FAQ/Finding Information About Psychological Tests

Introduction

The APA Science Directorate answers hundreds of calls and emails each year from persons trying to locate the right test or find more information about psychological tests. APA neither sells nor endorses testing instruments, but it does provide guidance in using available resources to find psychological tests. Answers to frequently asked questions are provided here.

Contents

Section 1: Published Psychological Tests
The first section contains information about published psychological tests — those available for purchase through a test publisher. It includes tips on how to locate tests within a given subject area, how to contact the test publisher once you find an appropriate test, and where to find computerized testing materials and information.

- Finding Information on a Particular Test
- Finding a Particular Type of Test
- Locating a Specific Test
- Locating Test Publishers
- Purchasing Tests
- Test References
- Available Software and Scoring Services
- Additional Information on the Proper Use of Tests

Section 2: Unpublished Psychological Tests and Measures
The second section focuses on unpublished psychological tests and measures — those that are not available commercially for purchase. Information about unpublished tests usually appears in journal articles. The test can usually be obtained directly from the researcher who created the test or measure. This section tells you how to find unpublished tests in your area of interest and highlights your responsibilities as a user of unpublished psychological tests.

- PsycTESTS Database
- Printed Directories
- Other Directories

Section 3: A Final Word and Responsibilities of Test Users
Section 1: Published Psychological Tests

- Where can I find tests to measure self-concept?
- Can you send me a copy of this test?
- Am I qualified to administer this test?

Although some questions like these do require the assistance of professionals, most can be answered by consulting one of many sources of testing information available to the public. Whether student, teacher, concerned test-taker or psychologist, everyone can benefit from the many reference texts, databases, test reviews and other items accessible through local colleges or public libraries.

The following information answers some of the most frequently asked questions regarding published tests.

**Finding Information on a Particular Test**

The first place to start is with one of several excellent testing references available at your local library. These references provide comprehensive, useful and directive information on tests. They can also provide answers to a variety of questions, such as these: What tests are available for a specific purpose (e.g., clerical spatial relations)? Who publishes the test? How can I evaluate the test? How do I get more information on a specific test?

*Tests in Print (TIP), the Mental Measurements Yearbook (MMY), Tests and Test Critiques* are the four most useful and popular references. These are described in detail later in this document and are available in the reference section of most college, university, and larger public libraries.

**Finding a Particular Type of Test**

Whether you are trying to locate tests that measure self-concept, or some other specific cognitive skill or personality trait, you should begin your search with one of the four test reference books identified above. If available, *TIP* may be your best choice, because it has the most entries per volume. Each of the references contains several indexes to aid in such a search. Subject and test title indexes may be most helpful. For example, suppose you are interested in measuring self-concept. Looking under ‘personality tests’ in the *TIP* subject index, you would quickly find three tests for self-concept. On further inspection, you would identify over a dozen additional tests that may be relevant, but are listed somewhere else in the nine-page index of personality tests. Yet a relatively quick search of a specific subject heading in the index can provide you with several useful leads.

Once you have identified several tests that may be of interest, you would review the more detailed entries on each test to determine if they are useful for your intended purpose. Entries typically identify the age or school grade levels for which the test is appropriate, as well as any subtests. Of course, if you are searching for a very specialized test or measure, your search is not so simple. For example, if you are interested in measuring letter recognition or honesty, you may not locate any relevant tests through the subject index. In this case, your best option is to go to
the MMY and use the 'score index,' which would identify tests measuring subareas (e.g., honesty, letter recognition).

**Locating a Specific Test**

Once you have a name or author of a test, your chances of locating it are greatly improved. Again, you could check any of the four test reference books, but *TIP* and the *MMY* have the largest indexes of tests. Title and author indexes in each of the reference books should refer you to the section of the book describing the test. (In the case of the *MMY* or *Test Critiques*, you may actually be referred to an earlier volume of the book for more information).

**Locating Test Publishers**

Directories of test publishers are included in most major testing reference books (*MMY, Tests, TIP*). The size and scope of the directory usually reflects how many tests are included in that book. For example, *TIP* provides brief information on the greatest number of commercially available tests and, thus, has an extensive publishers directory. The Test Collection at Educational Testing Service (ETS) has a free pamphlet entitled Major U. S. Publishers of Standardized Tests, which lists the names, addresses, and phone numbers of 28 major test publishers. Call or write to them for your free copy at ETS, Library, Rosedale Road, Princeton, NJ, 08541, (609) 734-5667.

