Understanding personalities

Lone wolf or social butterfly?

1. Read the idiom in the box and say to what extent you agree. Give examples.

> Don't judge a book by its cover.

2. Read the methods of identifying personality traits and discuss the questions.

The **Myers-Briggs test** categorizes the subject into one of 16 different personality types through a series of 94 questions.

The **Rorschach test** analyzes interpretations of ink drawings to gain psychological insight.

Graphology is a method of identifying traits through the study of handwriting.

Astrology is the study of the movement of planets and stars to explain personality traits.

Career aptitude tests evaluate personality traits, skills, interests and preferences to find a suitable job choice.

Palmistry is the practice of reading the features of the hands to reveal characteristics.

- Have you heard of any of these methods of identifying personality traits? Have you used any?

- To what extent do you think these methods are reliable?

- Do you know of any other ways to measure personality? What are they?

- Why do you think people enjoy taking personality tests? Are there any potential risks? What are the advantages?

- Do you think understanding personality is important when making friends? To succeed at work? To be a good parent? Why/Why not?

- Do you consider personality types often? Is it something that impacts you day-to-day?

- How important is self-perception when it comes to understanding our own personality and others?

- Can individuals consciously develop desirable personality traits and, if so, what strategies are most effective?

- What external factors affect personality traits? Have you noticed your personality changing depending on the context or the company you're in? What did you notice?

3. **Read the four situations in which people have experienced changes in their personality. For each situation, suggest why it might be happening.**

The Confident Traveler

In their hometown, this person is usually hesitant to meet new people and avoids socializing at all costs. However, when they travel to a new place, they become the life of the party!

The Family Wallflower

This person is outgoing and sociable and has an active social calendar. When they are with their family, however, they become reserved and withdrawn, and they do their best to avoid conversation.

The Book Club Conversationalist

A quiet and shy person known for their introverted nature is transformed at their weekly book club meeting. In these discussions, they become lively, charming, entertaining and even loud-mouthed!

The Social (Media) Butterfly

In real life, this person comes across as unfriendly, moody and serious. On social media, however, they seem the total opposite, making jokes, sharing stories and revealing a whole different side of themselves.

4. **You're going to watch a video about how birth order affects personality types. Before you do, choose three words to describe yourself from the list below.**

- adaptable
- approval-seeking
- attention-seeking
- bossy
- cautious
- charming
- controlling

- entertaining
- fun
- independent
- individual
- lone wolf
- manipulative
- mature

- peacemaker
- people-pleaser
- rebellious
- reliable
- responsible
- self-centred
- well-balanced

5. **Watch the video [https://youtu.be/0S_hqbCbo9Y] and check if the adjectives you chose are the same as those the speaker uses to talk about your birth order position(s).**

7. **Explain the meaning of the statements about personalities below and discuss to what extent you agree.**

6. **Discuss the questions.**

- What do you think about the idea of birth order and personality? Do you think there's truth to it? Why/Why not?

- To what extent (if any) do you agree with what the video says about:
  - the oldest child (bossy, controlling, people-pleaser, responsible, reliable, cautious, neglected, dethroned)?
  - the middle child (left-out, ignored, adaptable, well-balanced, peacemaker)?
  - the youngest child (self-centred, manipulative, fun, entertaining, charming, attention-seeking, striving for independence and individuality)?
  - the only child (self-centred, independent, approval-seeking, mature, embodying characteristics of the eldest or youngest child)?

- Do you agree with the statement from the video that "within every family, every child has to compete for parental attention and investment in order to survive"?

- What are some advantages or disadvantages of being the oldest, middle, only or youngest child?

7. **Explain the meaning of the statements about personalities below and discuss to what extent you agree.**

- Personality is a convenient story we use to simplify human behaviour because we fear the complexity of the human mind.

- Personality is not a fixed concept. It is fluid, ever-changing and context-dependent.

- Personality is a social currency traded for acceptance and approval. It's a mask we wear to navigate the world.

- Personality is a tool of control, as certain social groups are categorized and stereotyped according to certain personality traits.

- Personality is always more heavily influenced by social norms rather than by genetic makeup.