

people believe that projective tests are particularly unreliable given that they rely so extensively on the therapists' interpretations.

A far simpler and more widespread method of personality assessment is to use *self-report inventories*. Self-report inventories are essentially questionnaires that ask people to provide information about themselves. Many different kinds of psychologists, such as humanistic psychologists, trait theorists, and cognitive-behavioral psychologists, might use self-report inventories as one means by which to gather data about someone. These kinds of tests are often referred to as objective personality tests since people's scores are determined simply by their answers and are thus unlikely to be affected by evaluator bias. An interview, on the other hand, is a subjective assessment. Although such subjectivity decreases reliability and opens the door to bias, some believe that subjective measures yield richer and more valid data.

The *Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory (MMPI-2)* is one of the most widely used self-report instruments. A potential problem with such inventories is that people may not be completely honest in answering the questions. Some tests have "lie scales" built in to try to detect when people are not being honest.

Radical behaviorists would reject all the above methods, arguing instead that the only way to measure people's personality is to observe their behavior. Again, a number of other kinds of psychologists, particularly cognitive-behavioral ones, would utilize observations of a person's behavior as one way to gather data.

People are naturally curious about what various personality assessments will say about them. Unfortunately, this curiosity makes people susceptible to being deceived. Research has demonstrated that people have the tendency to see themselves in vague, stock descriptions of personality. This phenomenon, the *Barnum effect*, is named after the famous circus owner P. T. Barnum, who once said "There's a sucker born every minute." Astrologers, psychics, and fortune-tellers take advantage of the Barnum effect in their work. Personality has proved difficult to define, much less measure, so be skeptical when confronted with people who offer you quick, pat descriptions of your life or future.

Practice Questions

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. According to Freud, which part of the mind acts as a person's conscience?
 - (A) Eros
 - (B) ego
 - (C) libido
 - (D) superego
 - (E) id

2. Cettina fills out a personality inventory several times over the course of one year. The results of each administration of the test are extremely different. Cettina's situation suggests that this personality inventory may not be
 - (A) reliable.
 - (B) standardized.
 - (C) normed.
 - (D) projective.
 - (E) fair.

3. Which approach toward personality is the least deterministic?
 - (A) psychoanalytic
 - (B) humanistic
 - (C) trait
 - (D) behaviorist
 - (E) biological

4. One of your classmates remarks that "Mary is all id." What does she likely mean?
 - (A) Mary uses a lot of defense mechanisms.
 - (B) Mary is a highly ethical person.
 - (C) Mary is a perfectionist.
 - (D) Mary frequently pursues immediate gratification.
 - (E) Mary is in constant conflict over the proper course of action to take.

5. The belief that personality is created by the interaction between a person, his or her behavior, and the environment is known as
 - (A) combination theory.
 - (B) interactionist perspective.
 - (C) reciprocal determinism.
 - (D) mutuality.
 - (E) circular creation.

6. Juan has a huge crush on Sally, but he never admits it. Instead, he tells all who will listen that Sally is really "into him." Psychoanalysts would see Juan's bragging as an example of
 - (A) displacement.
 - (B) reaction formation.
 - (C) sublimation.
 - (D) denial.
 - (E) projection.

7. Dr. Li asks her clients to interpret ambiguous pictures of people in various settings. The method she is using is called
- (A) the Rorschach test.
 - (B) the MMPI.
 - (C) the TAT.
 - (D) factor analysis.
 - (E) the WISC.
8. One personality trait that is thought to be highly heritable is
- (A) generosity.
 - (B) sense of humor.
 - (C) neatness.
 - (D) introversion.
 - (E) diligence.
9. Which psychologist believed that people have free will and are motivated to self-actualize?
- (A) Abraham Maslow
 - (B) Sigmund Freud
 - (C) Albert Bandura
 - (D) B. F. Skinner
 - (E) John Watson
10. Which is NOT one of the big five personality traits?
- (A) extraversion
 - (B) openness
 - (C) agreeableness
 - (D) honesty
 - (E) conscientiousness
11. Feminist psychoanalytic critics of Freud most commonly argue that
- (A) there is no proof that the unconscious exists.
 - (B) Freud devoted too much attention to childhood.
 - (C) women's superegos are just as strong as men's.
 - (D) men and women use different defense mechanisms.
 - (E) while women all suffer from penis envy, men all suffer from womb envy.

12. Jamal sucked his thumb until age eight. As an adult, he smokes, chews gum, and thinks constantly of food. Psychoanalysts would describe Jamal as having
- (A) an obsession.
 - (B) an orally controlled libido.
 - (C) an Oedipus complex.
 - (D) an oral fixation.
 - (E) a mother complex.
13. Someone who has an external locus of control is likely to have
- (A) a positive self-concept.
 - (B) a high sense of self-efficacy.
 - (C) a strong libido.
 - (D) a belief in luck.
 - (E) a high IQ.
14. What kind of psychologist would be most likely to use a projective personality assessment?
- (A) social cognitive
 - (B) trait
 - (C) behaviorist
 - (D) humanistic
 - (E) psychoanalytic
15. Redirecting one's unacceptable urges into more socially acceptable pursuits best defines which of the following defense mechanisms?
- (A) intellectualization
 - (B) denial
 - (C) sublimation
 - (D) rationalization
 - (E) regression

ANSWERS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. (D) Freud described the superego as the part of the mind that acts as a conscience. The other two parts of the mind are the id and ego. The id acts according to the pleasure principle, while the ego acts as a buffer between the id and the demands of the external world. Eros is the life instinct, and the libido is the energy that drives Eros.
2. (A) A test that does not yield consistent results is not reliable. Such a test may still have been standardized and normed, both of which mean that it has been pretested on a large population and structured so that certain percentages of people answer each question in certain ways. Projective tests are used by psychoanalysts to try to see what is in a person's unconscious. Fair is not a scientific term; tests may be perceived as unfair for a variety of reasons.

