Individual differences

C.1 · SL and HL

Born in January

> A selected count is evidence to investigate, not proof of its cause.

- Invented selected academy: 48 of 120 first-quarter births; 14 last-quarter.
- Need the eligible population and selection cut-off before assessing bias.
- Trait, current state and observed behaviour are distinct.

Three approaches to personality

Approach	Behaviour comes from
Trait	Relatively enduring tendencies, not identical actions
State	Current mood can change with conditions
Interaction	Person and context influence behaviour

The Big Five

Openness, **conscientiousness**, extraversion, agreeableness, **neuroticism**.

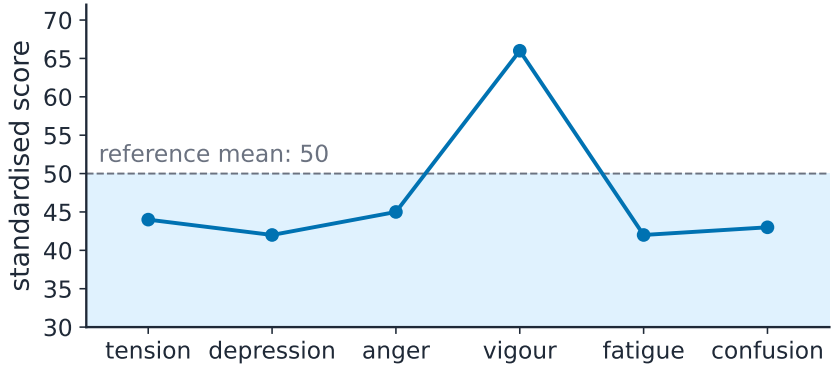
- Conscientiousness may relate to organised engagement.
- Neuroticism describes a tendency, not a diagnosis or fixed match outcome.

Social learning

> Observational learning does not imply identical copying by everyone.

- Attention, retention, reproduction and motivation are distinct requirements.
- Regard for a model and observed consequences can affect imitation.

The iceberg profile



> Mood is a state; this sketch is not a winner-selection test.

Evaluate prediction with relevant evidence

> Do not select or exclude a young athlete from a profile.

- A trait measure may inform understanding without determining performance.
- Independent outcomes, suitable samples and repeated measurement test a claim.

The 4Cs of mental toughness

C	Example
Control	Calm after a bad call
Commitment	Finishing winter training
Challenge	Welcoming a strong opponent
Confidence	Wanting the last-minute ball

Extension: standards and concerns

Strivings

High personal standards.

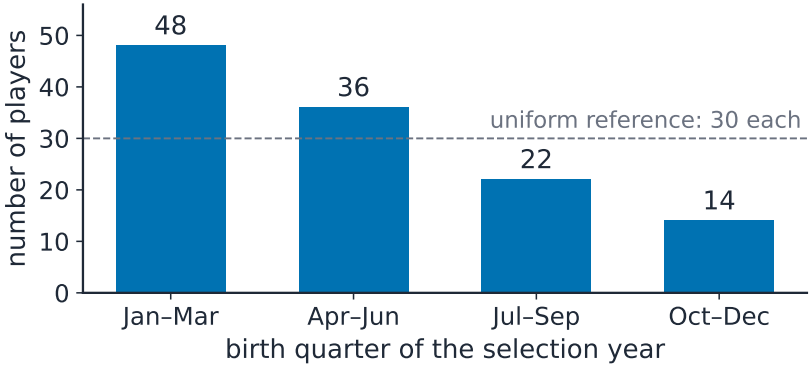
Can support effort.

Concerns

Fear of mistakes and evaluation.

Interpret in context; do not diagnose from a label.

The relative age effect



Check the eligible population and actual selection cut-off.

