

WORK SMARTS™

Word Smart

What Is It?

Word smarts (or linguistic intelligence) is the ability to use language effectively, whether orally or in writing. This includes the ability to manipulate the structure or syntax of language, the sounds of language, the meanings of words, and the practical uses of language. In other words, people who have highly developed word smarts tend to be excellent writers and public speakers. They are often effective communicators and have an appreciation for the written word. Given that much of our education focuses on our mastering languages (our native tongue and others), word smarts tend to be privileged in many facets of our culture.

How They Learn

People with word smarts learn best when they are exposed to a combination of traditional and non-traditional learning methods. They tend to have high verbal memory and recall of information presented in lectures or in writing. In addition, they enjoy other forms of learning, including listening to stories, keeping a personal journal, making speeches, debating, and creative writing.

Word Smarts & Careers

People possessing word smarts are best suited for occupations that involve speaking or writing. They are skilled at giving instructions to others, writing and editing text, and discussing and debating information and ideas in the workplace. They are also frequently skilled at teaching and lecturing and persuading others to do things. Contrary to stereotypes, people with word smarts are not necessarily bookworms (though many enjoy reading). They simply understand how to use and manipulate language—which, as it turns out, is a highly valued skill in today's workplace. Most of the fastest-growing jobs require that people understand how to read and write effectively, as well as communicate with others.

"Language is the armory of the human mind." – Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Keep This in Mind

Look at the big picture – You probably have and use most of the eight intelligences to some degree or another throughout your daily life. You may even excel at multiple intelligences and use them effectively in your career. That's why it can be useful to read through the materials for each intelligence.

Develop career aspirations – The theory of multiple intelligences can help you explore intelligences you possess and then use this knowledge to help you make career choices. Remember that the *Work Smarts* assessment is not designed to match you with an occupation, but it can help you explore many occupations related to your intelligences that you might not have considered before.

Embrace your strengths – Remember that multiple intelligences stretch over a wide spectrum of abilities, not just those traditionally valued by society, such as English and math. Now is your chance to see the different ways that you are intelligent and to capitalize on your strengths.

Don't ignore hidden intelligences – The theory of multiple intelligences allows you to identify and work to develop your hidden or underdeveloped intelligences. It is never too late to awaken unused abilities. Doing so can even open up career paths that you will find more productive and rewarding.

Top Occupations for Word Smart People

Speech-Language Pathologists assess and treat people with speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders. They may select alternative communication systems and teach their use. They also perform research related to speech and language problems.

Outlook: Average (7% to 13%) growth with a need for 33,000 additional employees for 2006–2016.

Median Earnings: \$60,690/year

Lawyers represent clients in criminal and civil litigation and other legal proceedings, draw up legal documents, and manage or advise clients on legal transactions. They may specialize in a single area or may practice broadly in many areas of law.

Outlook: Average (7% to 13%) growth with a need for 228,000 additional employees for 2006–2016.

Median Earnings: \$106,120/year

Customer Service Representatives interact with customers to provide information in response to inquiries about products and services and to handle and resolve complaints.

Outlook: Much-faster-than-average (21% or higher) growth with a need for 1,158,000 additional employees for 2006–2016.

Median Earnings: \$29,040/year

Public Relations Specialists engage in promoting or creating good will for individuals, groups, or organizations by writing or selecting favorable publicity material and releasing it through various communications media. They may prepare and arrange displays and make speeches.

Outlook: Faster-than-average (14% to 20%) growth with a need for 61,000 additional employees for 2006–2016.

Median Earnings: \$49,800/year

Word Smart Workplace Skills

Understanding the order and meaning of words.

Recalling and memorizing information.

Explaining, teaching, and learning.

Persuading others through writing and/or speaking.

Creative and expressive writing.

The ability to communicate information and ideas clearly through speaking or writing.

Profiles in Intelligence

Maya Angelou is an accomplished American poet; an award-winning writer, activist, playwright, actress, and producer; and an important figure in the American Civil Rights Movement. Maya has also won three Grammy Awards for her autobiographical spoken-word recordings. Maya continues to influence people through her writing, speaking, and documentaries—a prime example of word smarts at work.

MI Resources

Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice, Howard Gardner

7 Kinds of Smart: Identifying and Developing Your Multiple Intelligences, Thomas Armstrong

www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm

www.newhorizons.org/strategies/mi/front_mi.htm