



GRAPHOLOGY AND JOHN HOLLAND'S RESEARCH ON CAREERS - ADAM BRAND

Introduction

Dr John Holland spent many decades researching the education, training and personality type required for over 12,000 different jobs. His work, used by millions of people, has been the basis of a number of psychometric tests such as 'The Vocational Preference Inventory', 'The Self-Directed Test' and 'The Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory'.

When graphologists are asked to give help counselling on careers, Holland's work can be of assistance.

An appropriate career is vital. As Blaise Pascal has said, 'the choice of a profession is the most important act in life. All the rest is nothing but the preamble or consequence of this act'. Anne Anastasi has said that 'a profession has a central part in a person's adaptation to life; emotional problems often derive from frustrations suffered at work, while an intensive and profitable job can be highly therapeutic'.

Why is Holland's work useful to a graphologist?

Holland assessed 12,099 jobs by education level, training time required and the appropriate personality type. Other systems available to graphologists generate fewer details, as the following examples illustrate. With the Enneagram (Riso) 39 jobs are suggested. When considering a '7' – the generalist - the jobs suggested are 'pilot, flight attendant, photographer, entrepreneur, nurse, teacher, counsellor'. With MBTI (Myers Briggs) 42 jobs are suggested. When considering 'ENTP', for example, the jobs suggested are 'actor, chemical engineer, computer analyst, credit investigator, journalist, marketer, psychiatrist, public relations executive, sales agent'. With Szondi (Hughes) 157 jobs are suggested. When considering 'FACTOR P', for example, the jobs suggested are 'pharmacist, chemist, homeopath, musician, missionary, explorer, palaeontologist, geologist, archaeologist, mythologist, mystic, psychologist, psychiatrist, **graphologist**, astrologer, writer, poet, politician, lawyer, judge, detective, counter-espionage agent, security officer, medical practitioner'.

Holland's work is useful in that it outlines considerably more options than the above, but is there a danger in too much detail? For example, Dorothy Sara has said,

'the handwriting analyst does not look at a doctor's handwriting or a cobbler's handwriting but instead looks for many signs in the writing which the specific job requires. One might find the intellectual qualities a man needs to become a scientist, but these traits may be contradicted by adverse signs which would militate against that person's potential in the field of science'.

But most graphologists are likely to have an understanding in depth of only a few jobs, so Holland's detailed work gives additional information. It must be stressed that Holland's work is about career counselling not recruitment. With recruitment, the client will provide the specific criteria for assessing candidates. With career counselling the specifics have to be provided by the graphologist.

Suggestions below on how the Holland work can help career counsellors were given by delegates at the 1996 Cambridge Symposium and by Richard Nadeau - his book, however, uses a different lettering system to Holland.

Environment and personality

Holland was innovative in his emphasis on environment as well as personality. He believed that finding the right environment for a personality is crucially important if a person is to be fulfilled and happy in a particular job. He stated that personality types develop as a result of the interaction of hereditary, culture and the physical environment. This results in a person preferring some activities to others; those activities become well defined interests; and those interests lead to a special group of competencies. All that results in a personality type which thinks, perceives and acts in a certain way.



Holland believed that each work environment tended to be dominated by a particular personality type. So people need to search out environments (and organisations may have a number of different environments) that suit their skills, abilities and attitudes (at the same as taking into account any limitations they may have in relation to age, intelligence and education). It must be noted that the help to career counsellors that the Holland system provides is based on USA 'environments'. As Geert Hofstede's research has shown, USA 'environments' may be similar to the UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Sweden, Holland and Norway but it is not necessarily duplicated in other countries.

Holland's environments and personality types

The model Holland developed is titled RIASEC.

Environments

R is about **REALISTIC** environments that deal with tools and machinery

I is about **INVESTIGATIVE** environments that deal with technical data

A is about **ARTISTIC** environments that deal with creativity

S is about **SOCIAL** environments that deal with service to people

E is about **ENTERPRISING** environments that deal with risk and challenge

C is about **CONVENTIONAL** environments that deal with predictability.

