

Learning Style Inventory

Each person learns in a unique way. We each absorb and process information differently. Discovering how you learn best can help you to learn more effectively in all of your courses. This inventory will help you to determine which way you prefer to learn.

Each question has two possible answers and you should select which option best describes you. Try not to take too long to think about the answers, just pick the answer that describes you best.

Complete the Learning Style Inventory and follow the directions to identify your style of learning.

Learning Style Inventory

McWhorter (2012) provides the following Learning Style Inventory to help you assess your learning style:

Directions: Each numbered item presents two choices. Select the one alternative that best describes you. There are no right or wrong answers. In cases in which neither choice suits you, select the one that is closer to your preference. Check the letter of your choice next to the question number on the answer sheet on page 6.

1. In a class, I usually
 - a. make friends with just a few students
 - b. get to know many of my classmates

2. If I were required to act in a play, I would prefer to
 - a. have the director tell me how to say my lines
 - b. read my lines the way I think they should be read

3. Which would I find more helpful in studying the processes by which the U.S. Constitution can be amended?
 - a. a one-paragraph summary
 - b. a diagram

4. In making decisions, I am more concerned with
 - a. whether I have all the available facts
 - b. how my decision will affect others

5. When I have a difficult time understanding how something works, it helps most if I can
 - a. see how it works several times
 - b. take time to think the process through and analyze it

6. At a social event, I usually
 - a. wait for people to speak to me
 - b. initiate conversation with others

7. I prefer courses that have
 - a. a traditional structure (lectures, assigned readings, periodic exams, and assignments with deadlines)
 - b. an informal structure (class discussions, flexible assignments, and student-selected projects)

8. If I were studying one of the laws of motion in a physics course, I would prefer to have my instructor begin the class by
 - a. stating the law and discussing examples
 - b. giving a demonstration of how the law works

9. Which set of terms best describes me?
 - a. fair and objective
 - b. sympathetic and understanding

10. When I learn something new, I am more interested in
 - a. the facts about it
 - b. the principles behind it

11. As a volunteer for a community organization that is raising funds for a hospice, I prefer the following tasks.
- stuffing envelopes for a mail campaign
 - making phone calls asking for contributions
12. I would begin an ideal day by
- planning what I want to do during each hour of the day
 - doing whatever comes to mind
13. If I wanted to learn the proper way to prune a rosebush, I would prefer to
- have someone explain it to me
 - watch someone do it
14. It is more important for me to be
- consistent in thought and action
 - responsive to the feelings of others
15. If I kept a journal or diary, it would most likely contain entries about
- what happens to me each day
 - the insights and ideas that occur to me each day
16. If I decided to learn a musical instrument, I would prefer to take
- one-on-one lessons
 - group lessons
17. If I worked in a factory, I would prefer to be a
- machine operator
 - troubleshooter

18. I learn best when I
- write down the information
 - form a mental picture of the information
19. If I gave a wrong answer in class, my main concern would be
- finding out the correct answer
 - what others in class thought of me
20. I prefer television news programs that
- summarize events through film footage and factual description
 - deal with the issues behind the events
21. Whenever possible, I choose to
- study alone
 - study with a group
22. In selecting a topic for a research paper, my more important concern is
- choosing a topic for which there is adequate information
 - choosing a topic I find interesting
23. To help me reassemble a complicated toy or machine I took apart to repair, I would
- write a list of the steps I followed when taking the toy or machine apart
 - draw a diagram of the toy or machine
24. As a member of a jury for a criminal trial, I would be primarily concerned with
- determining how witness testimony fits with the other evidence
 - judging the believability of witnesses
25. If I were an author, I would most likely write
- biographies or how-to books

- b. novels or poetry
26. A career in which my work depends on that of others is
- a. less appealing than working alone
 - b. more appealing than working alone
27. When I am able to solve a problem, it is usually because I
- a. worked through the solution step by step
 - b. brainstormed until I arrived at a solution
28. I prefer to keep up with the news by
- a. reading a newspaper
 - b. watching television news programs
29. If I witnessed a serious auto accident, my first impulse would be to
- a. assess the situation
 - b. comfort any injured people
30. I pride myself on my ability to
- a. remember numbers and facts
 - b. see how ideas are related
31. To solve a personal problem, I prefer to
- a. think about it myself
 - b. talk it through with friends
32. If I had one last elective course to take before graduation, I would choose one that presents
- a. practical information that I can use immediately
 - b. ideas that make me think and stimulate my imagination

33. For recreation, I would rather do a
- a. crossword puzzle
 - b. jigsaw puzzle
34. I can best be described as
- a. reasonable and levelheaded
 - b. sensitive and caring
35. When I read a story or watch a film, I prefer one with a plot that is
- a. clear and direct
 - b. intricate and complex

Answer Sheet

Directions: Check either a or b in the boxes next to each question number.

