

Traits of Giftedness

(Adapted from material from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented and Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D., University of North Carolina;

Equity in Gifted Education Task Force Members.)

Characteristic	General Description	How It May Look
Motivation: Evidence of desire to learn	Internal drive or encouragement that initiates, directs, or sustains individual or group behavior in order to satisfy a need or attain a goal.	Demonstrates persistence in pursuing or completing tasks that the student considers meaningful; evident in school or non-school activities; intuitive and insightful learner interested in pursuing tasks that improve welfare of self or group; more pronounced need to see purpose for following rules; may hide achievement if not valued by the peer group.
Interests: Intense, sometimes unusual interests	Activities, interests, objects, etc. that have special worth or significance. May become areas of intense focus. Interests may be unrelated to school.	Unusual or advanced interests relevant to student's passions, life, or personal relationships, persists in an activity-beyond age mates either independently or with support.
Communication Skills (Use of Language): Highly expressive with words, gestures, stories, numbers, or symbols both verbally and/or nonverbally	Transmission and reception of signals or meanings through a system of symbols (codes, gestures, language, and numbers).	Unusual ability to communicate that exhibits richness of expression using particularly apt examples, illustrations, stories or elaborations. Use of metaphors, analogies, figurative language, and unusual perspectives shown through a variety of forms including verbal, nonverbal, artistic, symbolic, or physical; may experience difficulty in written language.
Problem-Solving Ability: Effective, often inventive, strategies for recognizing and solving problems.	Process of determining alternatives leading to a goal or to successful completion of a desired task.	Unusual ability to devise or adopt strategies to solve problems and to change the strategy if it is not working; creates new designs; inventor. Divergent thinker: generates multiple, unusual, elaborate, even bizarre ideas or solutions.; May appear to daydream when generating ideas
Memory: Large storehouse of information on school and/or non-school topics	Exceptional ability to retain and retrieve information.	Already knows; needs only 1-2 repetitions for mastery if presentation of material aligns with learning needs; has a wealth of information about school and non-school topics; pays attention to details; manipulates information.
Inquiry/Curiosity: Strong desire to question, experiment, explore	Has a method or process of seeking knowledge, understanding or information.	Asks unusual questions for age, some may even be obnoxious or looking for the shock value; plays around with ideas; may question authority or fairness, focusing on the relationships. Wants the "why".

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<p>Reasoning: Logical approaches to figuring out solutions</p>	<p>Highly conscious, directed, controlled, active, intentional forward-looking, and goal-oriented thought.</p>	<p>Ability to make generalizations and comprehend complex relationships and systems; may use metaphors and analogies; can think things through in a logical manner arriving at a plausible answer; critical thinker; may give logical explanations for inappropriate behavior or use circular logic.</p>
<p>Imagination/Creativity: Produces many ideas; highly original</p>	<p>Process of forming mental images of objects; qualities, situations, or relationships which aren't immediately apparent to the senses; problem solving through non-traditional patterns of thinking.</p>	<p>Incorporates unexpected points of view; shows exceptional ingenuity in using everyday materials; is keenly observant; has wild, seemingly silly ideas; fluent, flexible producer of often unusual or "bizarre" ideas expressed through storytelling, the arts, manipulatives, oral or written language; highly curious.</p>
<p>Humor: Conveys and picks up on humor well</p>	<p>Ability to synthesize key ideas or problems in complex situations in a humorous way; exceptional sense of timing in words or gestures.</p>	<p>Keen and clever sense of humor that may be gentle, dark, or hostile displayed through unique use of language; may use humor to deal with stressful situations or avoid trouble; often seen as class clown; may mimic people and events accurately; capacity for seeing unusual; uncommon emotional depth; openness to experiences; sensory awareness.</p>
<p>Intensity ("Overexcitabilities"): Strength of reactions, responses, behaviors (The term "overexcitabilities" comes from Polish psychologist Dabrowski.)</p>	<p>Very Strong, even extreme, responses to stimuli in five areas: emotional, intellectual, sensory, psychomotor, and imagination.</p>	<p>May exhibit either intense desire for, or avoidance of, experiences in the area(s) of overexcitability; powerful emotions; seeks intellectual stimulation; sensory experiences evoke strong responses; constant movement or gesturing; vivid fantasy life; may need creative outlets for intensity.</p>
<p>Sensitivity: Strong reactions to emotional stimuli</p>	<p>Events and situations in the affective and social domains elicit a stronger response than usual.</p>	<p>Strong sense of compassion; willingness to defend the needs of the group; keen sense of justice; empathy; moral, cultural and ethical sensibilities; sense of being "different" socially; existential worrying; often overly self-critical; withholds trust until sincerity is proven;</p>
<p>Learning Preferences: Way we prefer to learn</p>	<p>Characteristic patterns of strengths, weaknesses and preferences in taking in, processing, and retrieving information.</p>	<p>Prefers complex challenging work that may include; discovery, kinesthetic, visual, conceptual, constructive, abstract, concrete, and/or sensory learning that may make emotional connections.</p>