

Preferred Learning Styles



**Personal
Assessment for
AS Level
Students**

Learning Styles

Although it's probably not something to which you've given much thought, we all have our preferred individual way of learning. For some people, that preferred way is a practical one - "learning by doing". Others may learn best by simply listening or by talking things through with a friend, colleague or lecturer.

The purpose of the following questionnaire, therefore, is to help you to identify your individual preferred style of learning. In other words, its designed to provide the information you need to maximise your learning throughout your AS course.

When completing the questionnaire, you need to keep the following in mind if you are to accurately and usefully identify the style - or styles - of learning that are best suited to you as an individual:

- **This is not a test** - there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.
- **There is no time limit to the questionnaire** - you may take as much or as little time as you need.
- You should think carefully about each question and answer it as honestly as possible.
- You should not discuss your possible answers with anyone else since the questionnaire aims to identify **your** preferred learning style, not someone else's preferred style.
- For each question, choose the answer that best explains your preference and circle the letter next to the answer.
- If a single answer does not accurately reflect your feelings about the question you may select more than one response to the question.
- If there are any questions you do not understand or you feel the answers provided do not accurately reflect your beliefs then do not give a response to the question.
- For the most accurate results you should answer all questions, if possible. However, the questionnaire will still be helpful if you answer a minimum of 10 questions.

The Questionnaire

Please circle the letter which most accurately reflects your belief about what you would do.

You may circle more than one letter for each question.

1. You have a few minutes with nothing better to do. Would you be more likely to:

- a. stare into space or doodle.
- b. talk to yourself or to others.
- c. pick something up to read.
- d. do something practical, like fix something or straighten up your room.

2. You are not sure about the correct spelling of a word (for example: 'dependent' or 'dependant'). Do you:?

- a. look it up in the dictionary.
- b. see the word in your mind and choose by the way it looks
- c. sound it out in your mind.
- d. write both versions down on paper and choose one.

3. You want to plan a surprise party for your best friend's birthday. Do you:?

- a. talk about it on the phone with your other friends.
- b. make lists of what to do and what to buy.
- c. picture the party activities in your mind.
- d. invite friends and let it develop.

4. You are going to make or build something special for your friend or your family. Do you:?

- a. make something without the need for instructions.
- b. thumb through some books and magazines looking for ideas.
- c. refer to a specific handbook where there are good instructions.
- d. talk it over with some friends

5. You are really pleased with your acceptance for an educational course. This is also of interest to two friends. Do you:?

- a. take them to see the program in action.
- b. show them the brochure and information you've found about it
- c. start practicing the activities you'll be doing in the program.
- d. describe to your friends the activities you'll be doing each day of the course.

6. You are about to buy a new CD player. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?

- a. the salesperson telling you about it.
- b. reading the details about it.
- c. playing with the controls and listening to it.
- d. it looks really nice and it is something you could picture in your room.

7. Recall a time in your life when you learned how to play a new board game or computer game. How did you learn best? By:

- a. watching others do it first
- b. reading instructions.
- c. listening to somebody explaining it.
- d. doing it or trying it for yourself.

8. After reading a play you need to do a project on it for your English class. Would you prefer to:?

- a. read a speech from the play in front of the class.
- b. draw a poster showing something that happened in the play.
- c. act out a scene from the play.
- d. write your own review on the play

9. You are about to try to put together something like a computer or some self-assembly furniture. Would you first:?

- a. unpack the box and start trying to put the pieces together.
- b. read the manual that comes with the computer.
- c. telephone a friend and ask questions about it.
- d. look at the pictures in the manual and on the box

10. You need to give directions to two friends to go to a house nearby. Do you:

- a. draw a map on a piece of paper.
- b. tell them the directions.
- c. write down the directions on a piece of paper.
- d. walk them over to the house yourself.

11. You have a problem with your knee and it hurts when you play your favourite sport. Would you prefer that the doctor:

- a. describes to you what is wrong.
- b. gives you an article or brochure that explains the common problems with knees.
- c. shows you a diagram of what is wrong.
- d. demonstrates with a model what is wrong.

