

**Do you wonder if an IQ test will be of any use?**

# Am I gifted or not?

gifted  
adults  
foundation



*Giftedness is sometimes seen as an all or nothing issue. That is not the case – giftedness is in fact something that can be present very clearly or more in the background and is effectively quite relative. People usually want to know more about this because they feel that others who are important to them don't understand them. If you think you may be gifted, then this question could arise: do I want to, or need to prove my giftedness? For example by taking an IQ test? There is no right answer to that question. With this leaflet we want to give you enough information to think about this and decide what you want to do.*

## Giftedness and IQ tests

There are hundreds of definitions and descriptions of giftedness. All of them mention being highly intelligent. Most also say that giftedness is more than just being very intelligent. At the Gifted and Talented Adults Foundation we use the description that was created by a panel of twenty Dutch experts in 2008:

*A quick and clever thinker, able to deal with complex matters. Autonomous, curious and passionate. A sensitive and emotionally rich individual, living intensely. He or she enjoys being creative. (Delphi-model of Giftedness – Kooijman - van Thiel, M. (red.). Hoogbegaafd, dat zie je zó! 2008)*

Of course these characteristics can be seen in other people as well. But in this description giftedness is seen as a complete package of clearly present characteristics. No test has been developed that can measure giftedness based on this description. What can be measured is general intelligence, also known as cognitive intelligence, even though there are some within the field of psychology who criticise this. For now, intelligence tests are the only practical method of mapping someone's intellectual capabilities. A number of different tests have been developed to measure intelligence, mostly consisting of different exercises that appeal to reasoning abilities and spatial awareness. These tests result in a score that is generally called someone's IQ (intelligence quotient). For giftedness the threshold is usually set at 98%. That means that your score must be higher than 98% of the general population (98th percentile). It is quite impossible to get this score by accident. It is more common for people to score lower than they would do normally because of fear of failure for example.

## The question: take the test or not?

Someone's IQ may be relatively easy to determine, it's not that easy to determine with equal certainty if someone is gifted or not, because of other factors that are hard or impossible to measure. Recognising yourself in the description mentioned above is a strong indication. If you need more certainty, for whatever reason, then you could consider taking an IQ test. In the Netherlands the WAIS IV is currently the most widely used test. This is an individual test that needs to be administered by a certified person. This can cost a few hundred Euro. A cheap alternative is a Mensa test that is taken in groups.

Many people tell us that their high score on an IQ test is reassuring to them because now they have much less reason to doubt their mental capabilities. However, there are a number of individuals who take the test and score just below the 98% mark. They have a higher tendency to start doubting themselves, when it is obvious that they are very intelligent. It is important to know why you would want to take the test. And to consider what would be the advantages and disadvantages of taking the test and getting the results (which can go either way).

### Recommendations

- When you recognise yourself in the characteristics of giftedness, as described for example by the Delphi model of giftedness, then start learning more about these characteristics in order to get to know yourself better.
- If you wonder if your problems in life are linked to being gifted, then it can be very beneficial to read articles and books about giftedness and going to meetings where you can interact with (other) gifted people. Even if you don't know your IQ you are welcome at many gatherings and activities that are set up for gifted persons, and on gifted forums on the internet.
- If you are thinking about taking an IQ test, then realise that it only measures a limited aspect of your capabilities. Also think about the effects of the result of such a test.
- Practice IQ tests on the internet. Even though they will mostly not be validated tests, practicing can help you overcome fear of failure and give you an impression of what you can expect. For example: the Mensa workout (see [www.mensa.org](http://www.mensa.org)).
- Even without proof of a high IQ you may be gifted! Because it's not about the number, but more about knowing yourself and what makes you happy.
- Do you need help, then try talking to a coach or counsellor that has experience working with gifted people. Together you will make a more informed choice.
- If you are going to take an IQ test then do it with an expert who has studied the subject of giftedness.

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