**Publishers' Catalogs**

All of the major test publishers have catalogs listing their own products. The catalogs are published on an annual or semiannual basis. These catalogs are frequently the best source of information for the most recent editions of a test. Information on the cost of materials and scoring, types of scoring services and ancillary materials are available through the catalogs. The catalogs also include information on variations of the test, such as large-print or foreign language versions. Contact the test publisher to request their catalog(s).

**Purchasing Tests**

Commercially available tests are usually purchased through the test publisher. Publishers hold the copyright to tests they distribute, and they maintain the copies of tests, test manuals and scoring keys.

After locating the name, address or phone number of a test publisher, contact the publisher with your request for information on a particular test (including purchase inquiries). Such inquiries should be made directly to the test publisher. Many publishers have separate policies for individual and organizational purchases of tests. Individuals may be required to complete a test purchaser qualifications form that allows a publisher to determine if the purchaser is qualified and competent to administer and interpret the test.

**Test References**
As mentioned earlier, the four most popular, useful and easy to locate printed references for published tests are *TIP, MMY, Tests* and *Test Critiques*. The following is a brief summary of these references.

- **Tests in Print (TIP) Publisher:** The Buros Institute for Mental Measurements, Lincoln, NE. Most current volume: 7th ed. (2006).

  **What information is here?** *TIP* is a bibliographic encyclopedia of information on every published (and commercially available) test in psychology and achievement. Each entry consists of the test title, intended population, publication date, acronym (if applicable), author, publisher, foreign adaptations and references. There are no critical reviews or psychometric information on the tests; detailed information on individual tests is available in other reference books such as *MMY* or *Test Critiques*. *TIP* was created to serve as a master index to the whole Buros Institute reference series on tests, including the 15 *MMY*s and the monograph series.

  **What tests are included?** The only criterion for inclusion is that the test be in print and available for purchase or use. So *TIP* covers a wide range of tests across psychology, education and achievement.

  **How do I use it?** Tests are listed alphabetically, within subjects. However, if you know a test title, you can flip to an alphabetical index to find it. There are five indexes: test title, classified subject, publisher, name (of authors, reviewers) and a publishers' directory. These five indexes are handy for locating tests by means other than the title or for accessing whole groups of tests for making comparisons (e.g., all tests tapping vocational interests). After you have located a test that interests you, turn to the *MMY* for more detailed information on that test, or use the directory of publishers to contact the test publisher for more information.

- **Mental Measurements Yearbook (MMY) Publisher:** The Buros Institute for Mental Measurements, Lincoln, NE. Most current edition: 17th ed. (2007).

  **What information is here?** In the *MMY*, tests are listed alphabetically by title. Each entry provides descriptive information, such as the test name, intended population, publication dates, forms and prices, test author and publisher. It also contains additional information on the extent to which reliability, validity, norming data, scoring and reporting services, and foreign language versions are available. Most entries also include one or more reviews of the test and testing materials (e.g., manuals) by qualified psychologists.

  **What tests are included?** The criteria for inclusion in the *MMY* are that the test be new or revised since the previous yearbook and that the publisher provide documentation supporting the technical qualities of the test.

  **How do I use it?** The introduction contains step-by-step directions for using the text to locate testing information. If you know the test title, you can look it up directly
through the alphabetical listings. The seven indexes arrange tests by title, print status (in or out), acronym, classified subject, publisher, name (author, reviewer) and score. These can be used to access tests about which you have limited information or to access groups of tests that fit into the same category (e.g., yield the same score or are all measuring stress).


  **What information is here?** *Tests*, like TIP, is a bibliographic encyclopedia containing information on thousands of testing instruments in psychology, education, and business. It provides concise descriptions of tests, with each entry including the test title and author, the intended population, the tests purpose, the major features, the administration time, the scoring method, the cost and availability, and the primary publisher. Also, a scanning line uses coded visual keys to indicate whether the test is self- or examiner-administered.

  *Tests* does not contain evaluative critiques or data on reliability, validity, or norms; this information can be found for selected instruments in *Test Critiques*.

  **What tests are included?** *Tests* was created to provide quick and easy access to all tests available in the English language. Several thousand tests are included from the areas of psychology, education, and business.

  **How do I use it?** The book is divided into three main sections: 'Psychology,' 'Education' and 'Business,' with each of these divided into subsections. Tests are arranged alphabetically within each subsection.

  *Tests* has seven indexes, including the test title index, author index, foreign language availability index, and a publisher/distributor index. Three indexes identify tests suitable for special populations: the hearing impaired, visually impaired, and physically impaired. Finally, there is a listing of out-of-print tests, which shows tests that publishers indicate have recently gone out-of-print. Use these indexes to locate information on a particular test or to access whole groups of tests in your area of interest. A publishers directory, also located in *Tests*, gives names, addresses and phone numbers of publishers to contact for more information or purchasing inquiries.

