

# MBTI

MBTI stands for Myers Briggs Type Indicator. This is a tool which is frequently used to help individuals understand their own communication preference and how they interact with others. Having an awareness of what MBTI is can help you adapt your interpersonal approach to different situations and audiences.

MBTI derives its underpinning theory from the work of Carl Jung and “Psychological Type”. Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother Katharine Briggs developed the system to make Jung’s work more accessible and useful in people’s everyday lives.

More than 2 million people use the MBTI personal inventory all around the world, with 20+ years of research and over 4000 research papers validating the theory.

## Common uses for MBTI include:

- Developing yourself
- Working with teams
- Understanding stress reactions
- Career development
- Working relationships
- Communication style
- Resolving conflict
- Leadership style
- Managing change
- Valuing diversity
- Considering team and organisational culture
- Problem-solving



*Katharine Cook Briggs*  
1875–1968



*Isabel Briggs Myers*  
1897–1980

MBTI talks about an individual's *preference* not their *capability*. This is an important distinction. Everyone has the *capability* to use all styles, however they will have a *preferred* style which they will use most of the time.

*For example; you will have a preference to use one hand rather than the other to write. In the space below write your name with your preferred hand. Then switch to your non-preferred hand to write your name.*

Preferred hand: ..... Non-preferred hand: .....

You are capable of writing your name with both; however your preferred hand was easier to use, the outcome was better and it felt natural. Using your non-preferred hand meant the result wasn't quite as good, you had to concentrate more and it probably took longer. It will get better with practice, however it is likely you will out of habit go back to your preferred hand. It is the same with type.

The purpose of MBTI is to raise awareness of your own *preference* and recognise where the other styles could add value, thinking about how you could do this. No one style is better than the others. An understanding of all increases flexibility and adaptability.

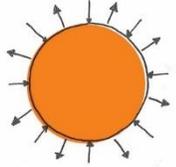
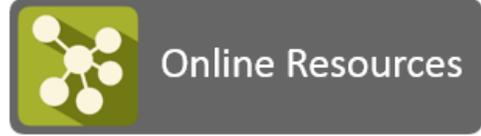
***NB MBTI should never be used as part of a recruitment process.***

# So, what are the preferences?

MBTI uses four scales to talk about preference, each with two opposing preferences. These are called the four dimensions of type and they are:

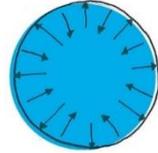


# Extraversion vs introversion – where you get your energy from



## Extraversion (E)

- Tend to act before thinking
- Prefer to get into action
- Talk things through
- More expressive when interacting
- Gain energy from interaction
- Have a breadth of interests



## Introversion (I)

- Tend to think before acting
- Prefer to spend time on reflection
- Think things through
- More contained when interacting
- Gain energy from concentration
- Have a depth of interests

**Remember**, extraversion and introversion aren't to do with sociability or social confidence, it is all to do with where someone gets their energy from.

When thinking about your own preference consider the below situations and reflect on whether you have preference for introversion or extraversion.

### ***How do you operate in meetings?***

Do you like to talk things through (E) or prefer time to think things through (I)?

### ***What is your preferred working environment?***

Do you like a busy and lively environment with opportunities for interaction (E) or prefer quiet space for reflection and concentration (I)?

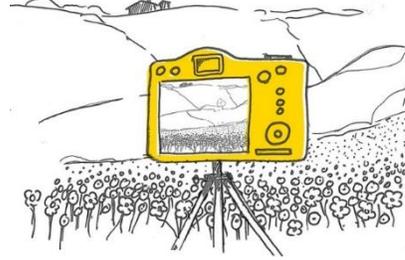
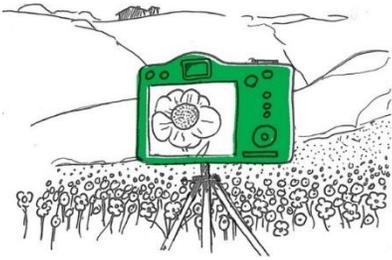
### ***How do you recharge at the end of the day?***

Re-energising by doing something active (E) or having time to wind down and think things through (I)?

### ***What kind of hobbies do you enjoy?***

Hobbies that involve action and allow you to meet others (E) or ones that encourage reflection and allow concentration (I)?

# Sensing v intuition – what kind of information you prefer to gather



## Sensing (S)

- Want to know the facts
- Look at specifics
- Adopt a realistic approach
- Focus on the here and now
- Ensure things work in practice
- Collect observations about the world.

## Intuition (N)

- Seek out new ideas
- Look at the bigger picture
- Adopt an imaginative approach
- Anticipate the future
- Ensure things work in theory
- Use conceptual frameworks

**Remember**, sensing isn't to do with being "sensitive" and intuitive isn't to do with "gut feel".

When thinking about your own preference consider the below situations and reflect on whether you have preference for sensing or intuition.

### ***What kind of instructions work well for you?***

Do you prefer step by step, realistic instructions that are clear and accurate (S) or do you prefer to be given the overall purpose and work it out for yourself (N)? Imagine you are completing an ikea flat pack – do you follow the instructions (S) or just give it a go (N)?

