

Personality Atlas Key Research Findings

Truity Psychometrics Roseville, CA, USA

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Introduction to Personality Atlas

Research has long suggested that our environment does affect our personalities, but to what extent?

With one of the most popular validated Big Five assessments available online, Truity was uniquely positioned to answer this question. Using global data from our Big Five assessment from 2022 and 2023, including scores for each of the five major dimensions of personality and cross-referencing with users' IP addresses, Truity conducted an extensive analysis of the relationship between personality and geolocation.

Truity's <u>Personality Atlas</u> is the result: a free tool that lets you explore and compare <u>Big</u> <u>Five personality traits</u> from across the globe, powered by the results of Truity's 3.6-million-person database of <u>validated Big Five personality assessments</u>.

Users can interact with the Personality Atlas tool to view the personality profile of a location, compare locations or view the top geographic locations by each of the Big Five traits: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism.

In this report, we cover some of the most salient and interesting findings from our own explorations with the tool. We encourage researchers, individuals, and anyone with an interest in personality to make their own discoveries!

Personality Traits in the United States: Key Findings

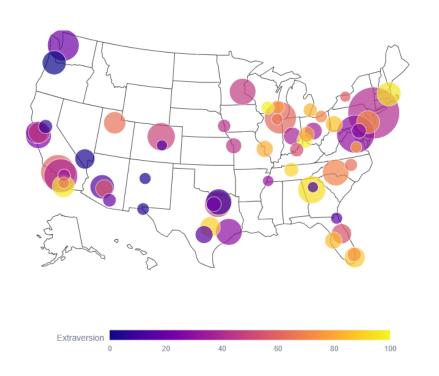
So, which cities and states in the United States rank highest and lowest in each of the Big Five dimensions of personality? The results paint a telling story of how factors such as climate, culture and diversity impact personality.

- Midwestern nice extends to the whole middle of the country: Midwest cities top the lists of the most Extraverted, Agreeable and Conscientious places in the U.S.
- Introverts out west: The most introverted cities and states can be found in the Southwest and on the West Coast; the most Extraverted regions lie on the East Coast and Midwest. For example, Madison, Wisconsin is more extraverted than 92.93% of the largest 60 cities in the U.S., whereas Albuquerque, New Mexico, is 96.97% less extraverted.
- Competition drives less cooperation: Tech hubs and centers of competitive industries, like Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area, rank among the least Agreeable places in the U.S. San Jose, California, the home to Silicon Valley and the center of the world's tech industry, is the #1 least Agreeable city in the US.
- Industrial cities are more disciplined, less flexible: Cities like Detroit, Dayton and Cincinnati rank amongst the most Conscientious in the U.S.
- Southern hospitality is more than a stereotype: Southern states, such as
 Alabama and Mississippi, score significantly higher in Agreeableness, on
 average, especially when compared to coastal states like New York and
 Massachusetts.
- State capitals are more creative and intellectual: Some of the most open cities are state capitals Austin, Nashville and Richmond. These cities also tend to be home to large college campuses and have younger populations. Notably, the nation's capital, D.C., is the most open state.
- Stress is higher on the coasts: Coastal cities scored higher in Neuroticism than Midwestern and Southern U.S. cities. The bustle and competitive nature of large coastal cities, like San Francisco, California, and Portland, Oregon, may contribute to higher rates of stress.

Which U.S. Cities Score Highest and Lowest on Extraversion?

<u>Extraversion</u> as a trait reflects an individual's orientation towards social interactions and external rewards. Individuals who score high on Extraversion generally seek out positive emotional experiences and are more enthusiastic and assertive. On the other hand, those who are low on Extraversion, also known as <u>Introverts</u>, conserve their energy, are more reserved and introspective, and do not work as hard to earn social rewards.