- **Test Critiques Publisher**: Pro-Ed, Inc., Austin, TX. Most current edition: updated annually.

  **What information is here?** This text is designed to be a companion to *Tests* and contains supplemental information designated as 'not appropriate for inclusion in that directory. This includes psychometric information such as reliability, validity and norm development. The tri-part entry for each test includes an Introduction, Practical Applications/Uses and Technical Aspects, followed by a critique. The Introduction describes the test in detail, including information on the authors and
publisher and the purpose of the test. Practical Applications/Uses gives information aimed toward the test user, including intended population, administration, scoring, and interpretation procedures. Technical Aspects includes citations from reliability and validity studies and opinions from experts regarding the technical adequacy of the test. The text is written for both professionals and students, with technical terms explained, and includes helpful information not usually found in other reference books. This makes it a user-friendly resource for students, teachers or persons unfamiliar with test terminology.

**What tests are included?** Tests are chosen for inclusion based on research on the most frequently used psychological, educational, and business-related tests. Selections are also made based on surveys of professional organizations regarding the tests they would most like to see critiqued. This text is updated annually.

**How do I use it?** Each volume contains a table of contents that lists all reviewed tests alphabetically, along with the name of the reviewer. Each volume also contains cumulative indexes organized by test title, test publisher, test author and reviewer, and subject. This makes it easy to locate information on a test reviewed in any of the volumes, all in one location. Once you have located and read the review for any test, contact the publisher for more information regarding the purchase of the test. Also, because Test Critiques is a companion to Tests, you can look to the Tests directory for more information regarding any test described in Test Critiques.

- **Internet Searches**

  The most comprehensive way to search for information is through the World Wide Web on the Internet. The Test Locator allows you to access test information from a variety of sources. Originally a joint effort of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation at the Catholic University of America, the Library and Reference Services Division of ETS, the Buros Institute of Mental Measurements at the University of Nebraska, and Pro-Ed (a publisher of test reviews), the Test Locator was designed as a gateway to various sources of information on tests. Sponsor websites includeEricae.net, Buros Institute of Mental Measurements and ETS TestLink.

- **Available Software and Scoring Services for Published Tests.** You can find a multitude of computerized testing materials, including a variety of software products developed for administering, scoring, and interpreting published tests. There are a couple of helpful directories that can lead you to the software you need.

- **What is "Test Reviews Online"?**

  At the Buros Center for Testing’s website, search engines allow you to examine a large amount of information on tests and testing. "Test Reviews Online" is a web-based service of the Buros Institute of Mental Measurements. Test reviews are available to individuals exactly as they appear in the 9th through the most recent
Mental Measurements Yearbooks. In addition, regular updates are provided from our latest test review database. For a small fee, users may download information for any of over 2,000 tests that include specifics on test purpose, population, publication date, administration time and descriptive test critiques.

Available Software and Scoring Services

You can find a multitude of computerized testing materials, including a variety of software products developed for administering, scoring and interpreting published tests. There are a couple of helpful directories that can lead you to the software you need.

- **Psychware Sourcebook**
  
  **Publisher:** Metritech, Inc., Champaign, IL. **Editor:** Samuel E. Krug, PhD. **Most current volume:** 4th ed. (1993).

  **What information is here?** This handy reference identifies and describes over 533 computer-based assessment tools, including computerized versions of paper-and-pencil tests and computer-based scoring and interpretation systems. It serves as a directory of available computer services and contains no reviews or critiques of software or services. Each item entry provides the test (or instrument) name, supplier, category (see below), applications, scale restrictions, type and cost of service, and product description. Also, an appendix showcases sample screens and sample outputs for many products, lending a realistic preview of services.

  A separate section, Additional Resources, contains information to direct readers to outside sources of information on new products and critiques of available ones. These resources include journals, newsletters, electronic bulletin boards, and databases.

  **What tests are included?** Instruments are categorized using the following classification scheme:

  1. Career/Vocational;
  2. Cognitive/Ability;
  3. Interests/Attitudes;
  4. Motivation;
  5. Neuropsychological;
  6. Personality; and
  7. Structured Interview.

  The 533 products described consist of both computer-based test interpretation (CBTI) packages and assessment products.

  **How do I use it?** Seven indexes provide easy access to the wide range of assessment tools included. The test title index makes it easy to trace a computer-based test version back to its paper-and-pencil counterpart. Other indexes arrange entries by product category, product application, service (including hardware
compatibility), and supplier. These are useful in searching for a host of available services for one particular test (e.g., the MMPI) or in locating products compatible with your own computer (e.g., Macintosh).

