

# Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

NOTE:  
DO NOT READ THIS UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED  
THE MBTI  
DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY

At this point, you should have already completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and received scoring instructions from the booklet or your instructor. This scoring procedure will give you a four-letter classification such as ENTJ or ISTP. If you have not already done this procedure, please do so before you read on. The instrument is available only to qualified test administrators and only through Consulting Psychologists Press of Palo Alto, California.

## *Background*

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is arguably the assessment instrument most commonly used in American industry today. Many companies conduct seminars and, indeed, many consultants have built their entire practices around this particular instrument. This level of activity means that new versions of the instrument continue to be developed and that training seminars on how to use the instrument are growing in number. Given the instrument's unique history, this development is significant.

Before World War II, Katherine Myers and her daughter, Isabel Myers Briggs, became increasingly interested in the behavior of Isabel's husband, Clarence G. Myers. In the midst of their affection for him, they found that he started to behave differently than what they, as mother and daughter, were used to. This observation and the family interactions surrounding it, along with an interest in the then-recent (1921) publication of a theory of psychological types by Carl Jung, stimulated their interest in understanding human behavior, particularly the differences in human behavior. This mother-daughter team embarked on what was to become a remarkable professional stream of research that has thus far lasted over forty years. That such a work should begin in large part out of the desire to understand a son-in-law and husband illustrates how significant insights often grow out of "ordinary" people's reflections on "simple" daily events. This underscores our fundamental thesis that you, while not trained in psychological assessment, can understand the theoretical underpinnings of the various instruments that we will use and can make reasoned, conservative conclusions from data generated by them.

## *Carl Jung*

Carl Jung was a student of Sigmund Freud's. Theirs was a close relationship, one often reviewed as an

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Prepared by James G. Clawson with acknowledgment of John Pickering for his helpful comments and editing. Copyright © 1990 by the Darden Graduate Business School Foundation, Charlottesville, VA. UVA-PACS-073.

example of mentor-protégé relationships. After a highly publicized break with Freud, Jung continued to develop and establish his own reputation in the field of psychology. He proposed and then spent much of his career refining a theory of psychological types, suggesting that human behavior was not so random and chaotic as it seemed, but, given the proper framework for viewing it, really quite regular and predictable. His work grew largely from his studies of his patients in psychotherapy over many years.

Jung's theory, in brief summary, said that, in a person's conscious mental activity, there were four fundamental psychological processes: Sensing (S), Intuition (N), Thinking (T), and Feeling (F). These "functions," as Jung called them, were distinct and unique from each other. The four formed two bipolar dimensions, S-N and T-F. People used all these activities or processes but not all in predominant ways, and these characteristic patterns endured over time and across situations. This patterned use of each mental activity gives rise to a certain predictability in a person's behavior that allows an observer to categorize the individual according to a relatively simple classification scheme.

Furthermore, one can observe distinct variations in these patterns depending on an individual's orientation to life, or "attitude" (in the sense of posture) toward the outside world. People seemed to attend more either to things outside them (which Jung called the extraverted world) or to the inner world of thoughts and ideas (the introverted domain). This distinction provided a third dimension, E-I. These three dimensions allowed Jung to categorize people according to eight fundamental types: extraverts with a dominant sensing activity, introverts with a dominant sensing activity, and so on.

Myers and Briggs added a fourth "preference" dimension to Jung's theory by noting that some people are generally open to new information while others are more interested in reaching closure. They termed the "open" characteristic Perceptive and the "closure" characteristic Judging.

These four dimensions can be summarized as shown in Exhibit 1. The E-I scale relates to a person's orientation to the outside world. The S-N dimension has to do with focus of data collection and the perception of information. The T-F dimension has to do with decision making, and the J-P scale relates to openness to the outside world. In Myers-Briggs parlance, the S-N and T-F are referred to as functions or mental processes and the E-I and J-P dimensions as attitudes. From a broad per-

## EXHIBIT 1

### Myers-Briggs Type Dimensions

Extraversion	-----	Introversion
Sensing	-----	Intuition
Thinking	-----	Feeling
Judgment	-----	Perception

spective, the functions on the left are "outer" functions and the ones on the right are "inner." This perspective is important to note because as individuals develop over time, they usually build complementary strengths in the outer and inner functions.