Combined environments

RI	Mechanics	electronics, earth sciences
IS	Life sciences	biology, chemistry, medicine
IR	Theoretical sciences	physics, engineering, computers, advanced maths
AE	Performing arts	music, dance, theatre
AI / ASI	Fine arts	sculpture, painting, architecture, writing
RA	Practical arts	design, crafts, decorating, photography
SIA	Social, behavioural	psychology, sociology, anthropology
SEI	Humanities	history, education, linguistics, philosophy
SAE / SR	Health	nursing, physiotherapy.
CE / CI / EC	Business	finance, accounting, HR
ESA	Enterprise	management, sales, investment, politics, entertainment

Personality types

The personality types that tend to dominate each of the above environments are labelled with the same letters.

- R (Realistic) types have mechanical/manual ability and are capable of concrete practical activity involving machines and tools. This type knows about the product and how to make it.
- I (Investigative) types have scientific/mathematical ability. They are analytical and have intellectual ability aimed at problem solving.
- A (Artistic) types have artistic/musical ability and are capable of unstructured intellectual activity. They understand about 'the message' and how to express it.
- S (Social) types have teaching ability and friendliness; they can work with people in a helpful way. They understand personal issues and how to resolve them.
- E (Enterprising) types have sales ability; they can work with people in a persuasive way to achieve goals. They can take risks to get what they want.
- C (Conventional) types have clerical and office skills and can work with numbers and things to meet the predictable needs of an organisation.



Some examples of Holland personality types (excluding information on education and training)

Realistic

- RAE Floral designer
- RES Baggage handler
Kitchen helper
- REI Dock hand
- RCI Garden worker
Photographic technician
- REC Screen printer
- RIE Commercial airline pilot
Electrician
Carpenter
Tool maker
Mining engineer
Laboratory technician
Decorator
Sound technician
- RIS Mechanical engineer
Radiographer
- RCE Film laboratory technician
Radio repairer
Watch repairer
Spray painter
- RES Fire fighter
Butcher
Farm worker (dairy)
Caretaker
- RSE Immigration inspector
Bricklayer (construction)
Glazier (construction)
- RSC Silversmith

Investigative

- IAS Economist
- ISC Market research analyst
Translator
- IEA Land surveyor
- ISR Dentist
- IER Information scientist
- IES Meteorologist
Pharmacist
Sociologist
- IRA Surgeon
- ISE General practitioner (doctor)
Actuary
- IRE Anthropologist
Archaeologist
Chemist
Civil engineer
Geographer
Statistician (applied)
Quantity control engineer
Taxi driver
- IRA Veterinarian
Biochemist
Chemical engineer
Curator

Artistic

- ASE Psychologist (social)
Reporter
Pastry chef (hotel and restaurant)
- AES Graphic designer
Actor
Entertainer (magician, comedian)
Book editor
Singer
Photographer (still)
- AIR Architect
- ASI Instrumental musician
Copywriter
- AER Dancer
- ASR Clothes designer
- AES Stage director
Music teacher
Orchestra conductor
Archivist
News editor
Editorial writer
Writer (prose, fiction, non-fiction)
Illustrator

Social

- SAI Librarian
- SEC Manager, production
Manager, personnel
Fund raiser
- SER Air traffic controller
- SEI Historian
- SAE Recruiter
Dispensing optician
Occupational therapist
- SIA Psychologist (counselling, clinical)
Nurse (general duty)
- SIR Chiropodist
Midwife
- SAI Clergy
Speech pathologist
Dental assistant
- SCR Police officer (crime prevention)
- SRI Stock control clerk



Enterprising

- ESC Insurance office manager
Bookmaker
- ESA Judge
Diplomat
Sales manager
Sales representative
Interpreter
- ESR Office manager
Hotel manager
Credit analyst
Financial planner
Buyer
Estate agent
Funeral director (undertaker)
Barber
Chef
- EAS Public relations executive
Columnist, commentator, journalist
- ERC Bar attendant
- EIS Manager, Education and Training
- ERS Coach driver
- ECS Tax accountant
- ESI Lifeguard
- ERI Director, Research and Development
Sales engineer
- EAI University department head

Conventional

- CSE Legal secretary
School secretary
- Typist
Underwriting clerk
Insurance clerk
Cashier
Receptionist
- CIE Building inspector
- CRS Accountant
- CRE Cleaner, housekeeper
- CSR Payroll clerk
- CES Waiter/waitress

How can handwriting analysis help to select the *riasec* letters?

