

How your eyes predict your personality

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Neil.

Rob

And I'm Rob.

Neil

Now, Rob, would you say that you are an introvert or an extrovert?

Rob

What a good question! Well, **extroverts** are confident in their personality. They're outgoing and comfortable in social situations. So, I would have to say that, if anything, I'm the opposite. I'm more of an **introvert**. I'm really quite shy. I feel uncomfortable in social situations. For example, if I go to a party, where I don't know anyone I usually feel very embarrassed and I find it impossible to start conversations with strangers.

Neil

But you do all of this on the radio and videos for Learning English, don't you? Some would say you have to be an extrovert to do what we do.

Rob

Ah! Well, maybe I'm pretending to be an **extrovert** to hide the fact that I'm an **introvert**. It's quite a common thing, you know.

Neil

Well, it might not be so easy to hide in the future because researchers have developed a computer program that can tell your personality from looking at where you look, by tracking your eye movements.

Rob

Wow! That sounds pretty hi-tech, and scary.

Neil

Well, we'll learn more shortly, but first a question on the topic of clever computers. The letters 'AI' stand for Artificial Intelligence but what are the letters 'AI'? Are they

- A) an abbreviation
- B) an acronym, or
- C) an initialism?

Rob

OK, I thought that was going to be easy, but I think it's an abbreviation, isn't it?

Neil

Well, you'll have to wait to the end of the programme to find out! Sabrina Hoppe is a researcher at the University of Stuttgart. She was interviewed on the BBC Radio programme All In The Mind. She spoke about an experiment in which they tracked the eye movements of people in real situations. This is what she said about the research. Was she confident the experiment would work in the real world?

Sabrina Hoppe

The main **finding** in our study is that it is possible at all to just look at eye movements and then predict something about their personality. And before our study, it was not clear at all if this would be possible from eye movements in such an **unconstrained** real world setting.

Neil

So, was she confident this would work?

Rob

No, not really. She said that before the study it wasn't clear if it would be possible in an **unconstrained** real-world setting. **Unconstrained** here means that there wasn't strict control over the conditions of the experiment. It took place in the 'real-world' – so not in a laboratory.

Neil

The result of the experiment - or the **finding**, as she called it - was that by following eye movements, a computer programme was able to work out the personality of the subjects. Let's listen again.

Sabrina Hoppe

The main **finding** in our study is that it is possible at all to just look at eye movements and then predict something about their personality. And before our study, it was not clear at all if this would be possible from eye movements in such an **unconstrained** real world setting.

Rob

So how does the software work, for example, what are the differences in the eye movements of **extroverts** compared to **introverts**?

Sabrina Hoppe

We still don't really know in detail what makes the difference. We can only tell that there are differences and that we know computer programs that can pick up those differences. Maybe **extrovert** people look up a lot because they want to look at people's faces, whereas some super **introvert** person maybe just stares at their own shoes, if you want to take the extreme examples. So, probably it somehow changes **gaze**. But we only know that this information is there and somehow our program **figured out** how to extract it.

Neil

So how does it work?

Rob

Well, that's the strange thing. She said that she didn't really know, at least not in detail. She did say that our personality somehow changes **gaze**. **Gaze** is another word for looking at something. So maybe we **gaze** in different ways depending on our personality. Extroverts may look up more and introverts, like me, may look down more.

Neil

Yes, it was interesting that she said that she didn't know how it did it, but the program somehow managed to **figure it out**. The phrasal verb **to figure something out** means 'to understand or realise something'. Time to review today's vocabulary, but first, let's have the answer to the quiz question. I asked what are the letters AI? Are they

- A) an abbreviation
- B) an acronym
- C) an initialism

Rob, what did you say?

Rob

I said A) an abbreviation.

Neil

Well sorry, no, AI is C), so to speak. It's an initialism. It's the first letters of the words 'artificial intelligence', but it's not pronounced like a new word, just the initial letters. Right, time now to review today's vocabulary.

Rob

Yes. We had the word **extrovert**. This describes someone who has a very outgoing personality. An **extrovert** is confident and socially comfortable.

Neil

By contrast, an **introvert** is someone who is shy and not comfortable in social situations and doesn't like being the centre of attention.

Rob

Our report today talked about the **findings** of some new research. A **finding** is something that has been learnt, discovered or indeed, found out. It is the conclusion that is reached.

Neil

Then we had **unconstrained** to describe the experiment which was not carried out in a controlled environment. So **unconstrained** means 'not limited or restricted'.

Rob

Our next word was **gaze**. This is a word that means 'our way of looking at something'.

Neil

Yes, the **findings** of the research suggest that our personality can affect our **gaze**.

Rob

And this was something the computer was able **to figure out**. **To figure out** means 'to study something and reach an answer to a particular question or problem'.

Neil

Right! Well, you know what I've just **figured out**?

Rob

Do tell!

Neil

It's time to bring this edition of 6 Minute English to an end. We hope you can join us again, but until then we are bbclearningenglish.com and you can find us on social media, online and on our app. Bye for now.

Rob

Bye-bye!

VOCABULARY

extrovert

someone who has a very outgoing personality, confident and socially comfortable.

introvert

someone who is shy and not comfortable in social situations and doesn't like being the centre of attention.

findings

the results and conclusions of research

unconstrained

without control or restriction

gaze

the way that someone looks at someone

figured out

understood something after studying it