12. A new film has arrived in town. What would most influence your decision to go (or not go)?

- a. you hear friends talking about it
- b. you read what others say about it in a magazine.
- c. you see a preview of it.
- d. it is similar to others you have liked.

13. Do you prefer a teacher who likes to use:?

- a. a textbook and handouts.
- b. diagrams, charts, pictures and slides.
- c. field trips, labs and hands-on sessions.
- d. Class discussions and guest speakers.

Identifying your preferred learning style

Use the following scoring chart to find the category that each of your answers corresponds to. Circle the letters that correspond to your answers e.g. If you answered “b” for question 1, circle “V” in the question 1 row.

If you gave more than one answer to a question (for example, you answered “b” and “c” for question one) you should circle the appropriate letters (in this instance, both “A” and “R”).

(The letters are not important for the moment - their significance will be explained once you’ve completed the scoring chart).

Question	“a” category	“b” category	“c” category	“d” category
1	V	A	R	K
2	R	V	A	K
3	A	R	V	K
4	K	V	R	A
5	V	R	K	A
6	A	R	K	V
7	V	R	A	K
8	A	V	K	R
9	K	R	A	V
10	V	A	R	K
11	A	R	V	K
12	A	R	V	K
13	R	V	K	A

Calculating your scores

Count the number of each of the V A R K letters you have circled to get your score for each category.

Total number of Vs circled =	
Total number of As circled =	
Total number of Rs circled =	
Total number of Ks circled =	
Total number of answers =	

Calculating your preferences

To identify your preferred learning style (or, in some instances, preferred learning styles), you will need to do the following:

1. Look at the **total number of answers** you have given to the questionnaire and calculate your “stepping distance” from the following table:

Total Answers Given	Stepping Distance
10-16	2
17-22	3
23-30	4
More than 30	5

2. Look at the total number of Vs, As, Rs and Ks circled. The **letter** that has the **highest score** is your **first preference** and should be placed on the first “Stepping Stone” below.
3. The **letter** that has the **next highest score** is your **second preference** and should be placed on the next (adjacent) Stepping Stone - **but only if it is equal to or less than your “Stepping Distance”** (as calculated on the table above).

- Look at the following **examples** to help you understand the scoring system...

Example 1

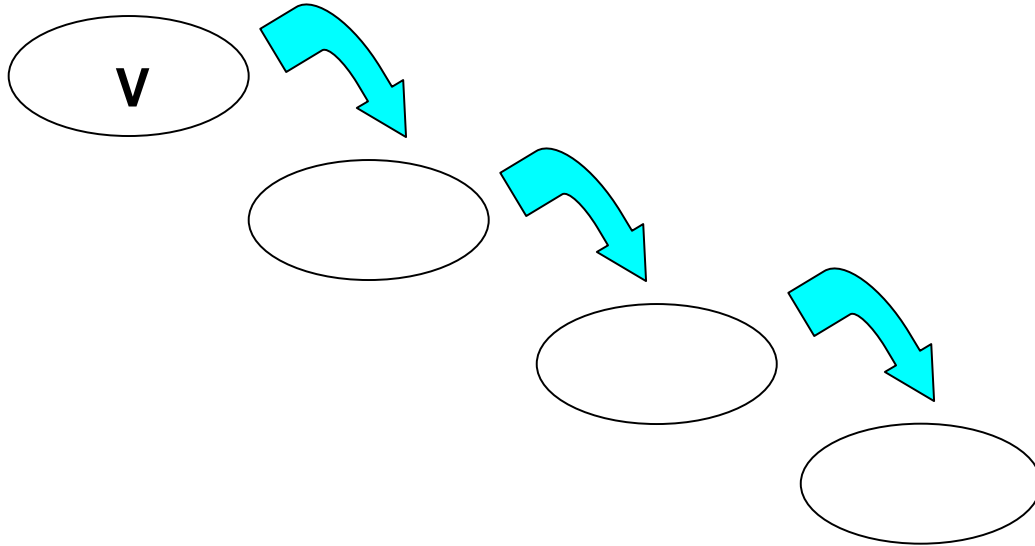
Total number of Vs circled =	10
Total number of As circled =	0
Total number of Rs circled =	2
Total number of Ks circled =	1

Total number of answers =

13

This gives a “Stepping Distance” of 2

The letter with the highest score is “V” which becomes the first preference:



The letter with the next highest score is “R” - but it **cannot** be entered on the adjacent stone because it is **further away** than the permitted stepping distance ($10 - 2 = 8$ - and the stepping distance is 2).