**Where can I find it?** Ask the reference librarian at your university or college library. If you cannot locate it, contact the publisher, Metritech, Inc.

**For Additional Information on the Proper Use of Tests:**

The following publications represent standards, guidelines, and principles that have been carefully developed by psychologists, educators and researchers to achieve and maintain ethical testing practices by the whole community. If you are interested in locating guidelines on the proper use of tests, you can consult the following:


**Section 2: Unpublished Psychological Tests and Measures**

- What do you do when you need to identify and find instruments in a research area where no published tests exist?
- What do you do when you try to find a specific test that has been used in a research study, but is not listed as a published test?
- What responsibilities do you have when using an unpublished test?

Psychological measures are not limited to published tests; a gold mine of unpublished (or noncommercial) inventories, checklists, scales, projective techniques and other instruments exist in the behavioral sciences literature. Unfortunately, only a few individuals who work in these areas know that the instruments exist or where to find them.

Locating these instruments is frustrating if you don't know where to look. Many researchers, unaware that measures may exist that are suited to their needs, re-create instruments for their own research. This process is a two-fold waste; usable instruments lie dormant, and time that could be spent refining existing measures is instead spent virtually duplicating them. But finding instruments to suit your needs can be easy if you know where to look.

**PsycTESTS Database**
You may want to make PsycTESTS one of your first stops, especially if you are looking for unpublished tests. Released in September 2011, it is designed to provide descriptive information about tests and their development and administration. More than 70 percent of the records contain the actual test, either in full or part. Most are in PDF; however, some are multimedia. See the PsycTESTS Quick Facts for the number of tests covered in the database, content coverage and much more information.

Most of the tests have links to published documents, primarily peer-reviewed journal articles that include further information about the development of the test. APA has gathered these tests from a variety of sources:

- Directly from authors who wish others to use their tests in research
- Peer reviewed journals for which APA has rights or permission to use
- Books and handbooks
- Dissertations
- Websites

For two types of tests, there may be no link to the literature. APA is working with the Archives of the History of American Psychology to digitize their test collection, and some of those are in PsycTESTS. Also, APA has negotiated agreements with commercial test publishers to include descriptive information about their tests with links to the publisher’s website. These two currently constitute a small portion of the database, but the collection is expected to grow substantially.

If you want to find a test you can use in research or teaching, you can limit a search to this category or check the Permissions field in the record. Other options are to contact the corresponding author, publisher or both.

A summary describes the development of the test, and the record includes the citation for the document that reported on the test as well as contact information for the corresponding author. Other key fields include the following:

- Construct
- Purpose
- Acronym or alternate names
- Format
- Administration Method
- Number of Items

If the source document included reliability and validity data, those are also included. Altogether 25 fields or more may be present. Some tests have multiple records for multiple source documents. One article might describe the development, and others may provide evaluations of the test or describe its use with a different population.
The database is a research resource, not an evaluative tool. That is, the summaries are factual descriptions, not reviews of the test. Tests have been acquired across the breadth of psychology; however, APA continues to widen its search and welcomes suggestions.

For more information about the database, see PsycTESTS. Authors who wish to have their tests included in PsycTESTS should email office.

Printed Directories

The following are two of the more popular printed directories of unpublished or noncommercial tests and measures:


  This valuable directory provides researchers and students easy access to recently developed experimental mental measures, tests and surveys that are not commercially available. These measures have been used by other researchers on topics ranging from educational adjustment and motivation to personality and perception. The tests are arranged in a 24-category system and are grouped according to function and content, noting purpose, format, psychometric information (where available), and related research. The newest category, Adjustment: Vocation,' identifies articles addressing burnout, vocational maturity, job-related stress, job frustration and job satisfaction.

  The directory has been updated periodically since Volume 1 was published in 1974. Each volume has a cumulative index which makes it easy to access any of the 5,363 tests contained across the first six volumes.


  This text provides annotated references to thousands of psychological measures first appearing in journal articles or other publications. The first section, 'Primary References,' lists each of these 3,000-plus article references, along with the name of the measure and one or more applications of this measure in other experimental studies. The 'Applications' section lists over 6,600 additional studies that provide experimental tests or additional uses of the original measures. Author and subject indexes are included.

  This text can help the researcher answer such questions as What empirical findings have been produced by the use of a given measure? or What additional information about a measure has been acquired since its publication?

  Although it contains a wealth of references to experimental measures and corresponding research, this text is outdated. It is a helpful resource when looking for a specific measure
appearing in the literature during the 1960s or early 1970s, but you would want to consult a more recent measure that is appropriate for your need.

