

Pitch Discrimination

Pitch Discrimination is the ability to make fine auditory discriminations in frequencies and pitch. It also influences your sensitivity in other sensory areas. It is an adjunct ability that lends greater specificity to major career choices.

The stronger your Pitch Discrimination, the easier it is for you to notice the tiniest of differences in what you hear, smell, feel (tactile), and/or taste.

Number Memory

Number memory is the ability to recall fairly long series of digits. It also enables you to remember miscellaneous facts and data.

This ability supports roles that require having statistical and/or numerical information at your fingertips, including accounting, banking, finance, sports broadcasting, inventory control and others.

Visual Speed and Accuracy

Visual Speed and Accuracy combine as Visual Proficiency, reflecting your ability to manage administrative or clerical work. Visual Proficiency also influences how your eyes are able to scan tables of numbers or symbols accurately and quickly.

It is important to keep in mind that abilities do not function in isolation. Rather than considering one ability at a time, the Highlands' proprietary Ability Combinations and Ability Patterns, generated from the results of the HAB, will provide a deeper understanding of your *combination* of abilities.

The patterns reveal your natural approach to managing tasks, roles and responsibilities and provide valuable insights to enhance and advance in your current career or to consider when contemplating a job or career change.