Each of the four function/preference dimensions and the categories formed by them are *descriptive*, not *prescriptive*, in nature. That is, each process has its strengths and weaknesses, and none is preferred, in a general sense, to another. Of course, the strengths and weaknesses associated with each will affect a person's ability to function in various jobs. Therefore, the types may suggest better fits to one job over another, but, by themselves, one type is no more preferable or socially acceptable or *good* in any broad sense than another. In fact, as you will see later, the diversity in types allows for greater strength in a variety of social settings.

Let's examine each of the four dimensions more carefully. Note that Jung did not use the labels of his dimensions in just the same way as lay language would suggest. One cannot read the labels and immediately know what they mean. Look, for instance, for the distinction between what Jung meant when he used the term "sensing," and what the common English meaning might be.

#### *Extraversion-Introversion*

Jung's definition of extraversion was that one's attention was centered on things outside, on people and objects external to the individual. Extraverts deal directly with the things around them and are often more given to action than are introverts. They process information externally, often "thinking out loud" and actively using others around them. One way to think of this is as a flow of energy from the outside to the inside; extraverts absorb energy from what is happening around them.

Introverts, in contrast, generate energy internally. In a crowd, introverts typically lose energy and are drained by the experience. This feature is not necessarily one of shyness; it is one of focus of at-

tention. Introverts take in and process internally, often in silence. The silence does not mean that they are uninterested or shy, only that their mental processes are private and inward. Crowds force attention to the external world and pull energy out of the introvert. The flow of energy and information is from the inside out. John Pickering, an experienced MBTI trainer, notes that extraverts and introverts have the same proportion of good and bad ideas, but everyone *knows* about the extraverts' ideas.

Another way to think about the E-I scale is to ask: From where does an individual get energy? What causes one to lose energy? If being in a crowd is draining, then one is probably an introvert. If being in a crowd is exhilarating and energizing, then one is probably an extravert. Another useful question is: Where does one prefer to process ideas, inside or outside? And a third useful discriminating question is: Is one more action-oriented, or more reflective?

#### *Sensing-Intuition*

Sensing relates to data collected through the five physical senses, sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. Our physical senses do not deal with the future; they yield information on the present and have offered data to be recorded in the past. Hence, those who use the sensing process predominantly are, by definition, focused on the present.

Intuitive types rely on a sixth sense, intuition. They focus more on possibilities, what could be, relationships among things; on concepts, theories, and alternative meanings. Rather than describing a thing, they will imagine its connections with the future, with other things in the past or present. Jung thought that the subconscious, rather than the outside, tangible, sensory world, informed the intuition.

#### *Thinking-Feeling*

Thinking relates to the connections between ideas and concepts. As Jung used it, thinking meant seeing logical, analytic, impersonal, and objective links from one thing to another. Thinking types make judgments about the truthfulness of something, always asking, "Is it true or false?" They tend to use impersonally held and "objectively" applied moral principles to make decisions, and they tend to focus on events, on facts, and on things.

To Jung, on the other hand, feeling was a subjective activity, based on value strength. People who use the feeling process are sensitive to their own values and priorities and to the values of others. This

process is more personal than thinking. It is not just the emotional side of a person, although values may give rise to emotions. Rather it comes from what an individual holds to be important. Feeling types make judgments about the worth of something, asking, "Is it good or bad?" They tend to be people and relationship oriented, using personally-held values and moral principles, "subjectively" applied, to make decisions. These values may not necessarily be "good" in the eyes of society; the point is that they are personally and tightly held by the feeling type.

#### *Judging-Perceiving*

Judging types desire organizing and concluding activities. They want to accomplish something and move on. It is not that they are 'judgmental' in the usual sense of the word; rather, they just do not want to linger over the alternatives and possibilities. Judging types need control; they like to have plans, make decisions, reach conclusions, and work to schedules and lists. They feel time pressure early on in a project or situation and press for wrapping things up. Judging types want to control not only their own lives but the lives of those around them and to control all the things that affect them. It would be difficult, for instance, for a J to accept the prayer "Lord, grant me the strength to work on the things I can do something about, the courage to avoid worrying about the things I can't do anything about, and the wisdom to know the difference." They are impatient and often implement the process of "Ready, fire, aim" or even just "Fire, fire, fire."