Each type is made up of three letters, the first letter describes the dominant aspect of the personality; the second letter is secondary, and the final letter is background.

First letter

Below are some handwriting signs to help the graphologist decide on the first letter. Please note that the letters are neutral in relation to education and training time required.

The graphologist will have to assess whether the writing shows sufficient intelligence for some of the more complex jobs. For example, although similar letters are used in both cases, the education and training required for a doctor (ISE) will be more demanding than that required for a lifeguard (ESI).

Second letter

Once this first letter has been selected, the second letter can be decided by taking into account Holland's theory on congruency. Holland developed a chart (illustrated later in this article) to show that the most likely second letter will be the one closest in distance to the first letter. Richard Nadeau has suggested that brain dominance should also be considered.

Third letter

Holland's detailed psychometric tests enabled him to generate a third letter for those clients prepared to fill out questionnaires. But it may take some practice for graphologists to sense from the writing what that third letter could be.

Letter order?

Holland did not insist on an exact sequence between the first and second letter. He believed that as long as the first two letters could be agreed with the client, then alternating the letter positions could stimulate discussion about other job possibilities.

Handwriting movements to help decide on the first letter

The great strength of graphology is that it does not put people in boxes, an issue sometimes considered a problem with psychometric tests. Although classifying people in 'types' may be crude it can, however, generate a hypothesis/ a springboard for checking the full range of personality aspects.

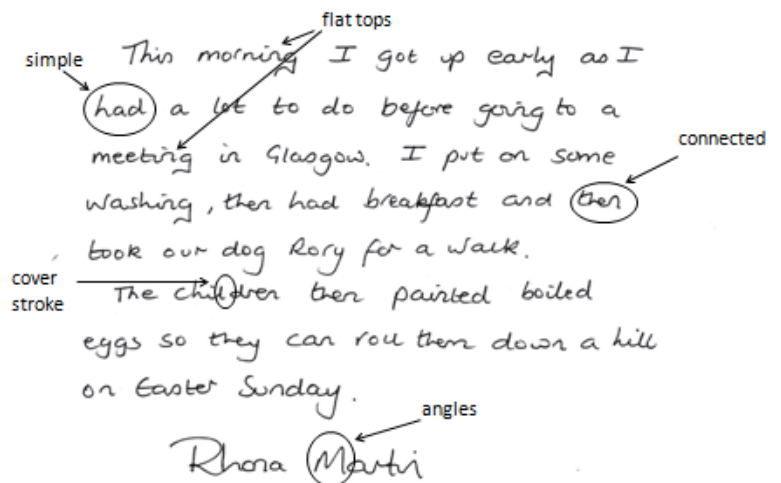
Realistic type

R – the realistic type, is similar to Jung's sensing type. Below are some of the suggested characteristics of the realistic type.

- Ability: athletic or mechanical.
- Preference for: systematic manipulation of objects and tools or working with animals.
- Aversion to: educational activities.
- Wants to acquire: manual, mechanical, agricultural, electrical competencies.
- Lacks: social and educational competencies.
- Values: money, power, status.
- Main characteristics: conforming, frank, genuine, hard headed, materialistic, natural, normal, persistent, practical, self-effacing, thrifty.
- Ideal work environment: results oriented.
- Examples: pilot, carpenter, engineer, farmer.

Realistic handwriting:

- 'earth signs', stationary structure.
- Flat tops in middle zone = a need to build, construct.
- Connected = a need for linkage; sense of logic.
- Cover strokes = reticence and possible preference for working with things or animals.
- Simple and unembellished writing: prefers working with 'real' objects.
- Angular = durability.



Above is a published example of the writing of Rhona Martin, the Scottish curling champion.

