PREPARING TO READ

Thinking about the topic

Whom do you know who is more or less intelligent than you? Your brother? Sister? Parents? Friends? What does it mean to say that someone is more or less intelligent than someone else? What do we mean by intelligence?

1➤ Work with a partner and write down four factors by which you judge someone to be intelligent or not.

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____

2➤ Compare answers with another pair of students.

Skimming for main ideas

Skim through the text and find the paragraph that deals with each of the following top-ics. Write the number of the paragraph in the blank.

_____ *a* Some problems with the theoretical definition of intelligence
_____ *b* An operational definition of intelligence
_____ *c* Several common-sense definitions of intelligence
_____ *d* A theoretical definition of intelligence

NOW READ

Now read the text "Intelligence Defined." When you finish, turn to the tasks on page 97.
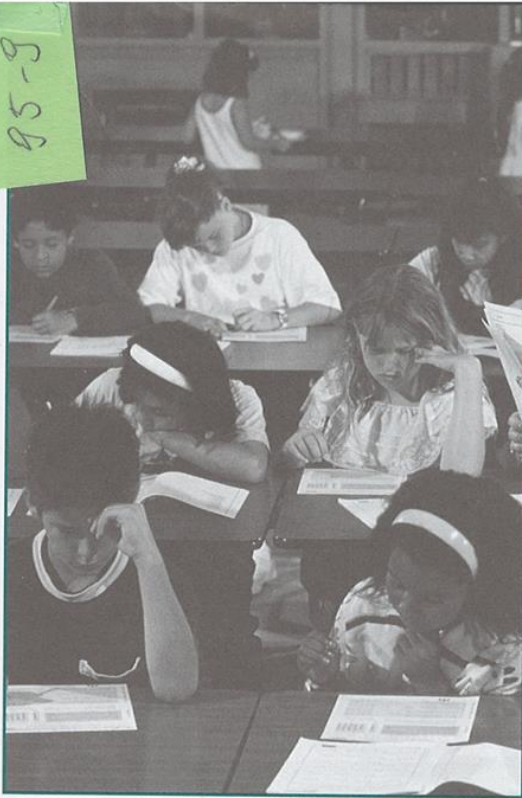
CHAPTER 5

Assessing Intelligence

1   INTELLIGENCE DEFINED

Intelligence has been defined in many different ways. Some have defined *1*
it as the sum total of everything you know, others have defined it as the
ability to learn and profit from experience, still others define it as the
ability to solve problems. Of course, there is nothing wrong with any of
these definitions of intelligence. The problem is that not one of them
alone seems to say it all. We use the term *intelligence* so often as a gener-
al label for so many abilities, that it is now almost impossible to give it a
specific definition.

However, it is important that we decide on a definition to guide us *2*
through this chapter. We suggest, therefore, that we accept two defini-
tions, one academic and theoretical, the other operational and practical.
For our theoretical definition of intelligence we can do no better than
David Wechsler, who defines it as "the capacity of an individual to
understand the world about him (or her) and his (or her) resourcefulness
to cope with its challenges" (1975).

This definition, and others like it, does present some ambiguities. Just *3*
what does one mean by "capacity"? What is actually meant by "under-
stand the world"? What if the world never really challenges one's resource-
fulness? Will such people be less intelligent? What at first may seem like
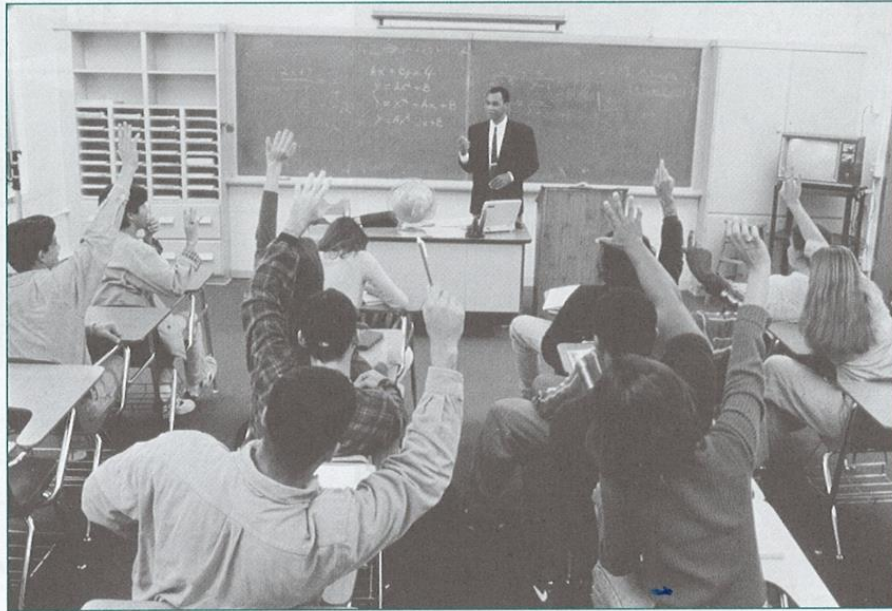
Teachers, like the rest of us, are continually making judgments about a person's intelligence, although it is difficult to define.

a very sensible and inclusive definition of intelligence may, upon reflection, pose even more definitional problems.

4   One way to overcome these difficulties is to define the concept of intelligence operationally. Thus, we can operationally define intelligence as that which intelligence tests measure. Notice that this definition sidesteps the thorny conceptual problem of coming to grips with the "true" nature of intelligence; it doesn't solve it. But it does what most operational definitions do – it gives a definition we can work with for a while. To use this definition, then, we need to see how intelligence tests work. We will then be able to see how people differ in terms of intelligence.

AFTER YOU READ

Task 1 Reading for detail

Answer the following questions and then compare answers with a partner.

1 In paragraph 1, how many definitions of *intelligence* are there? How many of these definitions were similar to your ideas in your prereading discussion?

2 In paragraphs 2 and 3, what would you say is the author's attitude toward Wechsler's definition of intelligence? (Choose one.)

   a It must be rejected, because it is too ambiguous.

   b It has problems, but it is as good as any other.

   c It poses more definitional problems than it solves.

   d It is a very sensible and inclusive definition.

3 In paragraph 4, what is the operational definition of intelligence?

Task 2 Building vocabulary: Collocations

> When studying vocabulary, it is always a good idea to be aware of collocations, such as nouns that frequently combine in object position with certain verbs or verb phrases.

1▶ Scan the text and find the nouns that occur in object position with these verbs.

to learn from _____   to present_____

to solve _____   to pose _____

to cope with_____   to overcome _____

2▶ Look at these collocations for the noun *problem*. Draw a line from each collocation in column A to its near synonym in column B.

A	B
to attack a problem	to confront a problem
to face a problem	to tackle a problem
to solve a problem	to be posed with a problem
to have a problem	to overcome a problem

3▶ Complete the following short text with verbs that collocate with *problem*.

Imagine you _____ a problem. It is no good running away from that problem. You must _____ the problem and really_____ it. Hopefully, in the end you will then_____ your problem.