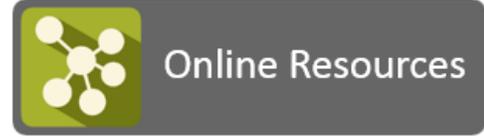
### ***How do you approach learning something new?***

YOU like to try things out and experience, focussing on learning that has a practical application (S) or rather explore how learning fits with other ideas and explore imaginatively (N)?

### ***What information do you need when buying something?***

The facts, specification and details to see if it will meet your needs (S) or an overview and imagine how the product will work for you, a vision of the future and how you will use it (N)?

# Thinking v feeling – how you make decisions



## Thinking (T)

- Apply logical reasoning
- Use cause-and-effect analysis
- Seek objective truth
- Decide using impersonal criteria
- Focus on tasks
- Provide a critique

## Feeling (F)

- Apply individual values
- Understand others' viewpoints
- Seek harmony
- Decide according to personal circumstance
- Focus on relationships
- Offer praise

**Remember**, just because someone has a thinking preference, this doesn't mean they don't have feelings! And just because someone has a feeling preference this doesn't mean they don't think about things!

When thinking about your own preference consider the below situations and reflect on whether you have preference for thinking or feeling.

### ***How do you go about making decisions?***

Do you step out of the situation to decide objectively, using impersonal criteria (T) or do you step into the situation to weigh things up and take into account personal circumstance (F)?

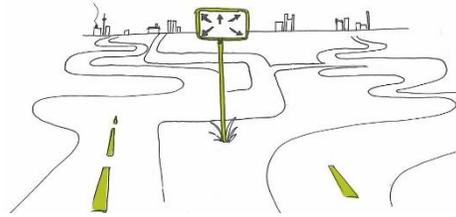
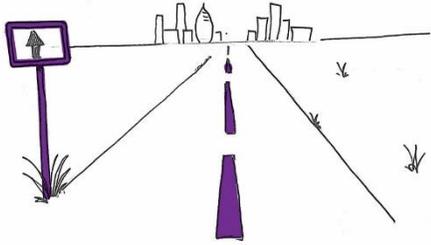
### ***How do you like to be recognised/appreciated?***

For a job well done at the end of a task (T) or for personal contribution and to be valued throughout the project (F)?

### ***How would you help someone with a problem?***

By fixing the problem by looking at practicalities and focussing on tasks (T) or by supporting someone, seeing how they feel about the situation and focussing on relationships?

# Judging v perceiving – *how you deal with the world around you*



## Judging (J)

- Like to come to closure
- Make plans
- Act in a controlled way
- Prefer to act within a structure
- Prefer to schedule activities

## Perceiving (P)

- Like to keep a range of choices available
- Remain flexible
- Respond to emerging information
- Prefer to go with the flow
- Prefer to be spontaneous

**Remember**, judging isn't to do with being "judgemental" and perceiving isn't to do with being "perceptive".

When thinking about your own preference consider the below situations and reflect on whether you have preference for judging or perceiving.

### ***What is your approach to deadlines?***

Do you work in a step by step approach to complete a task, being frustrate by last minute pressure or change (J) or do you prefer to work in an emergent, flexible way feeling energised by last minute pressure (P)?

### ***At what point do you come to closure on a decision?***

You prefer to decide sooner rather than later so you have the decision made and you can plan accordingly (J) or rather keep your options open as long as possible so you aren't tied down by a decision (P)?

### ***When do you work and when do you play?***

Tend not to feel comfortable playing whilst there is work to be done, see play as a reward for finishing work (J) or play without the outstanding work interfering with your enjoyment, seeing life as too short not to take the opportunity to play (P)?

# How does this work in practice?



These preferences will combine to form a four letter type and will influence how you interact with the people around you. See the examples below to illustrate the different approaches people may take in work scenarios.

## **In a meeting – Extraversion and Introversion**

An extraverted preference will often like to talk through their thoughts to work through issues, whereas an introverted preference will need time to reflect. This can cause a potential clash in meetings – with extraverts potentially being frustrated by the lack of contribution from the introverts, and introverts becoming frustrated with not having time to think and the extroverts dominating the conversation!

## **Approach to feedback – Thinking and feeling**

These preferences approach feedback differently; it is useful to bear this in mind. Thinkers will focus on improving the task, they may notice flaws and critique first, completely forgetting to offer praise. Whereas feelers give feedback to support the person and praise good points (sometimes even overlooking the flaws!). A mismatch can be demotivating to an individual and they can be left feeling frustrated or under supported.

## **Email communication – Sensing and intuition**

Individuals with a sensing preference will prefer to give a detailed account in emails, taking time to provide specifics. Emails can often be long and perceived as unnecessarily complicated to intuitive preferences. Their approach to emails maybe to give the big picture and talk about the purpose of a piece of work, however they may neglect some of the useful detail that sensing preference requires.

## **Project work – Judging and perceiving**

Judging preference will often like to create a plan, allocate tasks and get stuck into a project to get it completed ASAP. People with a perceiving preference may feel restricted by this, without the flexibility and freedom to explore options. This can cause conflict when working on a project with judging preference potentially becoming frustrated that a perceiving preference is cutting things fine, and the perceiving preference feeling rushed into action.