US Bubble Map of Extraversion by Major Cities

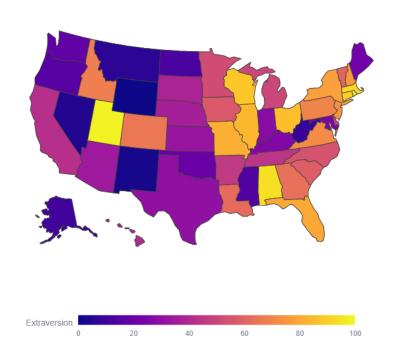


Top 5 Most Extraverted U.S. Cities	Top 5 Most Introverted U.S. Cities
1. Cincinnati, Ohio	1. Portland, Oregon
2. Madison, Wisconsin	2. Albuquerque, New Mexico
3. San Diego, California	3. Las Vegas, Nevada
4. Boston, Massachusetts	4. El Paso, Texas
5. Atlanta, Georgia	5. Sacramento, California

- **Economy:** Portland, Oregon, the most Introverted city in the US, is the global home of Nike and a host of tech companies, with a high concentration of software engineers and designers. Jobs in tech often attract individuals who are more analytical and may skew towards introversion, with engineers tending to be more Introverted overall.
- Scenery and density: Many of the more introverted areas are known for their
 "wide open spaces" like the vast deserts outside of Albuquerque and Las
 Vegas. Places like Portland and Sacramento, are both cities known for their
 small town feels, with Portland boasting a leafy, extensive system of trails and
 parks and Sacramento having a reputation for being a "farm to fork" capital with
 a relatively bucolic feel compared to other urban centers of the Golden State.
 This sense of space and calm is something that those who are more Introverted
 might seek out.
- ★ Age and social life: A high proportion of college students along with the presence of a bustling social scene with an array of diverse cultural experiences and attractions, seems to be a feature of places that rank high on the Extraversion scale. Many of the heavier clusters of highly Extraverted individuals were seen in areas with high populations of college students, like Boston, Madison and San Diego. The college student link correlates with the fact that younger people tend to be more Extraverted in general. Although one's personality won't change entirely with age, via a process known as "intrinsic maturation" people can become more self-contained as they age, needing less socializing to be happy. The District of Columbia is home to many college campuses and is a hub for politically and socially active individuals who are highly engaged with the outside world.

Which U.S. States Score Highest and Lowest on Extraversion?

US Map of Extraversion by State



Top 5 Most Extraverted U.S. States	Top 5 Most Introverted U.S. States
1. District of Columbia	1. Wyoming
2. Utah	2. New Mexico
3. Rhode Island	3. Nevada
4. Alabama	4. Montana
5. Massachusetts	5. West Virginia

What's Going On?

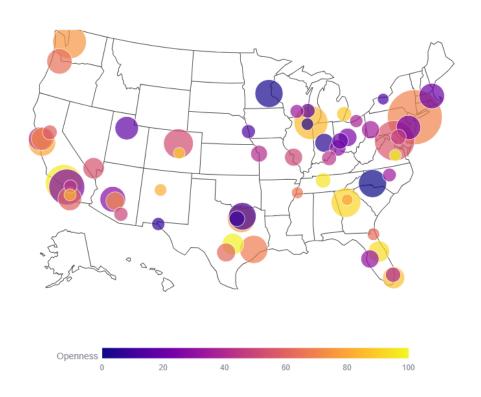
 Wide open spaces: Strikingly, the top five most Introverted states, also all rank within the top 10 least densely populated states in the nation. Places scoring high on Extraversion tend to be more dense and provide more opportunities for socializing, engagement and interaction. All of the Introverted states boast sprawling and beautiful landscapes, including jaw-dropping mountain ranges

