

Interpreting the WAIS-III – PERFORMANCE SUBTESTS

Performance Subtests	Abilities Measured	Notes
<p><u>PICTURE COMPLETION</u> Student tells what is missing from a picture (eyebrow on face, vein in leaf) <i>Generous time limits</i></p>	Visual perception of meaningful details Holistic processing (seeing the whole and its details) Understanding and evaluation of pictures Simultaneous processing Distinguishing essential from nonessential details Concentration	Student may point if term is not known – Affected by vision impairments Affected by impulsivity Affected by persistence – giving up <i>Low score indicates difficulty in settings where attention to visual details is required</i>
<p><u>DIGIT SYMBOL-CODING</u> Student copies symbols from list corresponding to numbers <i>TIMED TEST</i></p>	Visual perception of abstract designs Following complex verbal directions Sequential processing Learning ability Manual dexterity (reproduction of symbols) Short-term visual memory Visual processing speed Visual-motor coordination (eye-hand coordination) Clerical speed and accuracy Ability to work under time pressure	Affected by dexterity limitations Affected by vision impairments Affected by anxiety Affected by distractibility Affected by persistence – giving up Affected by perfectionism <i>Low score indicates difficulty with paper-pencil and clerical tasks</i>
<p><u>BLOCK DESIGN</u> Student organizes colored blocks to match picture <i>TIMED TEST</i></p>	Visual perception of abstract designs Fluid intelligence – developing a new strategy on demand Spatial processing Simultaneous processing (color, shape, position) Reproduction of models Mental processing speed Non-verbal analysis (breaking whole into parts) Visual-motor coordination (putting design together)	Affected by dexterity limitations Affected by vision impairments Affected by acquired brain injuries OK for non-verbal or limited English Affected by perfectionism <i>Low score indicates difficulty in settings requiring eye-hand coordination & speed</i>
<p><u>MATRIX REASONING</u> Student chooses a symbol to complete a visual pattern</p>	Visual information processing Abstract reasoning skills Fluid reasoning – analysis of complex visual details Simultaneous processing – shape, position, color Distinguishing essential from non-essential details	OK for Students with dexterity limitations Affected by color-blindness Affected by overly concrete thinking Affected by impulsivity – not trying item in the pattern before responding

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Performance Subtests	Abilities Measured	Notes
<u>MATRIX REASONING</u> (cont.)	Learning ability Mental flexibility – developing new strategy on demand Ability to work without feedback – independence of action Non-verbal problem solving with no time limit	<i>Low score indicates difficulty in settings requiring perception and decision-making with complex visual details</i>
<u>PICTURE ARRANGEMENT</u> Student sequences groups of pictures to tell stories <i>TIMED TEST</i>	Visual perception of meaningful information Distinguishing essential from non-essential details Understanding of social situations Fluid non-verbal reasoning Integrated brain functioning (items represent social settings) Simultaneous processing – 3 to 6 pictures for each story Planning a task Common sense (cause-effect relationships) Social judgment (social intelligence) Mental processing speed Visual sequencing Anticipating consequences	Affected by vision impairments OK for non-verbal or non-English proficient Students Affected by ability to work under time pressure Affected by cultural opportunities <i>Low score indicates difficulty with sequencing events and understanding social settings</i>
<u>SYMBOL SEARCH</u> 60 Paired groups of symbols. Student marks Yes or No indicating whether target symbols are in group of symbols <i>TIMED TEST</i>	Visual processing speed (Timed Test) Planning – systematically examining items Fluid reasoning – developing new strategy on demand Mental alertness – Attention, focus, concentration Learning ability Short-term visual memory Mental processing speed Paper and pencil (clerical) skills	Affected by vision impairments OK for non-verbal or non-English proficient Students Affected by anxiety & distractibility Affected by persistence – giving up Affected by ability to work under time pressure <i>Low score indicates difficulty in perceiving details and making quick, independent judgments</i>
<u>OBJECT ASSEMBLY</u> Optional puzzle test <i>TIMED TEST</i>	Visual perception Fluid intelligence – ability to learn from trial & error Non-verbal reasoning speed	<i>Low score indicates difficulty in settings requiring quick and accurate item assembly</i>