



Learning Preferences Inventory

Follow steps 1–3 to rank statements about your preferred learning approach, score your learning preferences inventory, and identify your learning preference. The Learning Styles Grid on page 5 provides examples of activities that best correspond with each learning preference.

Step 1: Rank the Statements

Read the four statements in each of the six groups on the next page. Rank the statements from your most preferred learning approach (1) to your least preferred approach (4), by circling the corresponding number to the right of the statement. Use each number (1 through 4) only once in each group. Rank the statements according to your general preferences, not according to a particular task or skill you want to learn.

Example

In the following example, the subject’s first preference (1) is to *practice new skills alone before trying them in public*. This person’s least preferred learning approach (4) is to *try new skills with others*.

1—First Preference	2—Second Preference	3—Third Preference	4—Fourth Preference
1. Ask others how they learned new skills.			1 2 3 4
2. Practice new skills alone before trying them in public.			1 2 3 4
3. Figure out for myself a step-by-step approach to learning new skills.			1 2 3 4
4. Try new skills with others.			1 2 3 4





	1—First Preference	2—Second Preference	3—Third Preference	4—Fourth Preference
1. Ask others how they learned new skills.	1	2	3	4
2. Practice new skills alone before trying them in public.	1	2	3	4
3. Figure out for myself a step-by-step approach to learning new skills.	1	2	3	4
4. Try new skills with others.	1	2	3	4
5. Read what experts say about an area in which I have a learning opportunity.	1	2	3	4
6. Interview experts for their ideas on the best way to take advantage of a learning opportunity.	1	2	3	4
7. Work on new learning opportunities in a group setting.	1	2	3	4
8. Act independently when facing a learning opportunity.	1	2	3	4
9. Interview an expert about his or her philosophy and approach.	1	2	3	4
10. Take a trial-and-error approach.	1	2	3	4
11. Study the theory behind a new approach on my own.	1	2	3	4
12. Work alongside an expert who can explain his or her approach.	1	2	3	4
13. Experience mistakes while working alongside others.	1	2	3	4
14. Learn from my mistakes as I make them.	1	2	3	4
15. Make a systematic study of my mistakes.	1	2	3	4
16. Ask others to suggest ways to remedy my mistakes.	1	2	3	4
17. Try new techniques by myself before involving others.	1	2	3	4
18. Discuss new techniques with others before trying them.	1	2	3	4
19. Independently figure out the best way to approach new techniques.	1	2	3	4
20. Plunge into using new techniques with associates.	1	2	3	4
21. Brainstorm tactics and strategies with others before attempting new procedures.	1	2	3	4
22. Formulate my own tactics and strategies before attempting new procedures.	1	2	3	4
23. Try new procedures on my own, and allow tactics and strategies to emerge with experience.	1	2	3	4
24. Try new procedures with others, and share tactics and strategies as they emerge.	1	2	3	4



Step 2: Score the Learning Preferences Inventory

From each statement on the previous page, copy the number you circled into the appropriate numbered space below.

Add the numbers in each of the four columns, and write the totals in the spaces provided. (Your four totals added together should equal 60.)

Thinking Alone	Thinking with Others	Acting Alone	Acting with Others
3. _____	1. _____	2. _____	4. _____
5. _____	6. _____	8. _____	7. _____
11. _____	9. _____	10. _____	12. _____
15. _____	16. _____	14. _____	13. _____
19. _____	18. _____	17. _____	20. _____
22. _____	21. _____	23. _____	24. _____
Totals: _____	_____	_____	_____





Step 3: Identify Your Learning Preference

The column with the *lowest* score indicates your *most preferred* learning style. The column with the *highest* score is the learning style you *least prefer*. Your preference is a guide, not a rule. There is no *right* learning preference, nor must you use the approach of your lowest scored item. The results simply suggest how you *like* to learn.

If the difference between scores is minimal, you probably can adapt to a learning approach other than your preferred one. If there is a wide gap between the scores, your preference is strong. Knowing your learning preference will help you to choose the types of activities, when possible, that will enable you to accomplish your development plan with greater retention and interest.

Thinking Alone	Thinking with Others	Acting Alone	Acting with Others
Prefer to study, observe, and plan before undertaking a new activity.	Prefer to get others' ideas before trying new behaviors.	Prefer to plunge into a new activity independently rather than study it in advance.	Prefer to act on rather than contemplate learning new things, but rely on others for feedback and advice, or to be role models.





Learning Styles Grid

Thinking Alone

Studying, observing, and planning before undertaking a new activity.

- Reading case studies and biographies.
- Observing role models on TV or video.
- Analyzing yourself, reflecting on your performance.
- Shadowing role models.
- Reading work-related publications and reference material.
- Studying self-paced learning.

Thinking with Others

Getting people's ideas before trying something new.

- Exchanging ideas at conferences.
- Requesting feedback on specific aspects of your performance.
- Networking outside the organization.
- Interviewing experts in your field.
- Participating in a class or workshop.
- Being a coach or mentor.
- Getting advice on handling a new task.

Acting Alone

Plunging into a new activity independently rather than studying it in advance.

- Practicing new skills independently.
- Engaging in short work rotations in different tasks.
- Conducting a written survey to gather ideas for improving performance.
- Using performance support tools, such as job aids and memory joggers.
- Working independently on an activity, assignment, or project.
- Practicing before a presentation.
- Gathering information on a process, issue, or opportunity.

Acting with Others

Acting rather than contemplating when learning new things, relying on people for feedback or advice.

- Taking on a stretch assignment.
- Establishing a protégé/mentor relationship.
- Learning new activities with your team.
- Performing an activity with someone observing and giving feedback.
- Performing community service.
- Practicing new skills by role-playing.
- Joining committees or task forces.
- Participating in community or school activities outside work.