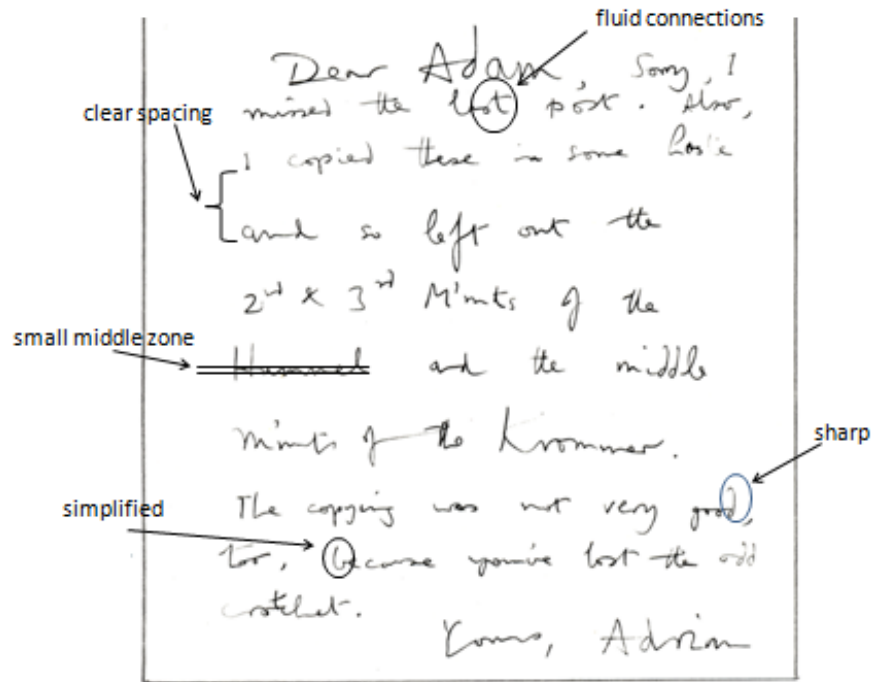
Investigative type

I – the investigative type is similar to Jung's thinking type. Below are some of the characteristics of the investigative type.

- Ability: facility in learning chemical formulae, etc.
- Preference for: investigation of physical, biological and cultural phenomena.
- Aversion to: social and repetitive activities.
- Wants to acquire: scientific, mathematical competencies.
- Lacks: persuasive and leadership abilities.
- Values: science.
- Characteristics: analytical, cautious, critical, complex, curious, independent, intellectual, introspective, pessimistic, precise, rational, reserved, retiring, unassuming.
- Ideal work environment: orderly, precise, cerebral.
- Examples: chemist, mathematician, physicist.

Investigative writing:

- Small, precise pressure, space dominates form
- Clear spacing = sense of proportion and balanced perspective.
- Small middle zone = ability to concentrate.
- Sharp = ability for critical and controlled thinking.
- Fluid letter connections = quick thinker.
- Simplified = straight forward approach to learning.



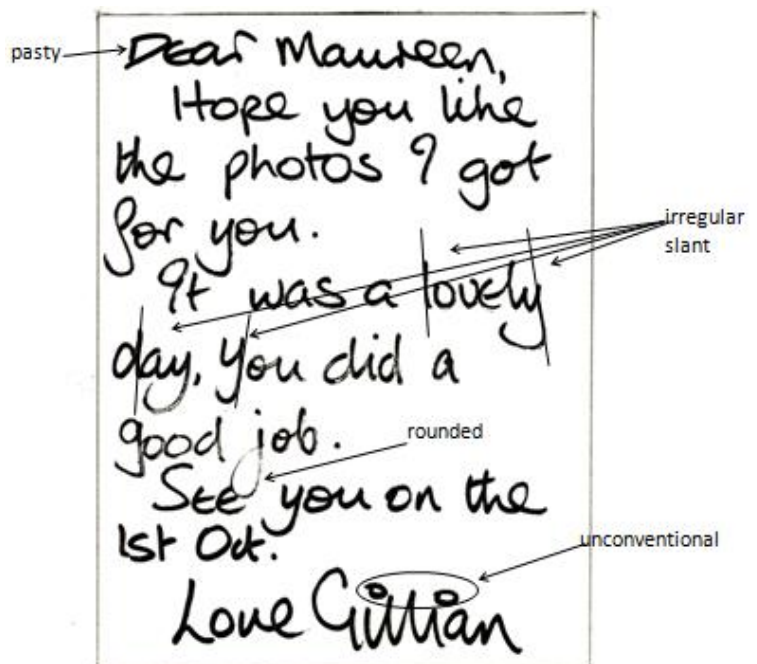
Artistic type

A – the Artistic type is similar to Jung's intuitive type. Below are some of the characteristics of the artistic type.

