

Big Five personality test theory

Why do people respond differently to the same situations? In contemporary psychology, the *Big Five factors of personality* are five broad domains which define human personality and account for individual differences. This article tells you more about the Big Five personality theory. After reading it, take our free [personality test](#) or [career test](#) to determine your own Big Five personality type.

History of Big Five personality theory

Several independent sets of researchers discovered and defined the five broad factors based on empirical, data-driven research. Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal advanced the initial model, based on work done at the U.S. Air Force Personnel Laboratory in the late 1950s.¹ J.M. Digman proposed his five factor model of personality in 1990², and Goldberg extended it to the highest level of organizations in 1993.³ In a **personality test**, the Five Factor Model or FFM⁴ and the Global Factors of personality⁵ may also be used to reference the Big Five traits.

Traits of the Big Five personality test

Human resources professionals often use the Big Five personality dimensions to help place employees. That is because these dimensions are considered to be the underlying traits that make up an individual's overall personality. The Big Five traits are **Openness**, **Conscientiousness**, **Extroversion**, **Agreeableness**, and **Neuroticism** or OCEAN:

- [Openness](#) - People who like to learn new things and enjoy new experiences usually score high in openness. Openness includes traits like being insightful and imaginative and having a wide variety of interests.

- [Conscientiousness](#) - People that have a high degree of conscientiousness are reliable and prompt. Traits include being organized, methodic, and thorough.
- [Extraversion](#) - Extraverts get their energy from interacting with others, while introverts get their energy from within themselves. Extraversion includes the traits of energetic, talkative, and assertive.
- [Agreeableness](#) - These individuals are friendly, cooperative, and compassionate. People with low agreeableness may be more distant. Traits include being kind, affectionate, and sympathetic.
- [Neuroticism](#) - Neuroticism is also sometimes called Emotional Stability. This dimension relates to one's emotional stability and degree of negative emotions. People that score high on neuroticism often experience emotional instability and negative emotions. Traits include being moody and tense.

How to use results from the Big Five personality test

The [Big Five personality test](#) gives you more insight into how you react in different situations, which can help you choose an occupation. Career professionals and psychologists use this information in a personality career test for recruitment and candidate assessment.

Test personality free

To determine your Big Five personality traits, take our free online [personality test](#). It tells you more about yourself and what your strengths and weaknesses are. This personality test measures the Big Five personality factors developed over several decades by independent groups of researchers. It is the most scientifically validated and reliable psychological model to **test personality**. You can also take our [career test](#) to test personality.

¹Tupes, E.C., Christal, R.E.; "Recurrent Personality Factors Based on Trait Ratings," Technical Report ASD-TR-61-97, Lackland Air Force Base, TX: Personnel Laboratory, Air Force Systems Command, 1961.

²Digman, J.M., "Personality structure: Emergence of the five-factor model," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 41, 417-440, 1990.

³Goldberg, L.R., "The structure of phenotypic personality traits," *American Psychologist*, 48, 26-34, 1993.

⁴Costa, P.T., Jr., McCrae, R.R.; *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, 1992.

⁵Russell, M.T., Karol, D.; *16PF Fifth Edition administrator's manual*. Champaign, IL: Institute for Personality & Ability Testing, 1994.