

What is Intelligence?...

Many definitions

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[Intelligence](#)

A proposed definition of intelligence

Intelligence is:

- a ubiquitous individual difference
- a hypothetical construct
- reflected in a variety of behaviours which demonstrate a cognitive capacity for:
 - thinking and reasoning
 - learning and adapting

Also see - [Student definitions of intelligence](#)

Classic definitions of intelligence

- "The ability to carry out abstract thinking."
(Terman, 1921)
- "The capacity for knowledge, and knowledge possessed."
(Henmon, 1921)
- "The capacity to learn or to profit by experience."
(Dearborn, 1921)
- "The capacity to acquire capacity."
(Woodrow, 1921)
- "Intelligence is what is measured by intelligence tests."
(Boring, 1923)
- "A global concept that involves an individual's ability to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with the environment."
(Wechsler, 1958)
- "Intelligence is a general factor that runs through all types of performance."
(Jensen)
- "A person possesses intelligence insofar as he had learned, or can learn, to adjust himself to his environment."
(Colvin, cited in Sternberg, 1982, p.30)
- "Intelligence is adaption to the environment."
(unknown)
- "Intelligence is that faculty of mind by which order is perceived in a situation previously considered disordered."
(R.W. Young, cited in Kurzweil, 1999)
- "Intelligent activity consists of grasping the essentials in a given situation and responding appropriately to them."
(unknown)
- "Intelligence is the ability to use optimally limited resources - including time - to achieve goals."
(Kurzweil, 1999)
- "Intelligence is what you do when you don't know what to do."
(unknown)
- "Intelligence is a hypothetical idea which we have defined as being reflected by certain types of

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behaviour. "
(unknown)