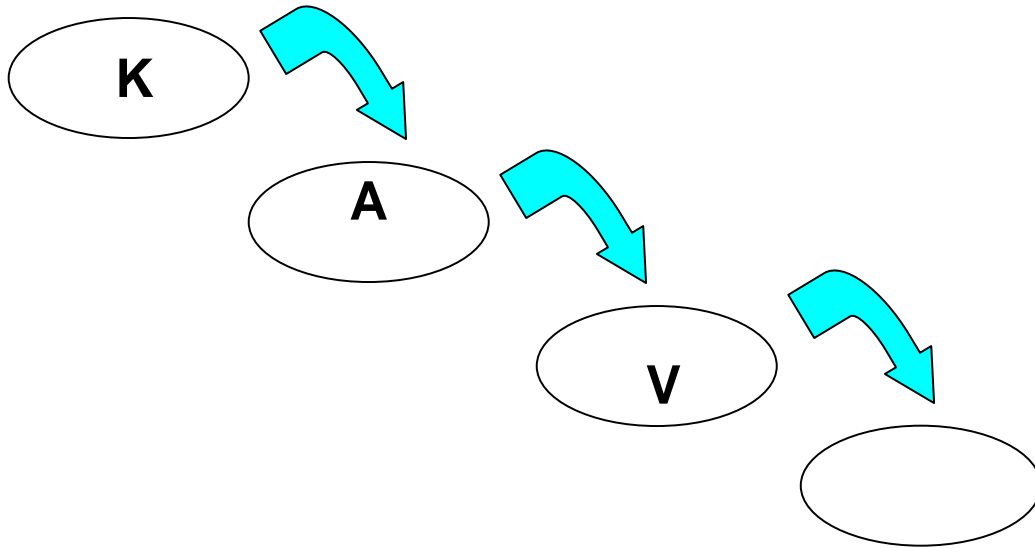
This means that you have identified your preferred learning style as “V”

Example 2

Total number of V s circled =	5
Total number of A s circled =	7
Total number of R s circled =	1
Total number of K s circled =	8
Total number of answers =	21

This gives a “Stepping Distance” of 3

The letter with the highest score is “K” which becomes the first preference:

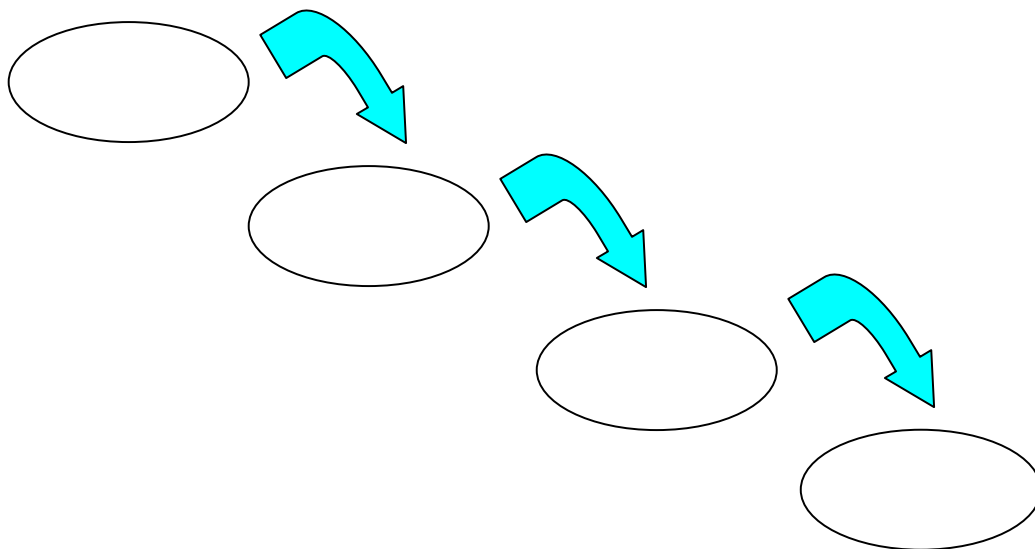


The letter with the next highest score is “A” and it **can** be entered on the adjacent stone because it is inside the permitted stepping distance ($8 - 7 = 1$ and the stepping distance is 3).

The letter with the next highest score is “V” and it **can** be entered on the adjacent stone because it is inside the permitted stepping distance ($7 - 5 = 2$ and the stepping distance is 3).

This means that you have identified your preferred learning style as “K A V”.

Use the Stepping Stones below to calculate your Preferred Learning Style(s)



What Does It All Mean?

Having successfully identified your **preferred learning style**, you may (or indeed may not) be wondering what the letters “V A R and K” mean.

In basic terms, they mean the following:

“V” = Visual

If your learning style is **visual** it means you **prefer** to use representations (such as charts, graphs, flow charts, symbols and so forth) as a way of depicting information that is usually in words.

“A” = Aural

If your learning style is **aural** it means you **prefer** to listen to information before you record it. Students with this learning preference tend to learn best from lectures, tutorials, tapes, talking to other students and the like.

“R” = Read/write

If your learning style is **read / write** it means you **prefer** information displayed as words (books, whiteboards, etc.).

“K” = Kinaesthetic

If your learning style is **kinaesthetic (pronounced “kin - s - thet - ick”** it means you **prefer** to collect information “by doing” - for example, you like to draw on your experiences, do experiments, simulations, practical work and the like

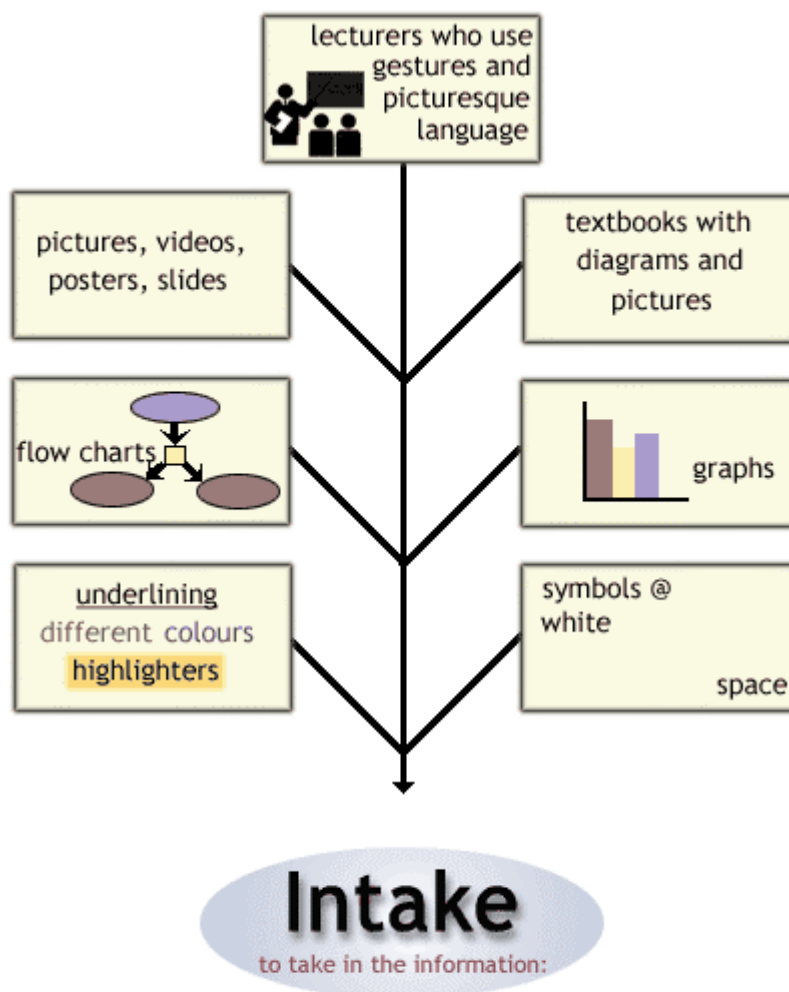
- For those of you who identified a single letter as your preferred learning style it means you have a very strong preference for this style - it is, in other words, the dominant way in which you prefer to learn
- For those of you who identified more than one letter as your preferred learning style it simply means you are comfortable working with a range of preferred learning styles - in some situations you may, for example, prefer to use one style whereas in other situations you may prefer to use another style.