- Ability: artistic, innovative.
- Preference for: unsystematised activities and freedom.
- Aversion to: explicit, ordered activities.
- Wants to acquire: artistic competencies – languages, art, music, drama, writing.
- Lacks: clerical or business system competencies.
- Values: aesthetic qualities.
- Characteristics: complicated, disorderly, emotional, expressive, idealistic, imaginative, impractical, impulsive, independent, introspective, intuitive.
- Ideal work environment: colourful, imaginative, impractical.
- Examples: artist, actor, poet, novelist, musician.

Artistic writing:

- Enriched, flamboyant, pasty.
- Rounded = expressive mentality.
- Irregular = creative, unconventional
- Dynamic = functions quickly and creatively.



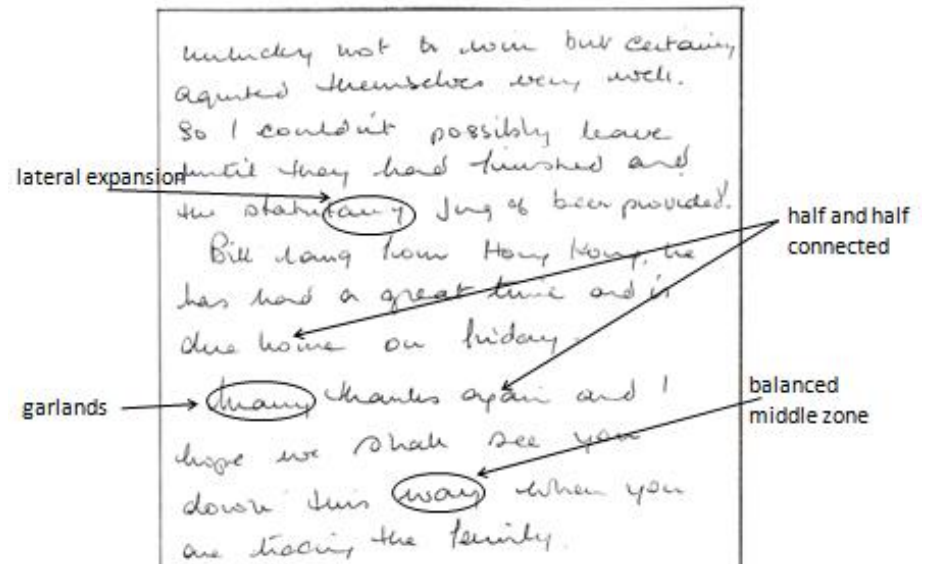
Social type

S – the social type is similar to Jung's feeling type. Below are some of the characteristics of the social type.

- Ability: can explain things well; good mediator and diplomat.
- Preference for: the manipulation of others to inform, train, cure, enlighten.
- Aversion to: systematic activities involving materials and tools.
- Wants to acquire: interpersonal and educational competencies.
- Lacks: technical and mechanical competencies.
- Values: co-operation.
- Characteristics: patient, friendly, generous, helpful, idealistic, kind, persuasive, responsible, social, tactful, understanding, warm, insightful.
- Ideal work environment: friendly, accommodating.
- Examples: teacher, social worker, priest, training manager.

Social handwriting:

- Warm strokes, legibility
- Lateral expansion (wide letters, wide letter spacing) = reaching out to others.
- Garlands = receptive to the needs of others.
- Balanced middle zone (letters as wide as they are high) = self-confidence.
- Vertical or slightly right slant = poised.
- Half and half connected: intuitive approach with an ability to solve problems in a logical manner.



