

Holland's Theory of Career Choice

Careers are determined by an interaction between our personality and the environment in John Holland's Theory of Career Choice. We want jobs with people like us.

John Holland's Theory of Career Choice (RIASEC) maintains that in choosing a career, people prefer jobs where they can be around others who are like them. They search for environments that will let them use their skills and abilities, and express their attitudes and values, while taking on enjoyable problems and roles. Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment.

Holland's theory is centered on the notion that most people fit into one of six personality types:

- Realistic
- Investigative
- Artistic
- Social
- Enterprising
- Conventional

Realistic

Description of interest area	Some key skills	Some occupations with Realistic components	Subjects you could study to give you the skills
Likes to work mainly with hands, making, fixing, assembling or building things, using and operating equipment, tools or machines. Often likes to work outdoors	Using and operating tools, equipment and machinery, designing, building, repairing, maintaining, working manually, measuring, working in detail, driving, moving, caring for animals, working with plants	Pilot, farmer, horticulturalist, builder, engineer, armed services personnel, mechanic, upholsterer, electrician, computer technologist, park ranger, sportsperson	English, Math, Science, Workshop, Technology, Computing, Business Studies, Agriculture, Horticulture, Physical Education

Investigative

Description of interest area	Some key skills	Some occupations with Investigative components	Subjects you could study to give you the skills
Likes to discover and research ideas, observe, investigate and experiment, ask questions and solve problems	Thinking analytically and logically, computing, communicating by writing and speaking, designing, formulating, calculating, diagnosing, experimenting, investigating	Science, research, medical and health occupations, chemist, marine scientist, forestry technician, medical or agricultural laboratory technician, zoologist, dentist, doctor	English, Math, Science, Computing, Technology

Artistic

Description of interest area	Some key skills	Some occupations with Artistic components	Subjects you could study to give you the skills
Likes to use words, art, music or drama to communicate, perform, or express themselves, create and design things	Expressing artistically or physically, speaking, writing, singing, performing, designing, presenting, planning, composing, playing, dancing	Artist, illustrator, photographer, songwriter, composer, singer, instrument player, dancer, actor, reporter, writer, editor, advertiser, hairdresser, fashion designer	English, Social Studies, Music, Drama, Art, Graphic Design, Computing, Business Studies, Languages

Social

Description of interest area	Some key skills	Some occupations with Social components	Subjects you could study to give you the skills
Likes to work with people to teach, train and inform, help, treat, heal and cure, serve and greet, concerned for the wellbeing and welfare of others	Communicating orally or in writing, caring and supporting, training, meeting, greeting, assisting, teaching, informing, interviewing, coaching	Teacher, nurse, nurse aide, counsellor, police officer, social worker, salesperson, customer service officer, waiter, secretary	English, Social Studies, Math, Science, Health, Physical Education, Art, Computing, Business Studies, Languages

Enterprising

Description of interest area	Some key skills	Some occupations with Enterprising components	Subjects you could study to give you the skills
Likes meeting people, leading, talking to and influencing others, encouraging others, working in business	Selling, promoting and persuading, developing ideas, public speaking, managing, organizing, leading and captaining, computing, planning	Salesperson, lawyer, politician, accountant, business owner, executive or manager, travel agent, music or sports promoter	English, Math, Business Studies, Accounting, Economics, Social Studies, Drama, Computing, Text Information Management, Languages

Conventional

Description of interest area	Some key skills	Some occupations with Conventional components	Subjects you could study to give you the skills
Likes working indoors and at tasks that involve organizing and being accurate, following procedures, working with data or numbers, planning work and events	Computing and keyboarding, recording and keeping records, paying attention to detail, meeting and greeting, doing calculations, handling money, organizing, arranging, working independently	Secretary, receptionist, office worker, librarian, bank clerk, computer operator, stores and dispatch clerk	English, Math, Business Studies, Accounting, Economics, Computing, Text Information Management

Holland asserts that people of the same personality type working together in a job create an environment that fits and rewards their type.

Within this theory there are six basic types of work environment, which correlate directly to the personality types. Holland emphasizes that people who choose to work in an environment similar to their personality type are more likely to be successful and satisfied. This idea is important as it shows Holland's theory can be flexible, incorporating combination types.

Holland's theory takes a problem-solving and cognitive approach to career planning. His model has been very influential in career counselling. It has been employed through popular assessment tools such as the Self-Directed Search, Vocational Preference Inventory and the Strong Interest Inventory.

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