

## VAK Learning Styles

### What is Your Learning Preference?

Whether you realise it or not, we all have preferences for how we absorb information, analyse it and make decisions:

- Some people like to see what you mean and make decisions based on how things look.
- Some people like to hear your ideas and decide based on what they sound like.
- Some people like to experience what you are talking about and decide by how things feel to them.

The Human Brain is an incredible computer. However, it does not come with an instruction manual! Understanding your personal learning style can improve your own learning process, and assist you in communicating with other people.

Learning styles can be broken into three modes: [Visual](#), [Auditory](#) (also called Aural or Audio) and [Kinesthetic](#), i.e. V-A-K. Most people have a preferred mode of learning, but we use all three to some extent. Some people can use more than one mode equally as well, and are referred to as [Multimodal](#).

**NOTE: Learning Preferences are not the same as Strengths.** For example, you might be a good public speaker (A), but prefer to watch a movie rather than read the book (V).

### Are you Visual, Auditory or Kinesthetic?

To find out your preferred learning style, you can take the VAK Test. This will give you three scores, one for each of V, A and K. The highest score is your called your preferred or dominant mode. The order of your scores, e.g. AKV, is called your "VAK code".

Of course, you could have a mixed learning style, referred to as Multimodal<sup>1</sup>. If this is the case, then your scores for two or three of the modes will be very close or even equal. This is nothing to be concerned about - it just means that you are a complex person!

Once you understand your learning preference, you can also try to understand other people to assist in interaction and communication

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<sup>1</sup> Multimodal people use more than one learning style. Everyone does this to some extent, but many people have a strong preference for one style. If you have one score that is much higher than the rest, then you have a clear preference. However, if your scores are very close, then you are multimodal. If you have two modes with roughly similar scores, then you have two strong preferences. It is also possible that all your scores are about equal, in which case you will dynamically switch modes depending on the situation. This is ideal, because you can learn in many varied ways.

# VAK Learning Styles Questionnaire

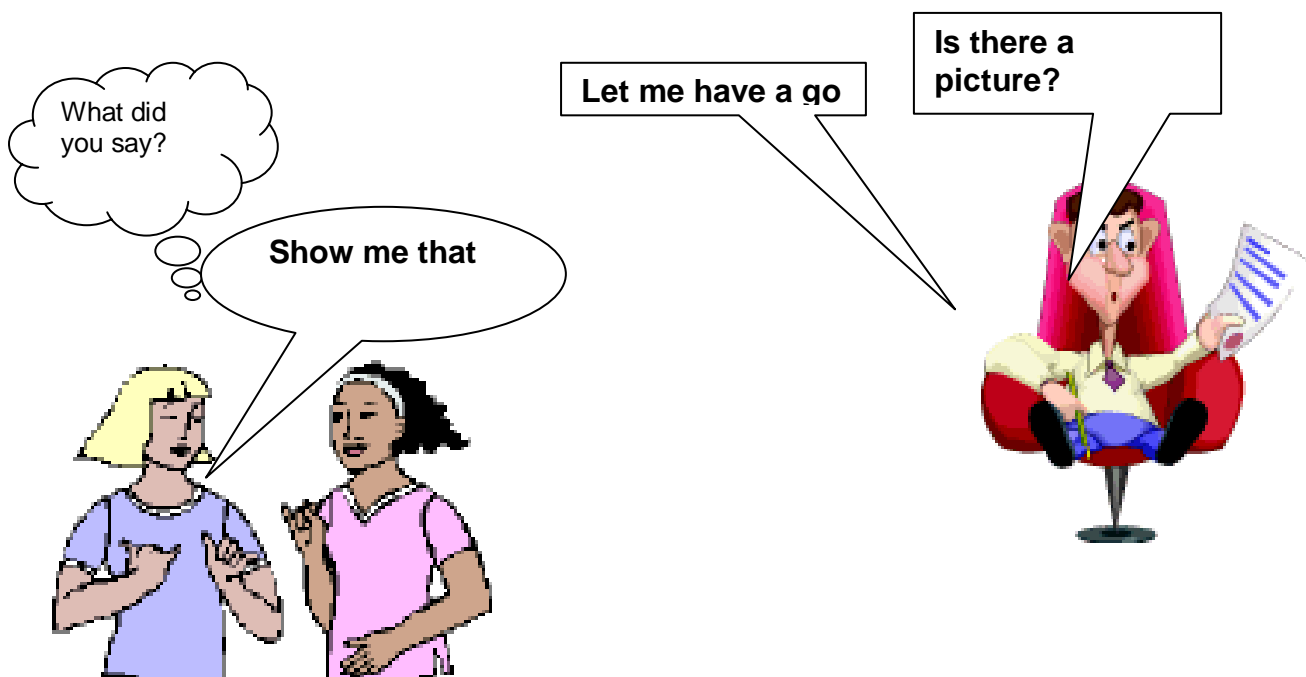
**What's my learning style?**



**Name:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Course:** .....

This questionnaire will help you find out the way you learn best. This information will help you and your tutors to make your time at College more enjoyable and successful.