Perceivers are looking for new information. They are receptive, open, adaptable, willing to bring in additional data. Perceiving types need information, options, flexibility. They resist control, plans, decisions, conclusions, closures, and schedules. They feel time pressures only very late, often too late. They are loathe to make decisions too early, or even at all. In the early stages of a decision-making process they are useful and productive because they are not likely to close down the data-collection process too soon. On the other hand, they often implement the process "Ready, aim, aim, aim . . ."

#### *A Developmental Model*

Jung's type theory is a developmental one. Born with a proclivity for one type, and shaped by one's environment, individuals continue to develop skills in their chosen type over their lifetimes. Jung taught that developing skill in one type precluded the development of skill in another type. Some find this

limitation disconcerting and prefer to believe that people can be or should be expert in all types and their attendant behaviors. To Jung, such an effort would be the mark of a less developed mentality. The maturing adult, he argued, has chosen a type and become confident and at ease in it. Trying to develop superior skill in all types would leave one underdeveloped in all. So, to Jung, people have dominant functions and subordinate functions. This was not to say people were totally inept in their subordinate functions, but rather that the well-developed personality was in part a result of having made an implicit choice of type and of having developed skill and confidence in it.

As an individual developed a type in life by choosing to be involved in one setting above another, Jung observed that the dominant process or function (S–N or T–F) was usually played out in the preferred orientation (extraversion or introversion). For example, a dominant Sensing type with a preference for extraversion would play the sensing function out in the external world. At the same time, most people would then develop a counterbalancing subordinate function to be played out in the *other* preference. The sensing extrovert was likely to develop a complementary set of “inner” functions. In this way, people were not completely incompetent in settings that played to their subordinate functions but were able to develop abilities that allowed them to function quite well in various situations. Jung believed, however, that mature individuals functioned more easily, more competently, and more naturally in settings that played to their dominant functions.

On the other hand, John Pickering, for one, believed that “maturity” meant that people developed skills in their nonpreferred styles over their lifetimes that allowed them to function in various settings.

### *Interpreting Type*

The four-letter summary of your scores on the MBTI is your type. The numbers associated with the letters indicate the clarity and consistency of your answers to the items on the instrument. A high E score, for example, means that your answers were consistently clear in favor of the Extraversion-related items on the test. Your type will be arranged by function in the order E–I, S–N, T–F, and J–P—for example, your type might be ESFJ.

One way to begin interpreting your type is to look at the numbers associated with each letter. The larger number determines which function is noted

in your type. The larger that number is relative to its opposite, the stronger that function is in you. These numbers can be displayed on a continuous scale in several ways. One way is to consider the midpoint between them as zero and plot the difference between the scores as Steven Taylor and Carrie Baugh did in the cases that follow. Plotting your scores on such a chart will help you visualize the consistency of your answers on each scale. The scores you receive will depend in part on the version of the instrument that you used; there are long forms and short forms of the official Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and many other instruments that purport to measure the same dimensions.

The next thing to do is to recognize the dominant and auxiliary behavioral patterns that your type suggests. Myers and Briggs have outlined an approach for identifying dominant and auxiliary functions; while this is a useful exercise, it is one that probably should be left to those who wish to pursue the understanding of type much further than we can in this context. The procedure for doing this makes several assumptions, including the one that the J–P dimension is an indicator of the dominant function and that it “points” to the second function, S or N.

For our purposes, without wrestling through the technique of determining dominant and auxiliary functions, we shall just note that four predominant temperaments emerge from the Jungian types—SPs, SJs, NTs, and NFs. Keirsey and Bates (see reference list on page 77) describe how other psychological theories throughout history can be melded with Jung’s to describe, in remarkably consistent fashion, these four broad temperamental behavioral types. Here is a brief overview of these temperaments.

### *The SP Temperament*

Relying on their senses and eager to take in rather than close out, SPs are impulsive, tuned to the moment. They want to be free, able to respond to whatever the current situation will suggest. SPs resist preparing for doing, for they would rather be doing, NOW. They are quite happy to engage in activities with unknown outcomes. Tools are their forte; they love using tools so much that they become experts with them. Charming, impulsive, light-hearted, cheerful, SPs make acquaintances easily, yet people often note years later that they have learned little more about them than what they knew the first time they met. Having little goal orientation. SPs display amazing endurance in the face of hardships; because they are living in the present, worrying

about the future does not weigh them down and they carry on. SPs, spontaneous and engulfed in the excitement of the moment, become great performers, artisans, and athletes. Their practicing is doing. While the other types practice for the performance later, SPs are performing constantly. For the SP, whatever is now, *is*, and that's what life is about. SPs are relatively common, comprising about thirty-eight percent of the population of the United States.

