

## How would you describe yourself ... honestly?

**Level:** Advanced (C1–C2)

**Time:** Approximately 90 minutes

**Business topics:** Hiring practices, applying for a job, organisational psychology

**Business language:** Useful vocabulary, business phrases, collocations, terms to describe personality

**Activities:** Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, decision-making: selecting a personality assessment tool

**Groups:** Whole class, one-to-one, small groups

**Overview:** This article discusses how and why employers are using personality assessments and their accuracy and limitations.

### 1. Warmer

- a. With a partner, students answer the questions leading to the article. After they have talked with a partner for a few minutes, get students to share their thoughts and ideas with the rest of the group. Write students' contributions of vocabulary used to describe personality on the board.

### 2. Key words

- a. Have students complete the task individually and compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from the whole class.

**Key:**

- |                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>aptitude</i>     | 8. <i>integrity</i>         |
| 2. <i>hypothetical</i> | 9. <i>embellish</i>         |
| 3. <i>hard-wired</i>   | 10. <i>reveal, revealed</i> |
| 4. <i>innately</i>     | 11. <i>trawl, trawled</i>   |
| 5. <i>game-changer</i> | 12. <i>assurance</i>        |
| 6. <i>prevalent</i>    | 13. <i>empathetic</i>       |
| 7. <i>profiling</i>    | 14. <i>invaluable</i>       |

### 3. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to scan the article individually to complete this activity and then to compare their answers.

**Suggested key:**

1. <b>what AlixPartners research</b>	<i>the core psychological needs of potential recruits</i>
2. <b>applications</b>	<i>Knowing what innately drives an individual, they can hire for the long term and weed out people who are not a good fit.</i>
3. <b>personality assessment tool disclaimer &amp; reasons</b>	<i>They should not be used to predict job performance since people lie, responses vary depending on the day, and practice tests mean you can beat the system.</i>
4. <b>Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic on accuracy</b>	<i>There is huge variability in the quality of tests. A small proportion of them were very accurate, but well-designed tests predict performance.</i>
5. <b>what companies use pre-employment testing</b>	<i>85–90% of companies on the Fortune 500, FTSE 100 and S&amp;P 500 indices, from PepsiCo and Boeing to Shell, Maersk and Spotify</i>
6. <b>screening methods and findings</b>	<i>In evaluating CVs, credit, criminal checks, and getting references, 40% have an error.</i>
7. <b>writer's test results</b>	<i>She is task-orientated, value-driven, and works best with clear, well-defined objectives; she can take on too much, need help delegating, become overinvested in achieving goals, and be stubborn and critical. Her ability to quickly process masses of data could be better.</i>

8. <b>factors that influence results</b>	<i>sleeping well, doing practice tests</i>
9. <b>benefits of testing</b>	<i>Testing provides extra assurance and saves the company money because hiring the wrong person is costly.</i>
10. <b>benefits of a hypothetical 100% accurate test</b>	<i>Manage people better; individuals would be assigned work more suited to them, and groups could function better.</i>

## 4. Business language – collocations

- a. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the activity. Then, regroup them so they can compare their answers in small groups before checking the answers with the whole class.

**Key:**

1. *resolve*
2. *diversify*
3. *collect / process*
4. *issue*
5. *embellish*
6. *become overinvested in*
7. *trawl*
8. *assess / measure*
9. *assign*
10. *dissipate*

- b. Ask students to complete the sentences individually before comparing their answers in pairs.

**Key:**

1. *trawled the internet*
2. *embellished qualifications*
3. *resolve, problems/disputes*
4. *assign, work*
5. *diversify, workforce*
6. *dissipate conflict*
7. *disclaimer, issued*
8. *measuring/assessing*
9. *collected, data*
10. *become overinvested in*

- c. Ask students to work individually and scan the article for useful vocabulary related to recruitment. They can decide how to organise this. It could be by part of speech, words related to employers/job candidates, words related by meaning, collocations, etc.

**Possible answers:**

<p><b>People:</b>  <i>recruitment company / organisational psychologist</i></p> <p><i>potential recruit / prospective employee</i></p>	<p><b>Actions:</b>  <i>hire for long term, build teams, predict job performance, recruit from specific schools, hire someone, evaluate CV, get references, assess an individual's skills and potential for growth, measure emotional intelligence</i></p> <p><i>be a cultural fit, embellish work histories and qualifications</i></p>
<p><b>Other:</b>  <i>pre-employment testing hiring tool work histories and qualifications credit and criminal checks shortage of skilled workers</i></p>	

## 5. Discussion

- a. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all of the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

## 6. Wider business theme – using personality assessment tools in the recruitment process

- a. Read the situation with the whole class.
- b. Put students into pairs and assign each pair a different personality assessment tool (HEXACO, DISC or Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). Ask each pair to brainstorm the pros and cons for their assigned assessment tool. Encourage them to do additional research. The purpose of this stage is for students to be prepared to present their assessment tool and try to convince others that it is the best option.

Once students are prepared, regroup them so they work in groups of three or six (one or two students representing each assessment option). Ask students to hold a meeting and decide which tool to use.

You can first brainstorm useful language for this task.

### **Possible answers:**

*... is a priority for us. We would need an assessment tool that ...*

*Given that ..., it is an excellent choice.*

*... makes it the most appropriate choice for us since ...*

*... is invaluable.*

*I recognise that ... but I still believe that ...*

*In addition, the ... allows ...*

*I see what you're saying, but ...*

*I think we can all agree that ...*

### **Extension**

Students can write an email summarising the meeting outcomes. You could suggest a structure as follows:

1. Background (situation)
2. Summary of suggested options
3. Final decision and reasons this assessment tool was supported most