

Empathy Quotient (EQ)

The Empathy Quotient (EQ) is a questionnaire designed to measure a person's ability to recognize and understand the emotions of others. It is often used in clinical assessments, particularly to detect traits associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Number of questions	60 questions
Estimated duration	15 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Empathy Quotient (EQ)
Target audience	Adults
Authors	Simon Baron-Cohen, Sally Wheelwright (2004)
Category	Autism spectrum, General

Preview of the 60 questions

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I can easily guess when someone wants to start a conversation.

Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I prefer animals to human beings.

Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I try to be fashionable.

Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I find it hard to explain to others things that I understood easily and that they did not understand the first time.

Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I dream most nights.

Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree

Scoring & interpretation

The Empathy Quotient (EQ) test includes 60 statements. For each statement, the participant chooses one of four possible answers. For positively worded items, scoring is as follows: "Strongly agree" is worth 2 points, "Slightly agree" is worth 1 point, "Slightly disagree" and "Strongly disagree" are worth 0 points.

However, not all items are scored the same way. Some items are worded positively, others in reverse. For positive statements (items 1, 6, 19, 22, 25, 26, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 52, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60), only the answers "Strongly agree" (2 points) and "Slightly agree" (1 point) are taken into account. For reversed statements (items 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 21, 27, 28, 29, 32, 34, 39, 46, 48, 49, 50), only the answers "Slightly disagree" (1 point) and "Strongly disagree" (2 points) earn points.

The test also contains 20 "filler" items that are not scored (2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 20, 23, 24, 30, 31, 33, 40, 45, 47, 51, 53, and 56). These items serve to divert the respondent's attention from the main theme of empathy, in order to improve the quality of responses to the relevant items.

The total score is obtained by adding up the points of the 40 empathy-related items. The maximum score is 80 points.

The EQ also includes 3 subscales for exploring different dimensions of empathy:

- Cognitive empathy (items 1, 19, 25, 26, 36, 41, 44, 52, 54, 55, 58) assesses the ability to understand the thoughts, intentions, and mental states of others.
- Emotional empathy (items 6, 21, 22, 27, 29, 32, 42, 43, 48, 50, 59) measures the capacity to feel and share the emotions of others.
- Social skills (items 4, 8, 12, 14, 35, 57) focuses on the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in social relationships.