### *The SJ Temperament*

SJs are about as common as SPs. Their behavior is focused around the concept of duty, especially duty to the group. For them, loyalty is a central value. Loyalty brings with it obligation and acceptance of rules. SJs learn the rules, obey the rules, and live by shoulds and oughts. SJs save, prepare, plan for the safety of the group. SJs believe, in fact, might have written Murphy's Law, the belief that if something can go wrong, it will. They work to prevent violations of law and social order. They maintain and build institutions of social order. Their devotion to the group and to orderliness leads them to professions where service is required—they teach, they nurse, they serve, they care for others. They are the repositories of culture and tradition.

### *The NT Temperament*

NTs are more rare than their SP and SJ cousins, only about twelve percent of American society. Thus, they often feel like minorities in an alien world. For them, power is the dominant drive, gaining and exercising power over their surroundings. NTs value knowledge, learning, intelligence, improvement understanding, and perhaps above all, competence. NTs are highly self-critical, holding themselves and others to high standards of insight and understanding. They make lists of things they should do and should be able to do. NTs are less willing to accept authority, especially in matters of intelligence, preferring instead to understand the primary rationale of a conclusion and sort it out for themselves. NTs fear failure and are driven to prove to themselves and others that their competence will overcome any such probability. Like the central theme for the other temperaments, this need to express competence for the NT is not an issue that is ever resolved; rather, it must be demonstrated daily. NTs get caught up in work and have a hard time playing or relaxing. Others find NTs discomfiting and demanding; consequently, this temperament is often isolated from others. NTs speak concisely and

without elaboration. They say what they mean, say it once, and often wonder that others should find it at all interesting since after all their study, things begin to seem obvious to them and therefore uninteresting. At the same time, others often see what the NTs have to say as abstract and difficult to follow. NTs gravitate to the sciences, engineering, and mathematics. They focus on the future and forget about the past. Having understood one set of phenomena, they move on to another.

### *The NF Temperament*

NFs find in searching for themselves the meaning of life. To the other three temperaments, this is a frustrating and inexplicable activity around which to organize a life. For the NF, the process of becoming one's self is what it is all about. About as rare as the NTs, NFs exert unusual influence on society through such commonly chosen professions as writers, playwrights, journalists, and teachers. They are constantly searching for deeper and higher meanings, insights that will shape and help society. NFs question themselves, their being, their values, their beliefs, their roles. NFs often become overwhelmingly committed to their search, sacrificing virtually everything else in their lives in favor of their quest. They search from one intellectual group to another, hoping for answers, discovering inevitably shallow ones, and moving on. They focus on people and their relationships, especially their relationships with themselves. It is in the exploration of these relationships through intense and continuing interactions that the NFs find daily sustenance.

With this introduction to the four dimensions and the four temperaments that provide a first level of analysis of type, we can move one step deeper, to consider each of the sixteen types themselves.

### *Characteristics of Types*

The four dimensions outlined above can be arranged in a variety of fashions. If we arrange them according to the four temperaments we have just discussed, we can see a matrix of individual types as shown in Exhibit 2.

While our primary focus here is on the use of the MBTI for individual analysis, a large version of this matrix can be effectively used with small groups by having each member of the group mark his or her type on it and then opening a discussion of what the resultant pattern means for the group's ability to work together.

Each intersection on this matrix represents a type,

**Exhibit 2**

**Myers-Briggs Types Arranged by Temperaments**

	SP	SJ	NF	NT
	ISFP	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
	ISTP	ISTJ	INFP	INTP
	ESTP	ESTJ	ENFP	ENTP
	ESFP	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
	SP	SJ	NF	NT

with broadly predictable patterns of mental and related behavioral activity. Although mental and behavioral indicators for each cell are not constrictive in reality, they can help us to understand why people behave the way they do and therefore help us to be better able to manage or deal with them. In the context of making career decisions, these indicators can help us identify patterns in our lives that will help us to choose the careers, industries, companies, and specific jobs that will allow us to utilize our strengths rather than forcing us to play to our lesser developed sides. Figures 4 and 5 give some simple preliminary indicators of the characteristics of each type. For more detailed information on each, consult the test booklet from which you took the instrument, or any of the many publications that deal with the MBTI listed in the references at the end of this note. A particularly good and readily available one is *Please Understand Me* by David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates.