## What do I do?

There are no right or wrong answers and there are no tricks.

You can take as long as you need to do the questionnaire.

(It will probably take between 10 and 20 minutes, but it is OK to take longer.)

Answer all the questions to get the best results.

All the answers are Yes or No. Tick just one answer per question.




If you want to answer 'sometimes', decide whether you agree more than disagree with the statement and then answer Yes or No.






To get the best results honesty is very important.



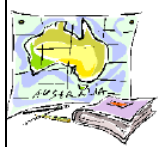



The questionnaire is yours, you do not have to show anyone your answers to the questions.



**Now have a go!**

		✓	
		Yes	No
1	 <p>When you are describing a party/holiday to a friend, do you describe the music, sounds and noise you experienced?</p>		
2	Do you use your hands when you speak?		
3	<p>To keep up with the news/sport, do you prefer the radio or TV rather than reading a newspaper?</p> 		
4	When you use a computer, do you find the visual prompts useful, eg the icons/pictures in the tool bars, highlights and underlines, etc?		
5	When you have to take down information, do you prefer drawing diagrams and pictures to writing notes?		
6	When you play noughts and crosses or draughts, can you picture the 'o' and 'x' or counters in different positions?		
7	 <p>Do you like to take objects apart and repair things, eg your bike, engines, etc?</p>		
8	When you are trying to remember the spelling of a word, do you tend to jot it down a few times in different ways until you find the one which looks right?		
9	When you are learning something new, do you like spoken instructions, talks and/or lectures?		
10	Do you like making things?		

		✓	
		Yes	No
11	When using a computer, do you find the bleeps and sounds useful to tell you that you have done something wrong or to show when you have finished something?		
			
12	When you revise/study or are learning something new, do you like to use diagrams and/or pictures?		
13	Are you quick and efficient at copying information down?		
14	If something is said to you, do you usually remember it, without it being repeated?		
15	 In your spare time do you like doing something physically active eg sport, walking, gardening, etc?		
16	When you have spare time, do you like to listen to music?		
			
17	When you are looking at a shop display, do you prefer to look around peacefully on your own?		
18	Do you find it easier to remember people's names than their faces?		
19	When you spell, do you usually have to write the word down?		
			
20	Do you like to be able to move around when you are working?		
21	Do you learn to spell by saying the words out loud?		
22	 When you are describing a party/holiday to a friend, do you describe what people looked like, what they were wearing and the colours?		
23	When starting a new task, do you like to get on and do something straight away?		
24	Do you learn well by watching someone demonstrate a particular skill?		

		✓	
		Yes	No
25	Does saying things out loud help you to learn?		
26	Do you like showing people how to do something as opposed to writing a series of instructions?		
27	Do you like role play and acting things out? 		
28	 Do you prefer to go out and about to find information rather than sitting in the library or at your pc?		
29	When you visit a shop, do you enjoy talking about the items on display, and listening to the comments of others?		
30	 Do you find it easy to follow a map?		
31	Do you feel that one of the best ways to appreciate goods in a shop is to be able to reach out and touch them?		
32	When you read a story or an article in a magazine do you picture the scene in your mind? 		
33	Do you tend to hum, or talk to yourself, when completing tasks?		
34	Do you look at the pictures in magazines before deciding what to read?		
35	 When you are planning a new journey, do you like to talk to someone to find out where to go?		
36	Have you always found it difficult to stay still for long and prefer generally to be active? 		

## Use your senses in teaching and learning

### What's my style?

If you have completed the questionnaire you will have some information about your preferred sensory learning style, or mix of styles. It is an advantage for you to know your own style, and to recognise other people's, as it will help you to learn more easily.



