The underlying goal of general ability tests is to assess potential candidates in terms of their overall intellectual potential and build a profile of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

There is a body of research to suggest that cognitive ability testing is a strong predictor of job performance and that the validity of this predictor rises as the complexity of the job rises.

The main types of ability test used in selection are:

- Tests of General or Global Ability (also called "g", intelligence, IQ)
- Tests of Specific Cognitive abilities (Abstract Reasoning, Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Reasoning)
- Tests of Psychomotor abilities and specific aptitudes (vision, hearing, motor dexterity, artistic ability, mechanical ability, management potential, leadership potential etc.)

**Tests of general / global ability** attempt to measure a person's ability to problem solve, analyse, understand and adapt to new situations or challenges. They usually produce an IQ score or measure of 'g'. In the workplace setting tests of this type are often "short versions" with the emphasis on gaining a better understanding of a person's general strengths and weaknesses in relation to other graduates, rather than deriving an IQ type score.

**Tests of specific cognitive & psychomotor abilities** attempt to measure the depth and nature of particular strengths and weaknesses in subject or job related areas. Typically these involve high level cognitive processing, complex problem solving, analytical reasoning, verbal reasoning, abstract reasoning and information checking. In some instances tests may extend to visual acuity, motor dexterity, mechanical reasoning and other psychomotor domains. The choice of test is largely dependent upon the context and nature of the role.

For graduate positions, many companies tend to use a broad range of tests to get a feel for a person's abilities in different areas, so as to help them assess where an applicant might best be suited. These are likely to include tests of vocabulary, numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, abstract problem solving or critical reasoning, in conjunction with personality and values questionnaires. It may also include tests of management and leadership potential, or mechanical or clerical aptitudes. Visual, motor, and tests of artistic ability are not usually included in standard multiple aptitude batteries due to their specificity and cost.

**Typical characteristics of ability tests**

- Usually timed (approximately 15 - 40 minutes)
- Consist of short questions where there is only one right answer but a lot of wrong ones.
- Are typically multiple choice, or short answer format where you are asked to provide a number or a single word response
- Are generally designed to discriminate between highly talented candidates therefore few candidates finish them.
- The questions usually become progressively more difficult.
- Each question is commonly worth the same value therefore speed of cognitive processing and number of correct answers are important.
- Most ability tests do not penalise you for incorrect answers, you will need to check this with the test supervisor before you begin.
- They are usually paper and pencil tests although some are available in electronic format.

**Sample question information**

The following section contains examples the style of question you may encounter. Actual questions cannot be provided,
as that would diminish the reliability of the tests.

**Abstract Reasoning Samples**

This is a test of skill at finding similarities and differences in groups of patterns. All the patterns in Group A are related to each other in some way. All of the patterns in Group B are related to each other in some way.

- Indicate whether each pattern in boxes 1-5 belong to Group A, Group B or neither group.

![Pattern Diagrams](image)

**Source: Psychometric Testing at New Monday**

- Below you will see a series of diagrams, each following a logical sequence. Nominate from the options at right, which one logically completes the sequence on the left.

![Sequence Diagrams](image)

*Reprinted with permission SHL Group © SHK Group PLC, 1998*

**Verbal Reasoning Samples**

The following passages test your skill at making sense of reports that cannot be relied upon to be objective, truthful or even consistent.

The test consists of a series of short passages of text, each of which includes a number of statements intended to convey information, or persuade the reader of a point of view.

Each passage is accompanied by four statements relating to the information or arguments it contains. Assume that what is stated in the passage is true - even if it contradicts what you know or believe to be the case in reality - and decide for each statement whether, on this assumption, it is true or false, or whether you cannot tell and need more information.

The definitions are:
In recent years it has become clear that man's use of fossil fuels is likely to have a major impact on the world's climate. As a result of this, increased concentrations of 'greenhouse' gasses such as carbon dioxide and methane will lead to global warming – an overall small increase in average temperatures whose impact is difficult to predict. Whilst some scientists predict melting of the polar ice caps, and so a rise in sea levels, others think this will be balanced by increased precipitation at the poles.

Source: ASE-Solutions

- If we go on using fossil fuels at the present rate, we must expect climatic change.
  True | False | Can't Tell
- Depletion of the Ozone layer will result in global warming.
  True | False | Can't Tell
- Scientists are all agreed that the use of fossil fuels will eventually lead to a rise in sea levels
  True | False | Can't Tell
- The burning of fossil fuels increases the concentration of methane in the atmosphere.
  True | False | Can't Tell

Numerical Reasoning Samples

These tests may take a form similar to the verbal reasoning test above, where information is presented in text, graphs, charts etc… followed by statements. You must indicate whether the statements are true or false, or choose between options.

- The following graph presents information followed by a question. You will need to use the information below, plus any additional information the question gives you, to identify which one of the six answer options is correct.

![Graph showing profits](image)

Source: ASE-Solutions

Q) Over three years, what was the mean (average) difference in profits between company X and company Y?

- 100,000
- 150,000
- 200,000
- 250,000
- 300,000
- 350,000
Q) What number comes next in the following sequence?
16, 8, 4, 2, 1, 0.5, 0.25, ___

Q) A car travels 40 metres in 0.2 seconds. If it continues at the same speed, how many metres will it travel in 1.5 seconds?