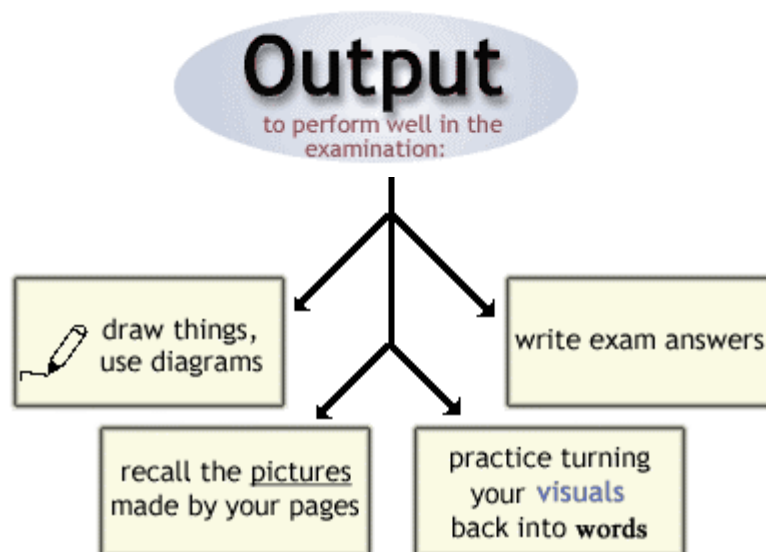
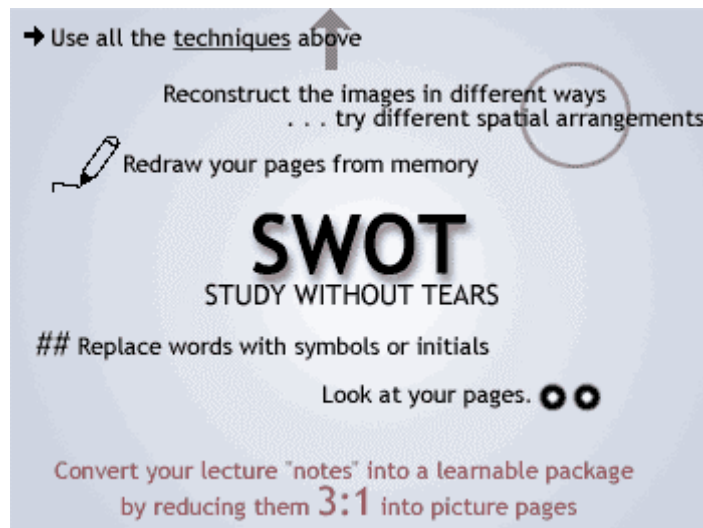
Please Note...

- The preferred learning style you have identified is **neither superior nor inferior** to any other preferred learning style. It is, for example, no better or no worse to prefer kinaesthetic styles of learning to read / write styles. The two may be **different** in many ways but they are **equally valid** styles of learning.
- The preferred style of learning you have identified is simply that - an indication of the learning style you prefer. **It doesn't mean:**
 - You should immediately stop using any other style of learning you already use.
 - This is your strongest style of learning (you may, for example, prefer to use one style but, throughout your school career, have become comfortable with another style...).

