

Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (Ardelt, 2003)

[Note for investigators: *c* = *cognitive dimension*; *r* = *reflective dimension*; *a* = *affective (compassionate) dimension*; *rev* = *reversed*

Delete those abbreviations and the above title before administering the test. Respondents should not know that they fill out a “wisdom” scale.

All 14 items of the *cognitive dimension* assess the absence of cognitive wisdom characteristics, such as the (in)ability or (un)willingness to understand a situation or phenomenon thoroughly (A1, A9, A11, B7, B13, B16, B23), the (un)acknowledgement of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty in life (A3, A5, A7, A13, A15, B10), and the (in)ability to make important decisions despite life’s unpredictability (B19). The *reflective dimension* contains 12 items, measuring the ability and willingness to look at phenomena and events from different perspectives (B1, B3, B5, B14, B17, B20, B24) and the absence of subjectivity and projections (A6, A10, B8, B11, B22). The 13 items of the *compassionate (affective) dimension* assess positive and caring emotions toward others (A12, B6), the motivation to nurture others’ well-being (A14, B2, B9, B18), and the absence of indifferent or negative emotions toward others (A2, A4, A8, B4, B12, B15, B21).

After data have been collected, reverse the scales for all items that are labeled with a “*rev*” and then compute the average of the 14 cognitive items to get the score for the cognitive dimension, the average of the 12 reflective items to get the score for the reflective dimension, and the average of the 13 affective items to get the score for the affective dimension. A simple overall wisdom score can be obtained by calculating the average of the three dimensions of wisdom, that is, the average of the three averages, NOT the average of all 39 items. Wisdom can also be treated as a latent variable with the cognitive, reflective, and affective dimensions of wisdom as its effect indicators. A relatively high wisdom score is indicated by average scores of 4.00 or higher on *each* of the three wisdom dimensions (strong criterion) or a score of 4.00 or higher on the average of the three wisdom dimensions (weaker criterion). Conversely, a relatively low wisdom score is indicated by average scores below 3.00 on *each* of the three wisdom dimensions (strong criterion) or a score below 3.00 on the average of the three wisdom dimensions (weaker criterion).

To do a rough validity check of the data compute the following (in SPSS):

Compute validity = 1.

If (((b02r eq 5) and (a14 eq 5) and (b09 eq 5)) or ((b02r eq 1) and (a14 eq 1) and (b09 eq 1))) validity = 0.

I recommend excluding all cases with failed validity checks: select if (validity eq 1).

Please note that the 3D-WS was not developed through an exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis of all of its items. Hence, the three dimensions of the 3D-WS are not unidimensional constructs but encompass several wisdom characteristics within the cognitive, reflective, and affective wisdom domains. To test the psychometric properties of the 3D-WS, Cronbach’s alpha values for each of the three wisdom dimensions should be reasonably high to confirm their internal reliability, and the three dimensions should significantly correlate with each other, with a Pearson’s correlation coefficient of .30 or higher.]

A. This section asks you about your opinion and feelings. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please remember there are no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
1. In this complicated world of ours the only way we can know what's going on is to rely on leaders or experts who can be trusted.	<i>c</i>				
2. I am annoyed by unhappy people who just feel sorry for themselves.	<i>a</i>				
3. Life is basically the same most of the time.	<i>c</i>				
4. People make too much of the feelings and sensitivity of animals.	<i>a</i>				
5. You can classify almost all people as either honest or crooked.	<i>c</i>				
6. I would feel much better if my present circumstances changed.	<i>r</i>				
7. There is only one right way to do anything.	<i>c</i>				
8. There are some people I know I would never like.	<i>a</i>				
9. It is better not to know too much about things that cannot be changed.	<i>c</i>				
10. Things often go wrong for me by no fault of my own.	<i>r</i>				
11. Ignorance is bliss.	<i>c</i>				
12. I can be comfortable with all kinds of people.	<i>a-rev</i>				
13. A person either knows the answer to a question or he/she doesn't.	<i>c</i>				
14. It's not really my problem if others are in trouble and need help.	<i>a</i>				
15. People are either good or bad.	<i>c</i>				

B. How much are the following statements true of yourself?

	Definitely true of myself (1)	Mostly true of myself (2)	About half-way true (3)	Rarely true of myself (4)	Not true of myself (5)
1. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.	<i>r-rev</i>				
2. If I see people in need, I try to help them one way or another.	<i>a-rev</i>				
3. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his or her shoes" for a while.	<i>r-rev</i>				
4. There are certain people whom I dislike so much that I am inwardly pleased when they are caught and punished for something they have done.	<i>a</i>				
5. I always try to look at all sides of a problem.	<i>r-rev</i>				
6. Sometimes I feel a real compassion for everyone.	<i>a-rev</i>				
7. I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likely chance I will have to think in depth about something.	<i>c</i>				
8. When I look back on what has happened to me, I can't help feeling resentful.	<i>r</i>				
9. I often have not comforted another when he or she needed it.	<i>a</i>				
10. A problem has little attraction for me if I don't think it has a solution.	<i>c</i>				
11. I either get very angry or depressed if things go wrong.	<i>r</i>				
12. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.	<i>a</i>				
13. I often do not understand people's behavior.	<i>c</i>				

	Definitely true of myself (1)	Mostly true of myself (2)	About half-way true (3)	Rarely true of myself (4)	Not true of myself (5)
14. Sometimes I get so charged up emotionally that I am unable to consider many ways of dealing with my problems.	<i>r</i>				
15. Sometimes when people are talking to me, I find myself wishing that they would leave.	<i>a</i>				
16. I prefer just to let things happen rather than try to understand why they turned out that way.	<i>c</i>				
17. When I am confused by a problem, one of the first things I do is survey the situation and consider all the relevant pieces of information.	<i>r-rev</i>				
18. I don't like to get involved in listening to another person's troubles.	<i>a</i>				
19. I am hesitant about making important decisions after thinking about them.	<i>c</i>				
20. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how <i>I</i> would feel if I were in their place.	<i>r-rev</i>				
21. I'm easily irritated by people who argue with me.	<i>a</i>				
22. When I look back on what's happened to me, I feel cheated.	<i>r</i>				
23. Simply knowing the answer rather than understanding the reasons for the answer to a problem is fine with me.	<i>c</i>				
24. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from another person's point of view.	<i>r</i>				

Reference: Ardel, Monika. (2003). Empirical assessment of a three-dimensional wisdom scale. *Research on Aging*, 25(3): 275-324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027503025003004>