*Using Your Type*

There are many ways you can use the information about yourself that the MBTI provides. First, an understanding of both your type and that of people close to you can help you relate to and understand these people. If, for instance, your spouse is an ENTJ and you are an ISTP, you can anticipate that there will be times when the overt animated discussion of ideas in which your spouse wants to engage will be overwhelming to your desires to more quietly gather some hard facts at hand and reach a more solid conclusion. You share an interest in the logical connections of things, but your spouse will want to process that with you while you are likely to want to do that alone or in silence. These insights can help you talk logically and effectively about how

you deal with each other and to improve your relationship. Obviously, this is also true of working colleagues, peers, bosses, and subordinates. For this reason, the MBTI is widely used in industry.

For this course, the main use of your type will be to use it in conjunction with other data to develop themes that describe you and will help you formulate implications for the kind of work you should be seeking. To the extent that sales requires one to focus on the values and feelings of others, clear ISTJ types may find selling activities stressful since that is not their natural style. For ISTJs there is a logical answer dictated by the strength of present facts. The natural tendency to interact with others to see what they want or help them see the “truth” of the facts is not as available to them as it is to ENFPs, for instance. That is not to say ISTJs never make good salespeople. In certain kinds of environments, perhaps research labs or engineering companies, they may indeed have the right kind of chemistry with the people with whom they would be working.

**BEWARE!** This brings us to a major caveat. The MBTI is often misused. With its increasing popularity and use comes some unfortunate superficiality. The MBTI is a seemingly simple yet very complex instrument. The more one delves into the meaning of mental functions and orientations and how they dynamically affect each other, the more powerful the model becomes. And it is not the final answer to human behavior in career choosing or organizational life. It is one tool, a tool, which, if used with other data, can provide useful insights.

Some MBTI seminar participants have gone back to the workplace and begun using the MBTI type as a form of greeting or labeling, as in, “Hi, you old ISTJ! Feel like talking today?” This kind of misguided boxing of others and overuse of the type indicators offends both business colleague and those who have worked long and hard to develop and understand the power of this mode. Psychologists trained in several psychological theories are perhaps best able to appreciate the usefulness of the MBTI as well as its limitations. Yet, to the credit of Mrs. Myers and her daughter, Mrs. Briggs, the instrument has been made available to trainers and instructors in a variety of educational settings. We encourage you to be responsible in your use of the data you receive about yourself and others during your discussion of the MBTI. Further, if you encounter the instrument again in your career, we hope you will lend to the discussions a sensitivity to the deeper implications of the theory and encourage others to work at getting beyond the superficial interpretations of the four types.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Sensing Types**

<i>ISTJ</i>	<i>ISFJ</i>
Quiet, thorough, logical, organized, conventional thinkers, managers	Friendly, quiet, loyal, stable, conscientious.
<i>ISTP</i>	<i>ISFP</i>
Reserved, detached, humor flashes, logical connections and principles	Sensitive, kind, modest, avoid contention, followers, not so achievement oriented, not hasty
<i>ESTP</i>	<i>ESFP</i>
Problem solvers, enjoy the moment, sports, adaptable, tolerant, action	Easygoing, see the positive and fun, joiners, eager, facts not theories, common sense
<i>ESTJ</i>	<i>ESFJ</i>
Practical, head for business, like to manage, can forget others' feelings, leaders	Talkative, popular, committees, need harmony, doing nice things, like to affect peoples' lives

**Exhibit 5**  
**Intuitive Types**

<i>INFJ</i>	<i>INTJ</i>
Persevering, do what's necessary, quiet, forceful, clear convictions	Original thinkers, skeptical, independent, determined, maybe stubborn
<i>INFP</i>	<i>INTP</i>
Seldom talk, loyal, like to learn, try to do too much, absorbed	Reserved, like theories and science, problem solvers, not good at small talk, focused, multiple interests
<i>ENFP</i>	<i>ENTP</i>
Imaginative, capable, quick solutions, improvisors, persuasive, unrealistic, unfocused	Quick, stimulating, talkative, resourceful, overlook routine and details, multiple interests
<i>ENFJ</i>	<i>ENTJ</i>
Responsible, concerned about what others think, comfortable discussion leaders, sociable, responsive	Hearty, frank, leaders, public speakers, like to learn, may be overconfident