- and vast deserts that are relatively free of people. Introverts might seek out these more calm, less hectic environments and shun the hustle and bustle of more dense urban centers. In turn, this sparsity can lend itself to more introverted behaviors, as people might have fewer daily interactions or social obligations than those in busier urban environments.
- **Economies:** Economies like those of Washington DC, with high rates of those working in the political realm, might attract those with higher Extraversion. The nature of such work often requires networking, public speaking and being in the public eye, all things that track with DC's off the charts level of Extraversion.
- Cultural differences: The Western US is overrepresented as a home to Introverts, and its history and culture of individualism, may contribute to that. The individualistic culture of the western states might promote behaviors and attitudes more aligned with introversion. Yet, Utah, a western state, is on the opposite end of the scale with a high level of Extraversion. One might speculate that Utah's exception to the western introversion rule might be attributable to the state's significant presence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS or Mormon Church), which emphasizes community involvement and missionary work and might attract and foster more extroverted behaviors. Similarly, in the case of Rhode Island, being one of the smallest states and most Extraverted, one could speculate that more close-knit communities where social interactions are frequent and valued, promote extraversion. Alabama's legendary southern hospitality and community gatherings might explain its bent toward Extraversion.

Which U.S. Cities Score Highest and Lowest on Openness?

<u>Openness</u> describes a person's tendency to think in abstract, complex ways. High scorers tend to be creative, adventurous and intellectual. They enjoy playing with ideas and discovering novel experiences. Low scorers tend to be practical, conventional and focused on the concrete. They tend to avoid the unknown and follow tradition.

US Bubble Map of Openness by Major Cities

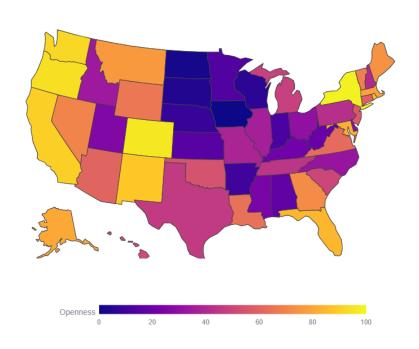


Top 5 Most Open U.S. Cities	Top 5 Least Open U.S. Cities
1. Richmond, Virginia	1. Charlotte, North Carolina
2. Austin, Texas	2. Minneapolis, Minnesota
3. Los Angeles, California	3. Aurora, Illinois
4. Nashville, Tennessee	4. Indianapolis, Indiana
5. Orlando, Florida	5. El Paso, Texas

- Urbanization and diversity: The most open cities are more dense and urban, with a significant mix of ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds. Urban areas tend to foster more diverse experiences and interactions, as well as universities, museums and cultural institutions, which could attract those with higher Openness. Los Angeles, for example, is one of the most diverse cities in the world, both culturally and creatively.
- State capitals: Three of the most Open cities are state capitals (Richmond, Virginia; Austin, Texas; and Nashville, Tennessee). State capitals tend to have many more government workers, be younger and are typically large college towns. One can also speculate that as seats of government, these cities are host to a number of differing ideas and debates and attract people who are interested in new ideas and intellectual pursuits. In addition, cities like Austin are known for being a liberal, progressive hub in a more conservative state, so we may see some self-sorting here by those with high Openness.

Which U.S. States Score Highest and Lowest on Openness?





Top 5 Most Open U.S. States	Top 5 Least Open U.S. States
1. District of Columbia	1. lowa
2. New York	2. North Dakota
3. Colorado	3. South Dakota
4. Oregon	4. Wisconsin
5. Washington	5. Nebraska

What's Going On?

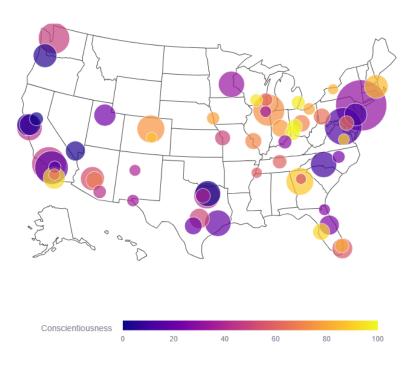
Rural vs urban: Coastal states that are highly urbanized with a significant mix
of ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds have higher levels of Openness overall.
We know that low levels of relative Openness tend to cluster in less dense and
more rural areas. The list of least Open states all have high rural populations,
with many of these low Openness states also being ranked high on lists of states
with the most rural residents.

