

Self Assessment

Dare You Say What You Think? The Social-Desirability Scale

Do you say what you think, or do you tend to misrepresent your beliefs to earn the approval of others? Do you answer questions honestly, or do you say what you think other people want to hear?

Telling others what we think they want to hear is making the socially desirable response. Falling prey to social desirability may cause us to distort our beliefs and experiences in interviews or on psychological tests. The bias toward responding in socially desirable directions is also a source of error in the case study, survey, and testing methods. You can complete the Social-Desirability Scale devised by Crowne and Marlowe to gain insight into whether you have a tendency to produce socially desirable responses.

Directions: Read each item and decide whether it is true (T) or false (F) for you. Try to work rapidly and answer each question by clicking on the T or the F. Then click on Total Score to access the Scoring Key and interpret your answers.

1. T F Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.
2. T F I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
3. T F It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
4. T F I have never intensely disliked anyone.
5. T F On occasions I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.
6. T F I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
7. T F I am always careful about my manner of dress.
8. T F My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.
9. T F If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.
10. T F On a few occasions, I have given up something because I thought too little of my ability.
11. T F I like to gossip at times.
12. T F There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
13. T F No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
14. T F I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.
15. T F There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.
16. T F I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
17. T F I always try to practice what I preach.
18. T F I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loudmouthed, obnoxious people.
19. T F I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
20. T F When I don't know something I don't mind at all admitting it.
21. T F I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
22. T F At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
23. T F There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
24. T F I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrong-doings.
25. T F I never resent being asked to return a favor.
26. T F I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
27. T F I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.
28. T F There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
29. T F I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.
30. T F I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.
31. T F I have never felt that I was punished without cause.
32. T F I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.
33. T F I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

SOURCE: D. P. Crowne and D. A. Marlowe, A new scale of social desirability independent of pathology, *Journal of Consulting Psychology* 24 (1960): 351. Copyright 1960 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

SCORING KEY FOR THE SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALE

Below is a summary of the answers you provided that match the answers found in the Scoring Key (not shown). Your total score is also provided. Read the text in the blue box to interpret your score. Click Reset to take the Self-Assessment again.

1. T	___	10. F	___	18. T	___	26. T	___
2. T	___	11. F	___	19. F	___	27. T	___
3. F	___	12. F	___	20. T	___	28. F	___
4. T	___	13. T	___	21. T	___	29. T	___
5. F	___	14. F	___	22. F	___	30. F	___
6. F	___	15. F	___	23. F	___	31. T	___
7. T	___	16. T	___	24. T	___	32. F	___
8. T	___	17. T	___	25. T	___	33. T	___
9. F	___						

Interpreting Your Score:

Low Scorers (0–8). About one respondent in six earns a score between 0 and 8. Such respondents answered in a socially undesirable direction much of the time. It may be that they are more willing than most people to respond to tests truthfully, even when their answers might meet with social disapproval.

Average Scorers (9–19). About two respondents in three earn a score from 9 through 19. They tend to show an average degree of concern for the social desirability of their responses, and it may be that their general behavior represents an average degree of conformity to social rules and conventions.

High Scorers (20–33). About one respondent in six earns a score between 20 and 33. These respondents may be highly concerned about social approval and respond to test items in such a way as to avoid the disapproval of people who may read their responses. Their general behavior may show high conformity to social rules and conventions.