Other Directories

Directories covering unpublished tests also exist in a nonprint format. The following is a summary of some of the more complete directories that fall into this category.

- **ETS Test Collection**

  The Educational Testing Service (ETS) Test Collection database contains records on over 10,000 tests and research instruments. These records describe the instruments and provides availability information. ETS Library and Reference Services Division prepares the descriptions. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation maintains the database and hosts the Search System.

  The title, author, publication date, and source appear in the record. An abstract describing the instrument, intended population, and uses accompanies the record. Subject terms give the age and grade level information as well as ERIC Thesaurus terms that describe the test. For more information, call or write: ETS Test Collection, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541, (609) 734-5689.

- **Tests in Microfiche**

  Available through the Test Collection at the ETS, Tests in Microfiche offers information on a multitude of educational and psychological tests cited in the literature, but unavailable commercially. This includes both never-published and out-of-print tests. Users who purchase the microfiche may reproduce tests for their own use.

  Currently, there are over 800 tests included, with new sets of tests prepared annually and added to the cumulative set. These can be purchased as a set or by individual title, and an annotated index is available with each set. Also available is the Cumulative Index to Tests in Microfiche (1975-1987), which indexes all tests available for the first 13 sets of Tests in Microfiche. This reference is now available at many college and university libraries. For more information, call or write: ETS Test Collection, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, 08541, (609) 734-5686.

- **Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI)**

  Many measures created or modified for specific studies appear in journals, but never become commercially available. This computerized database (formerly known as the Health Instrument File) publicizes their existence and allows researchers and students to benefit from past work and avoid re-creating existing instruments. HaPI uses controlled vocabulary descriptors from APAs Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms and the National Library of Medicine's Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). The database, which is updated quarterly, contains over 15,000 instruments, most appearing in the literature
between 985 and the present. One particularly useful feature is that reliability and validity can be used as keywords to access instruments with tested psychometric properties. You could, for instance, search for all instruments in your area with demonstrated test-retest reliability, construct validity, or both.

HaPI is available at many college libraries through BRS Information Technologies and online through databases such as EBSCO and Ovid.

- **Using the PsycINFO Database**

Suppose you are interested in group dynamics and want to locate a measure of group cohesion to use for your project entitled Cohesiveness Among Fraternities and Sororities. None of the tests or surveys you found in the directories or databases seem suitable for your study.

There is a chance that the measure you need is in the published literature, but has not yet been referenced in any of these directories. You can locate more tests through a literature search at your library. If you are not familiar with PsycINFO, a bibliographic database that indexes published research in psychology back to the earliest years of the discipline, ask your librarian. Using keywords to denote your interest areas, you can use the database to find citations for and links to articles in your interest area. If the article mentions the use of a test or measure or describes its development, you will find the name of the test in the Tests and Measures field.

**PsycINFO**

These citations also include the university or organizational affiliation of the authors, along with an address where you can forward correspondence regarding the article. Write to the author and ask for more information on the test or measure.

Depending on your research area, you may want to consult reference sources in fields related to psychology. For example, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) of the American Institutes for Research produces a database similar to PsycINFO that indexes research published in the educational literature. In addition, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation (ERIC/TM) processes information on approximately 2,000 documents and 2,000 journal articles per year, specifically in the area of testing and evaluation. Ask your reference librarian for more information about such alternative sources.

Section 3: A Final Word and Responsibilities of Test Users

Finding copies of unpublished tests and measures, or information about them, can be easy if you follow the tips in this document. Remember that the PsycINFO database is an excellent source of information on the very latest developments in psychology, including testing.

**Responsibilities of Test Users**
Users of unpublished tests have certain ethical responsibilities. Users must (a) contact the test author and request permission to use their test, and (b) secure their permission in writing if the material is copyrighted. Locating the author may be a difficult process, particularly if the measure is several years old, but try the following steps:

1. Journal articles list the authors organizational affiliation (or university) with a mailing address on the first page of the article. If the publication is fairly recent, this method is almost always successful.
2. If this fails, directories published by scientific and professional associations like APA could provide you with a more current address and phone number for the author. This is useful if the article is several years old and the author has moved since the article was published.
3. If these attempts to locate the author fail, contact the publisher holding the copyright to the original material and request permission from the publisher. Remember that APA holds the copyright to all material published in APA journals.

No matter how difficult this process may seem, you should make every effort to contact an author or copyright holder to secure permission before using any test or other instrument.

Still have a question about finding tests? Send an email to the Testing Office of the APA Science Directorate.