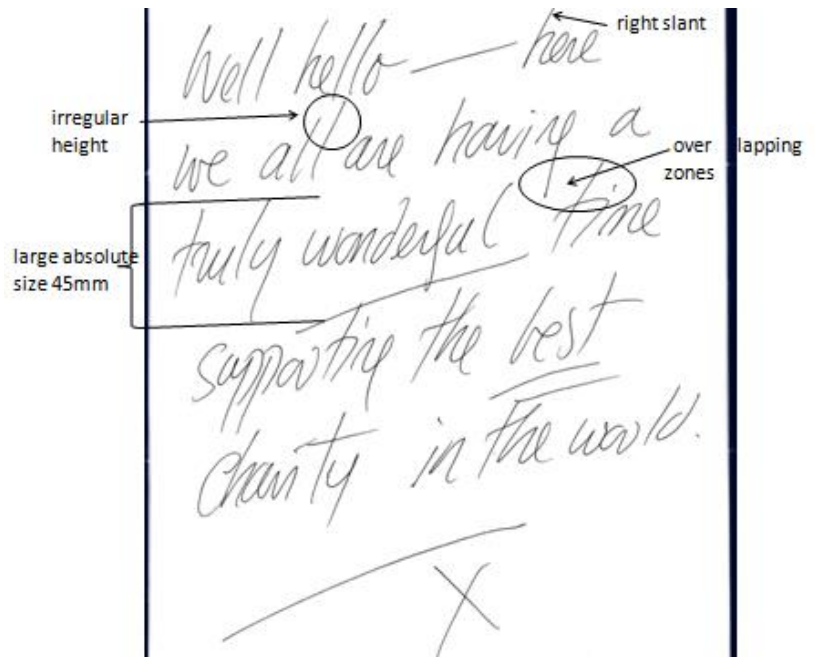
Enterprising type

Below are some of the characteristics of the enterprising type.

- Preference for: action and the manipulation of others to achieve goals/ money.
- Aversion to: observational, systematic activities.
- Wants to acquire: leadership, persuasive competencies.
- Lacks: scientific competencies.
- Values: political and economic success.
- Characteristics: acquisitive, adventurous, agreeable, ambitious, domineering, energetic, exhibitionistic, excitement seeking, extroverted, flirtatious, optimistic, self-confident, talkative, adventurous.
- Ideal work environment: expansive, attention getting.
- Possible examples: business entrepreneur, stockbroker, life insurance salesman.

Enterprising handwriting:

- Pressure on down strokes
- Large absolute size = risk taker
- Right slant, right tendencies, quick = responsive, restless.
- Above average middle zone height = sense of self-importance (as long as not a sign of over compensation).
- Large PPI and expansive capitals = desire for leadership and authority.
- Irregular upper and lower zones: energetic, volatile, dominating.



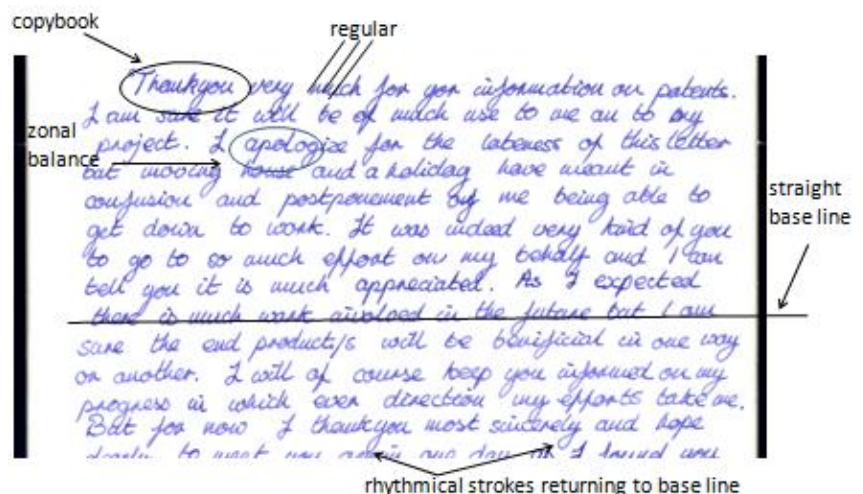
Conventional type

Below are some of the characteristics of the conventional type.

- Ability: capable of operating office equipment.
- Preference for: accurate records, meeting predictable needs of a company.
- Aversion to: ambiguous, free, exploratory unsystematic activities.
- Wants to acquire: clerical, business system competencies.
- Lacks: artistic competencies.
- Values: business and economic achievement.
- Characteristics: careful, conforming, conscientious, defensive, efficient, inflexible, inhibited, methodical, obedient, orderly, persistent, practical, prudish, thrifty, unimaginative, loyal.
- Ideal work environment: orderly, calm, efficient, structured.
- Possible examples: cashier, book keeper, bank manager.

Conventional handwriting:

- A picture of control and balance.
- Copybook writing = maintaining status quo.
- Regularity = consistent behaviour.
- Straight baselines = determination to finish job.
- Zonal balance = balanced distribution of energy in the personality.
- Rhythmical with strokes returning to the baseline = consistent work habits.