- Adventure and new experiences: Colorado, Oregon, and Washington, are all known for their natural beauty and outdoor recreational activities, which may attract individuals who are more adventurous and thus score higher on Openness.
- Diversity: Rural states that have historically been more homogeneous in terms
 of ethnicity and culture tend to score as less Open. A stable population with
 fewer new influences may contribute to a more traditional and less Open
 culture. Additionally, <u>studies</u> have found that those low in Openness may tend to
 hold more prejudicial attitudes.

Which U.S. Cities Score Highest and Lowest on Conscientiousness?

<u>Conscientiousness</u> describes the degree to which a person is able to forgo immediate demands or distractions in favor of delayed gratification. More Conscientious people tend to be goal-oriented, and self-disciplined, but may have trouble unwinding and being spontaneous. People who are less Conscientious tend to be flexible and more comfortable living in the moment, but may struggle with dependability and pursuing long-term goals.

US Bubble Map of Conscientiousness by Major Cities

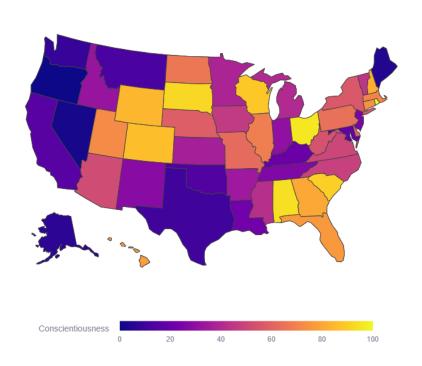


Top 5 Most Conscientious U.S. Cities	Top 5 Least Conscientious U.S. Cities
1. Dayton, Ohio	1. Plano, Texas
2. Cincinnati, Ohio	2. Sacramento, California
3. Detroit, Michigan	3. Las Vegas, Nevada
4. Madison, Wisconsin	4. Portland, Oregon
5. San Diego, California	5. San Francisco, California

- Values: Midwestern cities dominate the list of cities with highest
 Conscientiousness, and stereotypical Midwestern values stress dependability,
 substance over form and delivering on your promises, all traits of those high in
 Conscientiousness. In addition, the one West Coast outlier on the High
 Conscientiousness cities list is San Diego. With its significant military history
 and presence, it could be speculated that a military-like sense of duty and other
 traits linked to Conscientiousness like orderliness and dependability, might have
 permeated into the general population.
- **Culture:** All of the least Conscientious cities boast strong job markets, several amenities and an overall higher-than-average cost of living, offering a more leisurely lifestyle for those who can afford it. Cities like Las Vegas, have a reputation for attracting those who value spontaneity with a major focus on 24/7 entertainment. Meanwhile, the top three most Conscientious cities have a midwestern, industrial culture, which may attract those who value tradition and hard work.
- Suburban growth centers: Plano, Texas and Sacramento, California are both
 midsize cities that have witnessed rapid growth and sit just outside of larger
 metropolitan areas (Dallas and San Francisco, respectively). They both attract a
 mix of populations looking for more comfortable, suburban lifestyles, while still
 generally tethered to the economies of the larger metropolitan area (Plano is an
 outpost for a lot of larger Dallas-based companies where younger workers live,
 and similarly Sacramento has outposts of major Silicon Valley tech companies).
 These settings might prioritize family and leisure and enjoying life, over a life
 solely focused on work.

Which U.S. States Score Highest and Lowest on Conscientiousness?

US Map of Conscientiousness by State



Top 5 Most Conscientious U.S. States	Top 5 Least Conscientious U.S. States
1. Rhode Island	1. Oregon
2. District of Columbia	2. Nevada
3. Ohio	3. Maine
4. Alabama	4. Alaska
5. South Dakota	5. Washington

What's Going On?

