

The Strong Interest Inventory

You Need to Know About This Career Assessment

By [Dawn Rosenberg McKay](#)

The Strong Interest Inventory is a career [self assessment tool](#). Career development specialists administer it to clients as a way to measure their [interests](#) and ultimately help them [choose a career](#) or [college major](#). It was developed by E.K. Strong, a psychologist, in the early twentieth century.

A Brief History of E.K. Strong's Interest Inventory

In 1927, E.K. Strong published the self assessment tool that would many years later become the Strong Interest Inventory. He called it the Strong Vocational Interest Blank. It was the very first tool that could measure people's interests—their likes and dislikes.

Why would we want to know what people's interests are? To answer that, we must look back at what Strong and other psychologists learned about people several years earlier. After trying to figure out why some people were satisfied with their careers and some were not, they discovered that people employed in the same occupation had common interests. What a great way, they thought, to help people [choose suitable careers](#). If there were only a way to assess people's interests. They set out to do so, and that is how E.K. Strong's interest inventory came to be.

There have been many revisions and name changes to it over the years. When David S. Campbell, E.K. Strong's successor, revised the inventory in 1974, he renamed it the *Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory*. In 1997 the *Strong Interest Inventory* was published and that name has remained with the most recent version published by [CPP, Inc.](#) in 2012.

Taking The Strong Interest Inventory

Choosing a career, especially if you have no idea what you want to do, may require the services of a [career development specialist](#). This professional can help you learn about yourself and show you how to use that information to find a suitable occupation. He or she will choose the appropriate [self assessment tools](#) to discover your interests, [personality type](#), [work-related values](#), and [aptitudes](#). One of those instruments may be the Strong Interest Inventory, but only if he or she is "Strong Certified" by CPP, Inc. Career counselors, career coaches, guidance counselors, and college advisors may have this credential.

The Strong Interest Inventory contains 291 items and will take between 35 to 40 minutes to complete. Expect to answer questions about your preferences regarding occupations, subject areas, work and leisure activities, people, and characteristics.

Understanding Your Results

Your Strong Interest Inventory results will come in the form of a report. The professional who administers the test should go over it with you to make sure you understand it. He or she should inform you that, even though the report contains a list of occupations that might be suitable for you based on your answers, it doesn't necessarily mean they are. Always thoroughly [explore](#) any career you are considering before moving forward.

Your report will be presented in six sections:

General Occupational Themes (GOT)

General Occupational Themes are six broad areas that represent the personality types that John Holland, a psychologist, identified. Holland believed that all people fall into one or more of six types based on their interests and approaches to life situations: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. He surmised that work environments could also be categorized into these six types.

Your scores are compared to the average scores for your gender to determine your interest levels for each of the six themes. This section will also contain your [Holland Code](#) which indicates your highest three themes, along with information about the interests, work activities, potential skills, and values associated with each one.

Basic Interest Scales (BIS)

BIS Scales represent your top interests based on the work and leisure activities, projects, and coursework that you indicated are most motivating and rewarding. They are categorized under the General Occupational Themes as described in the previous section.

Occupational Scales (OS)

This section contains a list of occupations that match your interests. It is generated by comparing your interests to those of individuals who work in 122 careers and makes a match based on the theory that people who work in the same occupation share similar interests.

Personal Styles Scales (PSS)

Personal Styles Scales are your preferences regarding work style, learning environment, leadership style, risk-taking and team orientation. It is helpful to have this information as you begin to research occupations that you might want to pursue.

Profile Summary

In the Profile Summary, you will find a graphic representation of your results. Consult this as you move forward through the [career planning process](#).