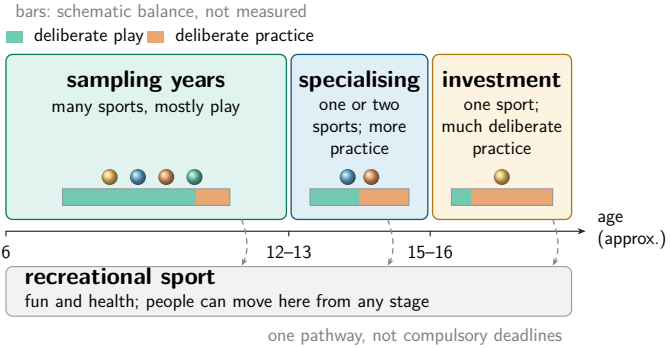
Measuring the effect

1. **First quarter.** $48/120 \times 100 = 40\%$
2. **Last quarter.** $14/120 \times 100 = 11.67\%$
3. **Ratio.** $48/14 = 3.42857\ldots$

Decision

Counts alone do not establish a maturity-based selection mechanism.

One participation model, not a deadline



> Approximate model stages are not compulsory age deadlines.

Evaluate the actual development programme

> A young high-performance example does not prove all children need **early specialisation**.

- Focused practice can develop relevant skills but narrow other opportunities.
- Repeated demands, recovery and enjoyment need evaluation.

Within and between people

Between-person

Different people compared.

Same scale and time point.

Within-person

One person over time.

Group results may not apply.

Ethical questionnaires

> A self-report score describes what a person reports, not a diagnosis.

- Voluntary informed participation and confidential handling.
- Explain withdrawal limits for fully anonymous data; avoid sensitive disclosures.

Measure a construct, not a stereotype

> A noisy one-off score is not a fixed description of a person.

- Trait tendencies concern patterns across contexts, while one role can change behaviour.
- Historical labels are not grounds for assigning a person to a sport.

Consistency and validity ask different questions

A consistent measure can still answer the wrong question.

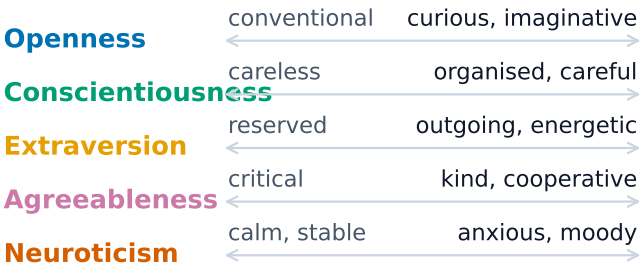
- Repeat scoring can test consistency under comparable conditions.
- Validity concerns whether the interpretation matches the intended construct and use.

Compare questionnaire, interview and observation

> Triangulate suitable evidence without claiming perfect access to an inner trait.

- Self-report can be standardised but influenced by social desirability and language.
- Interviews add detail; observations add behaviour, with interviewer/observer and context effects.

The Big Five traits



> Each trait is a scale, not a box

Check a selected squad against its reference

1. **First share** $17/40 \times 100 = 42.5\%$
2. **Last share** $4/40 \times 100 = 10\%$
3. **Count ratio** $17/4 = 4.25$, about 4.3 to one

Decision

The ratio does not directly measure biological maturity.

Evaluate responses to relative-age patterns

> Changing a cut-off can redistribute advantages rather than remove them.

- Maturity-informed grouping needs relevant reliable measures.
- Open selection and adjusted comparisons need resources, evidence and continued access.

Use the right sample and scale

1. **Group mean** $20/5 = 4.0$
2. **Person mean** $17/5 = 3.4$; range $5-2 = 3$
3. **Separate scale** 3,3,4,8,12: mean 6; range 9

Decision

A mean does not explain cause, diagnose a disorder or describe every occasion.

Resilience includes responding to setbacks

> Reporting injury or seeking help is compatible with resilience.

- Appraisal concerns how the challenge is interpreted.
- Confidence, commitment and control interact with actual resources and support.