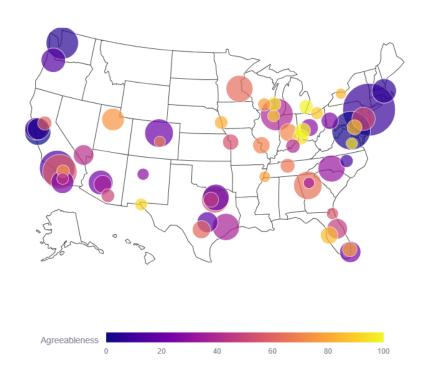
• **Economic roots:** Ohio is very, very conscientious! Dayton and Cincinnati (along with Detroit, Michigan and Madison, Wisconsin, which also top the list of most Conscientious cities) are known for their cultural through line of "midwestern"

- nice" and have deep roots in manufacturing. This unique industrial heritage may have fostered a deeper work ethic and a sense of responsibility. Many of the most Conscientious states are home to hubs of federal operations, manufacturing and agriculture industries that necessitate a high level of orderliness, responsibility and structured work ethic.
- **Culture:** The least Conscientious states tend to place a higher value on leisure and outdoor exploration, contributing to a culture that may prioritize adaptability over rigid structure and planning. With the exception of Maine (a state known for its culture of rugged independence), the West Coast dominates the list of least Conscientious places, which could be tied to the sense of innovation, risk-taking and adventure associated with the western US in general. This idea of the "West" has been dominant in long-term migratory patterns from the Gold Rush through to the tech revolution. It could be posited that types who seek more freedom and who are more likely to buck tradition and the old ways of doing things, are intrinsically drawn to the West.
- **Size:** Rhode Island, being one of the smallest states, might foster a close-knit community feeling. In smaller communities, there's often a stronger emphasis on trustworthiness and reliability, attributes of conscientiousness.

Which U.S. Cities Score Highest and Lowest on Agreeableness?

In Big Five theory, Agreeableness describes how we think, feel and act in relation to others. Emotionally intelligent and empathetic, people who score high in Agreeableness are comfortable putting others' needs before their own and value getting along well with others. People who score lower in Agreeableness are less concerned with helping and caring for others. They tend to be skeptical, competitive, and more willing to go against the grain.

US Bubble Map of Agreeableness by Major Cities

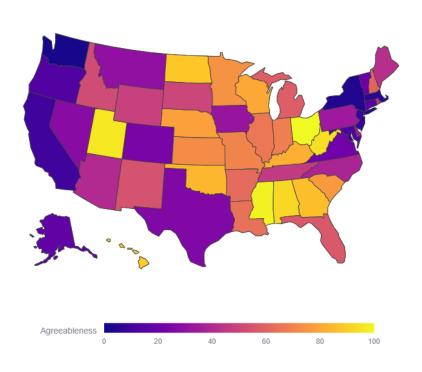


Top 5 Most Agreeable U.S. Cities	Top 5 Least Agreeable U.S. Cities
1. Dayton, Ohio	1. San Jose, California
2. Detroit, Michigan	2. Alexandria, Virginia
3. Milwaukee, Wisconsin	3. Oakland, California
4. Richmond, Virginia	4. Seattle, Washington
5. Cincinnati, Ohio	5. Boston, Massachusetts

- **Tech hubs:** As the #1 and #3 Least Agreeable cities in the US respectively, <u>San Jose, California</u> and Oakland, California, together represent one of the highest concentrations of major tech companies in the world, with Seattle coming just below the greater San Francisco Bay Area in terms of concentrations of tech workers and jobs. We know that those who thrive in Engineering roles, <u>tend to score lower in Agreeableness</u>.
- Urban cores/density: Without exception, the least Agreeable places are dense, busy urban centers. Similarly, many of the top cities in Agreeableness tend to be places that are less dense. Research indicates that people who are higher in Agreeableness are attracted to less frenetic environments, and may help create a more calm and predictable feel in their environment.
- **Culture and region:** The more Agreeable cities and states tend to be places in the Midwest, aside from Richmond, Virginia. And the least Agreeable cities are all squarely on the coasts. When it comes to midwestern "nice" the stereotype certainly holds true.