Study Strategies for Each Preferred Learning Style

1. If you have a strong preference for **Visual** learning, think about the following study strategies:





As a **visual** learner:

You want the whole picture so you are probably **holistic** rather than **reductionist** in your approach (in other words you use pictures, for example, to give you a view of the whole of the things you are trying to learning).

You are often swayed by the look of an object.

You are interested in colour and layout and design and you know where you are.

You are probably going to draw something.

2. If you have a strong preference for **Aural** learning, think about the following study strategies:

INTAKE

To take in the information

- attend lectures
- attend tutorials
- discuss topics with other students
- discuss topics with your lecturers
- explain new ideas to other people
- use a tape recorder
- remember the interesting examples, stories, jokes...
- describe the overheads, pictures and other visuals to somebody who was not there
- leave spaces in your lecture notes for later recall and 'filling'

SWOT - Study without tears

To make a learnable package:

Convert your lecture "notes" into a learnable package by reducing them (3:1)

- Your lecture notes may be poor because you prefer to listen. You will need to expand your notes by talking with others and collecting notes from the textbook.
- Put your summarised notes onto tapes and listen to them.
- Ask others to 'hear' your understanding of a topic.
- Read your summarised notes aloud.
- Explain your notes to another 'aural' person.

OUTPUT

To perform well in the examination:

- Talk with the examiner
- Listen to your voices and write them down.
- Spend time in quiet places recalling the ideas.
- Practice writing answers to old exam questions.
- Speak your answers.

As an **aural** learner:

1. You prefer to have all of this page explained to you.
2. The written words are not as valuable as those you hear.
3. You will probably go and tell somebody about this.

3. If you have a strong preference for **Read / Write** learning, think about the following study strategies:

INTAKE

To take in the information

- lists
- headings
- dictionaries
- glossaries
- definitions
- handouts
- textbooks
- readings - library
- lecture notes (verbatim)
- lecturers who use words well and have lots of information in sentences and notes
- essays
- manuals (computing and laboratory)

SWOT - Study without tears

To make a learnable package:

Convert your lecture “notes” into a learnable package by reducing them (3:1).

- Write out the words again and again.
- Read your notes (silently) again and again.
- Rewrite the ideas and principles into other words.
- Organise any diagrams, graphs ... into statements, e.g. "The trend is..."
- Turn reactions, actions, diagrams, charts and flows into words.
- Imagine your lists arranged in multiple-choice questions and distinguish each from each.

OUTPUT

To perform well in the examination:

- Write exam answers.
- Practice with multiple choice questions.
- Write paragraphs, beginnings and endings.
- Write your lists (a,b,c,d,1,2,3,4).
- Arrange your words into hierarchies and points.

As a **read / write** learner:

1. You like this page because the emphasis is on words and lists.
2. You believe the meanings are within the words, so any talk is OK but this handout is better.
3. You are heading for the library.

4. If you have a strong preference for **Kinaesthetic** learning, think about the following study strategies:

INTAKE

To take in the information

- all your senses - sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing ...
- laboratories
- field trips
- field tours
- examples of principles
- lecturers who give real-life examples
- applications
- hands-on approaches (computing)
- trial and error
- collections of rock types, plants, shells, grasses...
- exhibits, samples, photographs...
- recipes - solutions to problems, previous exam papers

SWOT - Study without tears

To make a learnable package:

Convert your lecture "notes" into a learnable package by reducing them (3:1).

- Your lecture notes may be poor because the topics were not 'concrete' or 'relevant'.
- You will remember the "real" things that happened.
- Put plenty of examples into your summary. Use case studies and applications to help with principles and abstract concepts.
- Talk about your notes with another "K" person.
- Use pictures and photographs that illustrate an idea.
- Go back to the laboratory or your lab manual.
- Recall the experiments, field trip...

OUTPUT

To perform well in the examination:

- Write practice answers, paragraphs...
- Role play the exam situation in your own room.

As a **kinaesthetic** learner:

1. You want to experience the exam so that you can understand it.
2. The ideas on this page are only valuable if they sound practical, real, and relevant to you.
3. You need to do things to understand.