Two sides of perfectionism

perfectionistic strivings
high personal standards and working towards them
may support effort; no guarantee

perfectionistic concerns
harsh self-judgement, fear of mistakes, others' expectations
linked to anxiety and burnout risk

the same athlete can show both; a trait label is not a diagnosis

> Concerns are linked to anxiety and burnout

AHL: Separate learning and immediate performance

> Explain the mechanism rather than assuming everyone copies the same star.

- A learner can attend to and remember a respected model without immediately reproducing the action.
- Observed consequences and available capability affect whether it is performed.

AHL: Evaluate an experimental inference

Match the study setting and outcome to the claim.

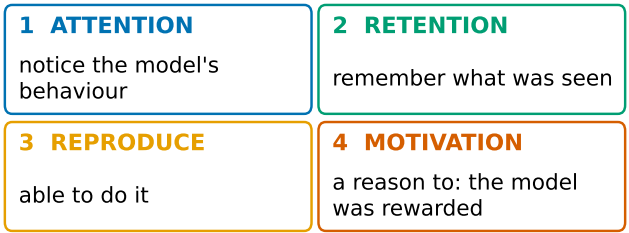
- Bandura and colleagues' 1961 experiment examined imitation in a specific setting.
- Its result does not prove every sporting viewer becomes aggressive or biology is irrelevant.

AHL: Track development over a suitable timescale

> A one-session behaviour change does not establish a lasting trait change.

- Experience, coaching and reflection can contribute to longer-term personality change.
- Use repeated appropriate measures across contexts; account for mood and response bias.

Bandura's observational learning



the Bobo doll study: children copied the aggression they watched an adult model

All four are needed to copy a model

AHL: Trace a self-fulfilling process

> Confidence acts through behaviour and context; it is not a guarantee.

- Expectation can change feedback, opportunity, persistence and practice.
- Those changes can affect outcomes and reinforce the expectation.

AHL: Explain perceived action–outcome control

> One quiet response or poor result is not a diagnosis.

- Learned helplessness concerns a perception that action cannot influence outcomes.
- That perception can reduce attempts, while actual barriers also need attention.

AHL: Interpret health associations carefully

> An association does not prove toughness training prevents or treats illness.

- Studies associate toughness scores with some sleep and stress-related symptom outcomes.
- Study population, stress level, reverse causation and confounding matter.

AHL: Classify the stated attribution

Locus and stability are different dimensions

	Stable in this account	Unstable in this account
Internal	“I have no ability and never will”	“I missed my routine this time”
External	“This course has remained difficult”	“A one-off gust affected the flight”

Controllability is a separate question.
A stable attribution is a belief,
not proof of unchangeable ability.

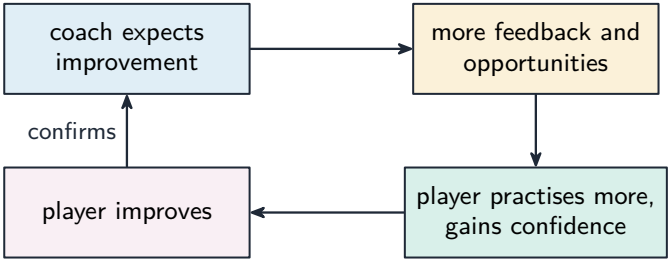
> A stated fixed belief is not proof of unchangeable ability.

AHL: Turn an explanation into a defensible response

> Support confidence without inventing a positive story or denying real barriers.

- Ask whether the explanation fits the evidence and identifies feasible actions.
- Internal does not automatically mean controllable; external does not mean permanent.

A self-fulfilling prophecy



low expectations can run the same loop downwards

> The improvement confirms the expectation

Exam tips

> Use evidence when asking whether personality predicts performance.

- Define construct and timescale before applying a theory.
- Show the denominator and reference distribution.
- Separate within-person and between-person claims.

Check yourself

Try these

In a squad of 40, 17 were born in the first quarter and 4 in the last. Find the percentages and the ratio.

Explain the interactionist approach with an example.

Evaluate the iceberg profile.