

Holland's Theory and Career Choice

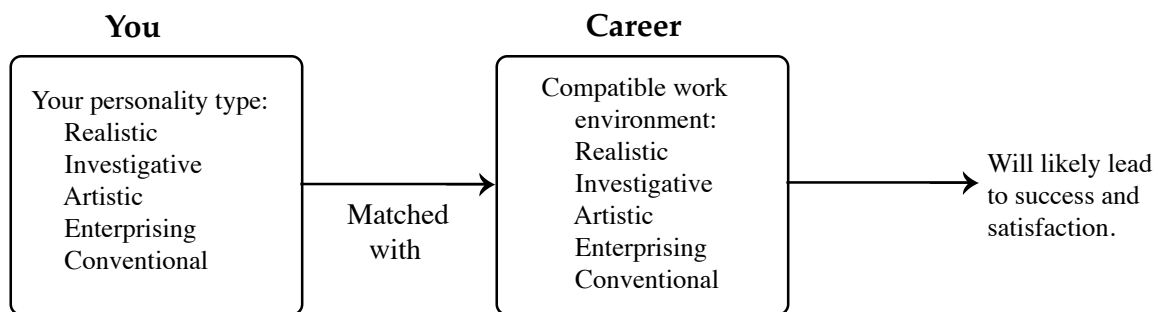
The Career Key is based on John Holland's theory of vocational choice. At its simplest, this theory proposes that "Birds of the same feather flock together." In other words, people like to be around others who have similar personalities. In choosing a career, it means that people choose jobs where they can be around other people who are like them.

It is the best known and most widely researched theory on this topic. It is used by many career counselors. Understanding it will help you make sense of your Career Key scores and how they are related to career choice. This discussion is divided into three sections: Section A describes Holland's theory, section B the six personality types in the theory, and section C the six environment types.

A. Summary of Holland's Theory

Holland's theory can be summarized in six statements:

1. In our culture, most person are one of six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. See Section B on page 3 for a description of each type.
2. People of the same personality tend to "flock together." For example, Artistic people are attracted to making friends and working with Artistic people.
3. People of the same personality type working together in a job create a work environment that fits their type. For example, when Artistic persons are together on a job, they create a work environment that rewards creative thinking and behavior -- an Artistic environment.
4. There are six basic types of work environments: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. See Section C for a description of each.
5. People who choose to work in an environment similar to their personality type are more likely to be satisfied and successful:



For example, Artistic persons are more likely to be successful and satisfied if they choose a job that has an Artistic environment, like choosing to be a dance teacher in a dancing school -- an environment "dominated" by Artistic type people where creative abilities and expression are highly valued.

6. How you act and feel at work depends to a large extent on your workplace environment. If you are working with people who have a personality type like yours, you will be able to do many of the things they can do, and you will feel most comfortable with them. How is this related to the scores you receive on the Career Key?

It means that you probably should choose an occupation whose type is the same as, or similar to, your personality type. For example, imagine that your highest score on the Career Key is for the Realistic type. Looking at the table below, you can see that the most compatible job environment is Realistic. This would suggest that you choose from the jobs that are in the Realistic group. Or, you might choose from the jobs that fall in the Investigative or Conventional category.

Compatible Work Environments

Your Personality Type	Most Compatible	Compatible
Realistic	Realistic	Investigative & Conventional
Investigative	Investigative	Realistic & Artistic
Artistic	Artistic	Investigative & Social
Social	Social	Artistic & Enterprising
Enterprising	Enterprising	Social & Conventional
Conventional	Conventional	Enterprising & Realistic

Most people, in reality, are a combination of types -- like Realistic-Investigative, or Artistic-Social. Therefore, you will probably want to consider occupations in more than one category.

In summary, then, you are most likely to choose a satisfying job if you choose one that fits your personality type.

On the next page you will see a description of the six personality types, followed by a description of the six environment types.

B. Holland's Six Personality Types

Realistic

- Likes to work with animals, tools, or machines; generally avoids social activities like teaching, healing and informing others;
- Has good skills in working with tools, mechanical or electrical drawings, machines, or plants and animals;
- Values practical things you can see, touch, and use like plants and animals, tools, equipment, or machines;
- Sees self as practical, mechanical, and realistic.

Investigative

- Likes to study and solve math or science problems; generally avoids leading, selling, or persuading people;
- Is good at understanding and solving science and math problems;
- Values science;
- Sees self as precise, scientific, and intellectual.

Artistic

- Likes to do creative activities like art, drama, crafts, dance, music, or creative writing; generally avoids highly ordered or repetitive activities;
- Has good artistic abilities - in creative writing, drama, crafts, music, or art;
- Values the creative arts - like drama, music, art, or the works of creative writers;
- Sees self as expressive, original, and independent.

Social

- Likes to do things to help people - like teaching, counseling, nursing, or giving information; generally avoids using machines, tools, or animals to achieve a goal;
- Is good at teaching, counseling, nursing, or giving information;
- Values helping people and solving social problems;
- Sees self as helpful, friendly, and trustworthy.