*Assignment*

Before you attempt to analyze your own data, look at the cases that follow. What inferences can you draw about these people from their types? What im-

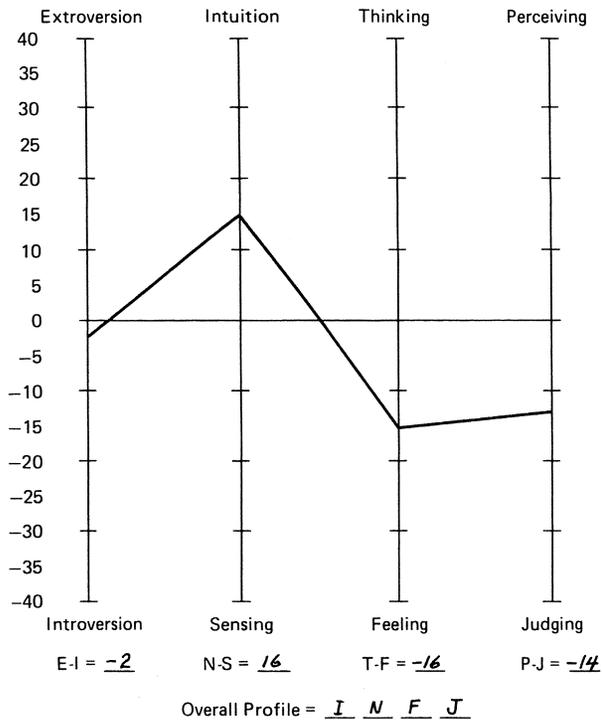
plications do your inferences have for the kinds of work these people should be seeking?

Once you have finished practicing on the cases, answer the same questions for your own type.

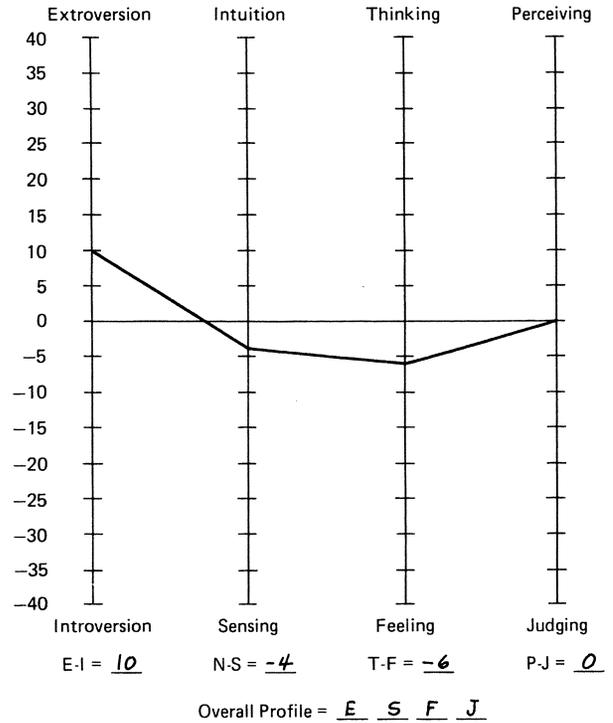
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STEVEN TAYLOR'S PERSONALITY TYPE INDICATOR



CARRIE BAUGH'S PERSONALITY STYLE INDICATOR



NOTES:

1. Final classification is Extroverted, Sensing, Feeling, Perceiving and Judging (Perceiving and Judging received same score).
2. More sensing than intuitive by only 4 points (10%).
3. More feeling than thinking by only 6 points (15%).
4. More extroverted than intraverterd (25%).

INFERENCES:

Carrie is a person who:

1. Is outgoing; relates well to people.
2. Prefers concrete, structured, "here and now."
3. May get frustrated with theory; is practical.
4. Is empathetic.
5. Relies on gathering information before making a decision, but is decisive after gathering facts.
6. Might be action oriented.
7. Is flexible and adapts well to different situations.
8. Might like to plan.