SEEING - VISUAL	HEARING - AUDITORY	DOING - KINAESTHETIC
Mind sometimes strays during verbal activities	Talks to self aloud	In motion most of the time/fidgety
Observes, rather than talks or acts; may be quiet by nature	Outgoing by nature	Outgoing by nature; expresses emotions by physical means
Organised in approach to tasks	Whispers to self while reading, may hum or sing while working	Taps pencil or foot/fiddles with objects while studying
Likes to read	Likes to be read to	Reading is not a priority
Usually a good speller	May be particular about the exact choice of words	May find spelling difficult
Memorises by creating mental images	Memorises by steps in a sequence	Likes to solve problems by physically working through them
Thinks in pictures	Very aware of rhythm	Very good body control, good timing and reflexes
Easily put off by visual distractions	Easily distracted by noises	Is affected by touch or lack of it
Finds verbal instructions difficult	May have difficulty with written instructions	Likes physical rewards
Remembers faces	Remembers names	Remembers what they have done rather than seen/heard
Strong on first impressions	May assess people by the sound of their voice	May assess people and situations by what 'feels right'
Likes drawing and doodling, may have good handwriting	Enjoys music and the sounds of words	Enjoys handling objects
Enjoys using colour	Enjoys talking and listening	Enjoys doing activities
Notices details	Can remember - and often mimic - speech by picking up rhythm of the sentence	Likes to use gestures and touch people while talking to them
Often a quick thinker	May need time to think (ie discuss it with myself)	May need time to think (ie process the actions involved)
May focus on the 'big picture' and use advanced planning	May assess a situation on 'how it sounds' to them	Will try new things - likes to get involved

## How does this help me to learn?

Use this knowledge of yourself to help you learn more easily. eg if you are mainly visual it would be more helpful if you were given diagrams or a video.

### Learns best by SEEING – Visual learner

- Learns best when there is a lot of visual input
- Needs a desk which is tidy - free of visual clutter
- Remembers things by their colour, size, location
- Remembers by 'photographing' or visualising information
- Makes use of posters and pictures - simplifies information
- Notes shapes or outlines
- Colour-codes different points or aspects of notes and texts
- Sticks useful information above eye-level
- Uses mind maps, flow charts, etc
- Learns from videos and OHP transparencies
- Uses visual clues to help remember things
- May find quiet background music helpful when working



### Learns best by HEARING – Auditory learner

- Learns best by listening and discussing
- Uses a tape-recorder to learn materials and plan assignments
- Practises by hearing and recalling
- Makes use of what words sound like and word associations
- Uses auditory mnemonics - remembers by sound or rhythm
- May need to ask for a spoken explanation when understanding is difficult
- Remembers by pitch, volume and rhythm of the voice when listening to information
- Finds concentration best in a quiet room, but may find quiet background music useful when working. (If using headphones, try turning the left earphone off)
- Needs to make sure of having copies of visual material used in lecture



### Learns best by DOING – Kinaesthetic learner

- Learns best by doing and practising
- Moves to learn - needs to have space for movement around the room. (If walking around is not possible, try using worry beads or squeezing a ball)
- Learns by handling materials, using models, doing things
- Uses texture and weight - learns through muscle memory
- Can learn from demonstration - watching carefully, then imagining or mirroring demonstrator's movements
- Explores situations by imagining what it would feel like
- Acts out events, or even facts, using role play
- Needs to make sure of having copies of visual material used in lecture





## Learning styles questionnaire

Now determine your learning style.

Name: ..... Date .....

Circle only the number of the questions that you answered YES to:

- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| 4  | 1  | 2  |
| 6  | 3  | 5  |
| 8  | 9  | 7  |
| 12 | 11 | 10 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 17 | 16 | 19 |
| 22 | 18 | 20 |
| 24 | 21 | 23 |
| 26 | 25 | 27 |
| 30 | 29 | 28 |
| 32 | 33 | 31 |
| 34 | 35 | 36 |

Total circled \_\_\_\_\_

Total circled \_\_\_\_\_

Total circled \_\_\_\_\_

Visual/Seeing

Auditory/Listening

Kinaesthetic/Doing



- Now shade in / plot the total number for each style on the bar chart below.
- The tallest bar on the chart shows your preferred learning style.
- If the bar chart is roughly even you probably enjoy using all of the learning styles.

13				13
12				12
11				11
10				10
9				9
8				8
7				7
6				6
5				5
4				4
3				3
2				2
1				1
	<b>Visual/ Seeing</b>	<b>Auditory/ Listening</b>	<b>Kinaesthetic/ Doing</b>	

You may also find it useful to look at the strengths and strategies that other learning styles use, to see what you may be able to learn from them.