Enterprising

- Likes to lead and persuade people, and to sell things and ideas; generally avoids activities that require careful observation and scientific, analytical thinking;
- Is good at leading people and selling things or ideas;
- Values success in politics, leadership, or business;
- Sees self as energetic, ambitious, and sociable.

Conventional

- Likes to work with numbers, records, or machines in a set, orderly way; generally avoids ambiguous, unstructured activities;
- Is good at working with written records and numbers in a systematic, orderly way;
- Values success in business;
- Sees self as orderly, and good at following a set plan.

On the next three pages you will read about the six environment types.

C. Holland's Six Environment Types

Realistic

Persons having a Realistic personality type "dominate" this environment. There are more of them than there are people of other personality types. For example, at a construction site there will be more persons having a "Realistic" personality than there will be people who have a Social or Artistic type.

"Realistic" people create a "Realistic" environment. For example, they particularly value people who are practical and mechanical -- who are good at working with tools, mechanical or electrical drawings, machines, or animals.

Examples of occupations that have a Realistic environment are:

Farmer	Forester	Fire Fighter
Police Officer	Flight Engineer	Pilot
Carpenter	Electrician	Diesel Mechanic
Locomotive Engineer	Truck Driver	Locksmith

The two work environments that are closest to the Realistic type are Conventional and Investigative. The farthest away is the Social type.

Investigative

Persons having an Investigative personality type "dominate" this environment. There are more of them than there are people of other personality types. For example, in a scientific laboratory there will be more persons having an "Investigative" personality than there will be people who have an Enterprising type.

"Investigative" people create a "Investigative" environment. For example, they particularly value people who are precise, scientific, and intellectual -- who are good at understanding and solving science and math problems.

Examples of occupations that have an Investigative environment are:

Chemist	Mathematician	Meteorologist
Biologist	Dentist	Physician
Veterinarian	Pharmacist	Medical Technician
Architect	Surveyor	Electrical Technician

The two work environments that are closest to the Investigative type are Realistic and Artistic. The farthest away is the Enterprising type.

Artistic

Persons having an Artistic personality type "dominate" this environment. There are more of them than there are people of other personality types. For example, among a group of professional musicians there will be more persons of an "Artistic" personality than there will be people who have a Conventional type.

"Artistic" people create an "Artistic" environment. For example, they particularly value people who are expressive, original, and independent -- who have good artistic abilities in creative writing, drama, crafts, music, or art.

Examples of occupations that have an Artistic environment are:

Dancer	Book Editor	Art Teacher
Clothes Designer	Graphic Designer	Physician
Actor	Disk Jockey	Comedian
Composer	Musician	

The two work environments that are closest to the Artistic type are Investigative and Social. The farthest away is the Conventional type.

Social

Persons having a Social personality type "dominate" this environment. There are more of them than there are people of other personality types. For example, in a hospital, school, or counseling service there will be more persons having a "Social" personality than there will be people who have a Realistic type.

"Social" people create an "Social" environment. For example, they particularly value people who are helpful, friendly, and trustworthy -- who are good at teaching, counseling, nursing, giving information, and solving social problems.

Examples of occupations that have a Social environment are:

Counselor	Parole Officer	Social Worker
Dental Hygienist	Nurse	Physical Therapist
Teacher	Librarian	Athletic Trainer

The two work environments that are closest to the Social type are Artistic and Enterprising. The farthest away is the Realistic type.

Enterprising

Persons having an Enterprising personality type "dominate" this environment. There are more of them than there are people of other personality types. For example, in a business or legal setting there will be more persons having an "Enterprising" personality than there will be people who have a Investigative type.

"Enterprising" people create an "Enterprising" environment. For example, they particularly value people who are energetic, ambitious, and sociable -- who are good at politics, leading people and selling things or ideas.

Examples of occupations that have a Enterprising environment are:

Auctioneer	Sales Person	Travel Agent
Recreation Leader	Judge	Lawyer
City Manager	Sales Manager	Bank President
TV Newscaster	Customs Inspector	Camp Director
Hotel Manager	Real Estate Agent	School Principal

The two work environments that are closest to the Enterprising type are Social and Conventional. The farthest away is the Investigative type.

Conventional

Persons having a Conventional personality type "dominate" this environment. There are more of them than there are people of other personality types. For example, in an office of a bank or real estate company there will be more persons having a "Conventional" personality than there will be people who have a Artistic type.

"Conventional" people create an "Conventional" environment. For example, they particularly value people who are orderly, and good at following a set plan -- good at working with written records and numbers in a systematic, orderly way.

Examples of occupations that have a Conventional environment are:

Court Clerk	Secretary	Bookkeeper
Bank Teller	Post Office Clerk	Mail Carrier
Typist	Title Examiner	Timekeeper

The two work environments that are closest to the Conventional type are Realistic and Enterprising. The farthest away is the Artistic type.

Source: "Holland's Theory and Career Choice" is from The Career Key website:
www.careerkey.org/english

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