<i>Column One</i>		<i>Column Two</i>		<i>Column Three</i>		<i>Column Four</i>		<i>Column Five</i>						
	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>		<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>		<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>						
1			2			3			4			5		
6			7			8			9			10		
11			12			13			14			15		
16			17			18			19			20		
21			22			23			24			25		
26			27			28			29			30		
31			32			33			34			35		
Total														

Directions for Scoring

1. On your answer sheet, add the checkmarks in each a and b column, counting first the number of a's checked and then the number of b's.
2. Enter the number of a's and b's you checked in the boxes at the bottom of each column.
3. Transfer these numbers to the Scoring Grid. Enter the number of a choices in column one in the blank labeled "Independent," the number of b choices in column one in the blank labeled "Social," and so on.
4. Circle your higher score in each row. For example, if you scored 2 for Independent and 5 for Social, circle "5" and "Social."
5. Your higher score in each row indicates a characteristic of your learning style. If the scores in a particular row are close to one another, such as 3 and 4, this suggests that you do not have a strong preference for either approach to learning. Scores that are far apart, such as 1 and 6, suggest that you favor one way of learning over the other.

Interpreting Your Scores

The Learning Style Inventory is divided into five parts; each question in the inventory assesses one of five aspects of your learning style. Here is how to interpret the five aspects of your learning style.

Scoring Grid		
Column	Number of Checkmarks	
	Choice a	Choice b
One	_____ Independent	_____ Social
Two	_____ Pragmatic	_____ Creative
Three	_____ Verbal	_____ Spatial
Four	_____ Rational	_____ Emotional
Five	_____ Concrete	_____ Abstract

1. Independent or Social

These scores indicate the level of interaction with others that you prefer. Independent learners prefer to work and study alone. They focus on the task at hand rather than on the people around them and are often goal oriented and self-motivated. Social learners are more people oriented and prefer to learn and study with classmates. They often focus their attention on those around them and see a task as an opportunity for social interaction.

2. Pragmatic or Creative

These scores suggest how you prefer to approach learning tasks. Pragmatic learners are practical and systematic. They approach tasks in an orderly, sequential manner. They like rules and learn step by step. Creative learners, in contrast, approach tasks imaginatively. They prefer to learn through discovery or experiment. They enjoy flexible, open-ended tasks and tend to dislike following rules.

3. Verbal or Spatial

These scores indicate the way you prefer to take in and process information. Verbal learners rely on language, usually written text, to acquire information. They are skilled in the use of language and can work with other symbol systems as well. Spatial learners prefer to take in information by studying graphics such as drawings, diagrams, films, or videos. They can visualize in their minds how things work or how things are positioned in space.

4. Rational or Emotional

These scores suggest your preferred approach to decision making and problem solving. Rational learners are objective and impersonal; they rely on facts and information when making decisions or solving problems. Rational learners are logical, often challenging or questioning a task. They enjoy prioritizing, analyzing, and arguing. In contrast, emotional learners are subjective; they focus on feelings and values. Emotional decision makers are socially conscious and often concerned with what others think. In making a decision, they seek harmony and may base a decision in part on its effect on others. Emotional decision makers are often skilled at persuasion.

5. Concrete or Abstract

These scores indicate how you prefer to perceive information. Concrete learners pay attention to what is concrete and observable. They focus on details and tend to perceive tasks in parts or steps. Concrete learners prefer actual, tangible tasks and usually take a no-nonsense approach to learning. Abstract learners look at a task from a broader perspective. They tend to focus on the “big picture” or an overview of a task. Abstract learners focus on large ideas, meanings, and relationships.

This inventory most likely confirmed some things you already knew about yourself, but it also may have provided you with some new information about how you tend to take in information. This particular inventory is just one way to gather information and happens to be geared particularly toward the writing process. No one knows you better than yourself; you can determine how accurate these results are. Just remember that as you grow and change during your educational journey, so might your style of learning. Try to experiment and use styles that you might not have used before. You might be surprised to find what works for you.

Reference

McWhorter, K. T. (2012). *Successful college writing* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford St. Martin's.