THE SECOND LETTER

Holland's suggestion is that the second letter is unlikely to be opposite to the first letter. Congruency is expressed by the physical distance; i.e Social goes with Artistic more than Social goes with Realistic.

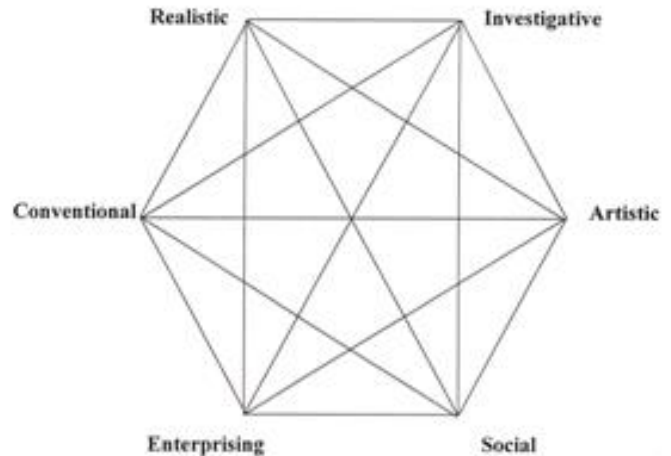
Once the writing has been checked to assess the dominant letter, it will then be possible to use the chart below to assess the most likely second letter.

Brain dominance and the second letter

Richard Nadeau has suggested that brain dominance will also be helpful in selecting letters.

The left brain hemisphere is about reality and it pays attention to order, mathematics, spelling and details. The right brain concentrates on the big picture, on meaning and how things feel.

If, from the writing, it appears that the client has a marked left or right brain dominance then that may help clarify which letters should be the second and third.



Left brain dominant letters

The letters showing left brain dominance are: R (Realistic) I (Investigative) and C (Conventional). The handwriting of left brain dominant people will show movements towards the centre – centripetal movements.

The letters below are left brain dominant and will give a guide as to the type of environment that might suit a client with similar letters describing their personality.

- **IR** scientific community.
- **IC** scientific business
- **RI** skilled trades
- **RC** technical support/assembly line
- **CI** skilled support for the business community.
- **CR** semi-skilled support for the business community.

Right brain dominant letters

The letters showing right brain dominance are S (Social) A (Artistic) and E (Enterprising). The handwriting will show movement away from the centre – centrifugal movements.

Again, the first two letters will give guidance for right brain dominant clients.

- **AE** entertainment, public relations
- **AS** creative and expressive arts community
- **SA** liberal arts, clerical
- **SE** senior education, government, business
- **EA** sales, communication, legal
- **ES** human resources, personnel management.

HANDWRITING EXAMPLES THAT SUGGEST THE PERSON MAY BE IN THE RIGHT JOB:

Dear Helen
 Very many thanks for kindly playing
 for us at the New Sinfonia rehearsal on
 Thursday Feb. 7th at 7.30/10.00 at the Basil
 Church. Brahms Concerto in A - Tschakovsky
 Variations on a Rossini Theme for cello.

Suggestion: ASI –
 instrumental
 musician

Actual job:
 professional oboist

Suggestion: ESC: business manager,
 employment manager

Actual job: head hunter.

showing you which we did as
 soon as we got off the motorway.
 Renault say they will replace
 the whole gearbox but this
 cannot replace the lovely
 evening which was denied us
 by their hopeless car.

HANDWRITING EXAMPLES THAT SUGGEST THE PERSON MAY BE IN THE WRONG JOB

Forgive me for the delay in writing but
 I nevertheless do wish to thank you both
 for your tremendous support during
 the last few months.
 Your very kind thoughts regarding my
 dear Anne have been a great comfort
 to me. She was indeed, a very remarkable

Suggestion: EAS –
 clothes designer

Actual job: air
 traffic controller.

Suggestion: IRE – chemical engineer
 Actual job: deputy head teacher

It means we were very glad
 to have you there and thank
 you for taking such a full part

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- Six Career Styles. J. Richard Nadeau (Self published) 6300 Orange Street, Los Angeles, California, 90048. 1988. Library of Congress TXU 330 876.