3. **(B)** The humanistic model of personality arose in opposition to the determinism of earlier models. One of the fundamental precepts of humanistic psychology is that people have free will, that their behavior is not predetermined. Conversely, all of the other models listed suggest that behavior is determined, at least to an extent, rather than freely chosen.
4. **(D)** Because the id follows the pleasure principle, it pursues immediate gratification. If Mary were all id, she would be unlikely to need many defense mechanisms; she would just do what she wanted. Similarly, such a person would rarely be in conflict over what to do and would have little interest in the proper course of action to take. A highly ethical person would be guided by her superego. A perfectionist might also have a strong superego or, alternatively, might have an anal retentive personality.
5. **(C)** Reciprocal determinism, also known as triadic reciprocity, is Bandura's theory that personality arises out of the interaction of a person's traits, environment, and behavior. All of the remaining choices are made-up distractors.
6. **(E)** Juan is projecting. Instead of acknowledging the feelings he has toward Sally, he views Sally as having those feelings toward him. Were Juan to displace his feelings, he would express love for someone else or something else. If Juan were to use reaction formation, he would claim to hate Sally. Juan could sublimate by directing his energies toward honing his ice hockey skills or writing poetry. Finally, were Juan to deny his crush, when asked about it, he would continue to deny it.
7. **(C)** Dr. Li is using the TAT (thematic apperception test). The Rorschach test asks people to look at inkblots, not people. The MMPI is a personality inventory and therefore simply involves answering questions about oneself. Factor analysis is a statistical technique, not a personality assessment. The WISC is an intelligence test.
8. **(D)** A lot of research suggests that shyness or inhibition is inherited. Relatively little evidence exists that suggests generosity, sense of humor, neatness, or diligence is genetically predisposed. However, many psychologists persevere in looking for this evidence.
9. **(A)** Abraham Maslow was a humanistic psychologist and therefore a strong proponent of the concepts of free will and self-actualization. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalytic theory, had a more deterministic interpretation of human behavior. Albert Bandura is a social-cognitive psychologist who put forth the idea of triadic reciprocity, that traits, behaviors, and environment interact to form personality. While less deterministic than the Freudian model, Bandura's theory does not ascribe a significant role to either free will or the desire to self-actualize. B. F. Skinner and John Watson were behaviorists who believed that people's personalities are essentially determined by the contingencies of reinforcement to which they have been exposed.

10. (D) Honesty is not considered one of the big five personality traits. The big five are extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability.
11. (C) Feminist critics of Freud most commonly argue that, contrary to Freud's assertion, women's superegos are as strong as men's. Psychoanalysts, feminist or not, generally believe in the unconscious. Feminists would be no more likely than any other group of people to argue that Freud overstressed the importance of childhood. Men and women do not seem to use categorically different defense mechanisms. While Karen Horney did suggest that men might suffer from womb envy, most feminists, including Horney, make the point that women are probably more envious of the advantages that men enjoy in society than they are of men's penises.
12. (D) Psychoanalysts would say that Jamal has an oral fixation. They would argue that some traumatic event during the oral stage (birth to one year) caused some of his libidinal energy to become fixated in that stage. Orally controlled libido is a made-up distractor, Oedipus complex refers to boys' supposed sexual desires for their mothers, and mother complex is a term that Jung might use.
13. (D) Rotter's concept of locus of control has to do with how much power one feels over his or her life. Someone who has an external locus of control feels as if she or he cannot control what happens. Externals often believe their futures are in the hands of fate or luck. Someone with a positive self-concept feels good about himself or herself. Someone with a high sense of self-efficacy believes in his or her own ability to accomplish things. When we say someone has a strong libido, we usually mean she or he has a strong sex drive. Someone with a high IQ is thought to be intelligent, at least in terms of traditional measures of intelligence.
14. (E) A psychoanalyst would be most likely to use a projective test since such measures supposedly allow the person taking the test to project his or her unconscious thoughts onto the stimuli. Trait theorists might ask the person to fill out a personality inventory such as Cattell's 16 PF. Behaviorists would monitor the person's behavior. Social-cognitive theorists might use both self-report inventories and behavioral measures. A humanistic psychologist would also use self-report techniques and watch someone's behavior. However, this psychologist might also want to talk to the person using an unstructured interview approach in order to get a fuller sense of the person.
15. (C) Sublimation is when one redirects unacceptable urges into a more socially acceptable pursuit. An example would be channeling your sexual frustration over your attraction to your opposite-sex parent to becoming a marathon runner. Intellectualization involves distancing oneself from the threatening issue by making it into an intellectual matter. Denial is when one denies the existence of the thought or feeling. Rationalization is when one explains away a behavior or feeling by making up a plausible excuse for it. Regression is when one returns to a behavior that was common and usually comforting at an earlier stage of life.