Beyond One Score

How psychologists describe and assess intelligence

SS24.P.13 "Describe methods of assessing individual differences and theories of intelligence, including Charles E. Spearman's general (g) factor of intelligence, Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences, and Robert J..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline each way to assess a person's abilities, circle the three intelligence theories, and number two reasons to question how a test score is used.

What Can a Score Tell Us?

1. A school wants to understand why students do well on different tasks. Psychologist Charles E. Spearman proposed a general intelligence factor, called g, that helps explain why people who perform well on one mental task often perform well on others. Howard Gardner proposed multiple intelligences, such as linguistic and spatial abilities, rather than one main ability. Critics note limited evidence that these are independent intelligences. Robert J. Sternberg's triarchic theory describes analytical, creative, and practical intelligence. These theories suggest different ways to interpret a student's strengths.

2. A counselor could use an individually administered intelligence test to estimate reasoning and problem-solving ability, or a group test to gather scores more quickly. An aptitude test predicts future performance, while an achievement test measures what someone has learned. Reliability means a test gives consistent results; validity means its scores support the intended interpretation. A timed test might reliably measure speed but fail to capture a student's broader reasoning. The Flynn effect describes rising average intelligence test scores over generations, not every person's score rising.

3. In the early 1900s, intelligence tests were used to identify students who might need educational support. They were also misused to restrict immigration and support forced sterilization, often treating scores as proof of fixed, inherited worth. Language barriers, unequal schooling, and unfamiliar test content can affect results and weaken the validity of comparisons. To assess individual differences responsibly, a school can combine test scores with classroom work, interviews, and observations. No single score describes everything a student can do or predicts every future outcome.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Spearman's and Gardner's theories differ in their descriptions of intelligence?

2. What three kinds of intelligence would Sternberg's theory lead a counselor to consider?

3. Which test type predicts future performance, and which measures learning? What score trend does the Flynn effect name?

4. Why might a timed test score be an invalid measure of broad reasoning? Name one historical misuse that warns against relying too heavily on scores.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Design a fair plan to assess a new student's strengths for course placement. In four sentences, name two sources of evidence, connect one intelligence theory to what you would look for, and explain one validity safeguard.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline each way to assess a person's abilities, circle the three intelligence theories, and number two reasons to question how a test score is used. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Spearman's and Gardner's theories differ in their descriptions of intelligence?	**Spearman proposed a general factor that helps explain performance across mental tasks. Gardner proposed multiple intelligences rather than one main ability.**
2	What three kinds of intelligence would Sternberg's theory lead a counselor to consider?	**Analytical, creative, and practical intelligence.**
3	Which test type predicts future performance, and which measures learning? What score trend does the Flynn effect name?	**Aptitude tests predict future performance; achievement tests measure learning. The Flynn effect names rising average intelligence test scores over generations.**
4	Why might a timed test score be an invalid measure of broad reasoning? Name one historical misuse that warns against relying too heavily on scores.	**A timed test may measure speed without capturing broader reasoning. Tests were misused to restrict immigration or support forced sterilization.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would review the student's classwork and use an individually administered reasoning test. I would also interview the student about how they approach unfamiliar tasks. Sternberg's theory would prompt me to look for analytical, creative, and practical strengths rather than rely on one score. I would check whether language barriers affect the test before using its score for placement.

Accept other appropriate evidence sources and any of the three named theories when the proposed assessment fits the theory. Validity safeguards may address language, schooling, test content, or whether the score supports the placement decision.