



What are you like?

Unlike practical or soft skills which can be learned or developed, your personality is about your natural strengths and preferences – what you're like and what motivates you.

Thinking about your personality can help you:

- Deal with different situations
- Get along with other people
- Make better decisions
- Consider the types of role and working environment which may suit you

Strong teams often have a mix of personality types – this means they have a range of strengths and ways of approaching problems. Understanding what others are like also helps you work well together.

When it comes to personality types there is no right or wrong – different strengths are useful in different ways. Being aware of your personality and preferences can help you adapt your behaviour to make life easier.

For example:

- If you tend to act first but think later, then taking time to consider your options or talking things through can help you avoid mistakes
- If you don't like surprises, then having some simple coping strategies can help you feel in control – try taking deep breaths or saying you'll get back to someone rather than giving an instant reply
- If you always try and wing it, then starting early with the important stuff, such as exam revision, can help you be more prepared

This idea also applies to careers. For example, if you like variety and action, then working in a fast-paced environment will probably suit you better than somewhere calm and quiet.

Lots of roles need a balance of personal qualities. People working in the caring professions, such as doctors or social workers, need to be able to empathise without becoming emotionally involved.

If you're thinking about careers, considering your preferences can help you identify jobs which could suit you. Do you prefer sitting at a desk or being out and about? Would you rather work as part of a team or on your own? Do you thrive on routine or the unexpected?

Alternatively, focusing on your strengths is a great way open up career ideas.

Neil is a plant hire manager. He loved the social side of school and was always chatting. "The job involves talking to people so I've sort of made it into a career."

[Watch video](#)

Activity: identifying personal strengths, qualities and preferences

1. Use the lists below or your own ideas to find three strengths, qualities or preferences which apply to you.

Then, working with a partner or in small groups:

2. Find one which you share.
3. Find one for each of you which you don't share.
4. Think of a job where one of these strengths, qualities or preferences could be useful.

Do you like...?

Having lots on the go	Being under pressure	Change
Trying new things	Routine	Learning new skills
Having clear goals	Sticking to what you know	Being on your own
Getting stuff done	Following the rules	Being in charge
Thinking on your feet	Complex tasks	Starting something new
Thinking things over	Working things out yourself	Being in a team

Are you...?

Adventurous	Creative	Calm
Patient	Organised	Chatty
Assertive	Good at listening	Practical
Persuasive	Instinctive	Quiet
Independent	Full of ideas	Determined

Do you...?

Like to please	Like to stand out	Question everything
Focus on the detail	Show your feelings	Adapt easily
Speak your mind	Take the initiative	Consider other's feelings
Avoid conflict	Plan ahead	Live in the moment

See how different personal qualities and strengths can link to jobs – watch these short career videos or explore more real-life career videos on icould.com:

- **Organising:** [Mark is a steeplejack contracts manager](#)
- **Being part of a team:** [Louisa is a business manager](#)
- **Connecting people:** [Jozsef is a conference manager](#)
- **Making ideas happen:** [Mustafa is a UX designer](#)
- **Finding new ways to look at things:** [Antoine is a senior lecturer](#)
- **Being active:** [Dave is an activity instructor group leader](#)
- **Solving problems:** [Barbara is a civil engineer](#)

Extension exercise

Tackling the tricky interview question - what are your strengths and weaknesses?

- Why do you think employers often ask this question?
- What do you think makes a good answer?
- How can you frame weaknesses in a positive way?