Which U.S. States Score Highest and Lowest on Agreeableness?





Top 5 Most Agreeable U.S. States	Top 5 Least Agreeable U.S. States
1. Ohio	1. District of Columbia
2. Mississippi	2. Washington
3. Utah	3. New York
4. West Virginia	4. Massachusetts
5. Alabama	5. New Jersey

What's Going On?

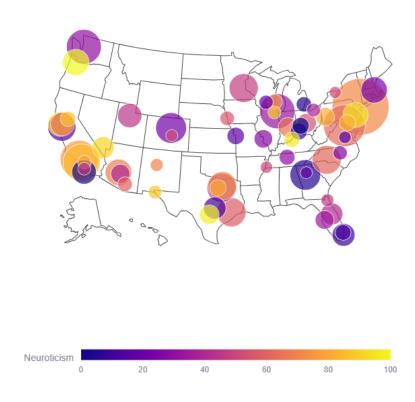
• **Culture:** The more Agreeable states tend to be places in the midwest and the south, whereas the least Agreeable cities and states are all squarely on the coasts. Midwestern nice and Southern Hospitality may be stereotypes, but they seem to hold true here – with states like Ohio, Mississippi and Alabama leading the list of most Agreeable states. Religious influence and community ties may influence some of the most Agreeable states, which tend to value cooperation,

- trustworthiness and maintaining social harmony. Meanwhile, certain regions, like the Northeast (e.g., New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts), value directness and assertiveness, which can sometimes translate to lower Agreeableness.
- Population density Without exception the less Agreeable places are dense, more urban states with high levels of population density. One can posit that these environments are more tolerable for those more comfortable in competing with others and who are less interested in the feelings of others (you can find this example any day during rush hour on the George Washington bridge!).
- Centers of media, political and academic thought: DC, New York and Massachusetts are centers of industry but also political and academic thought. DC is the center of the US government, New York is the center of major industries and the media, and all of the low Agreeableness states have a very high concentration of top-tier public and private universities. Academic, media-centric and political environments are all uniquely geared to those who challenge orthodoxy, enjoy debate and don't mind disagreement key traits of low Agreeableness.

Which U.S. Cities Score Highest and Lowest on Neuroticism?

<u>Neuroticism</u>, as a trait, signifies a tendency to experience negative emotions more frequently and intensely, such as anxiety, worry and mood swings. It's also linked to sensitivity and deep emotional experiences. While environmental factors play a role, individual and genetic factors also significantly influence neuroticism.

US Bubble Map of Neuroticism by Major Cities

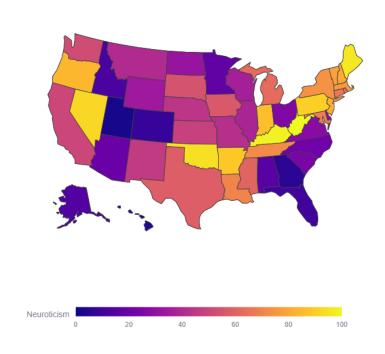


Top 5 Most Neurotic U.S. Cities	Top 5 Least Neurotic U.S. Cities
1. Portland, Oregon	1. Dayton, Ohio
2. San Antonio, Texas	2. San Diego, California
3. Louisville, Kentucky	3. Detroit, Michigan
4. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	4. Atlanta, Georgia
5. San Francisco, California	5. Cincinnati, Ohio

- Climate and quality of life: Regions that tend to make the top end of quality of life <u>surveys</u> and <u>rankings</u> which measure multiple factors of livability (infrastructure, scenery, climate, activities, safety, health, community, traffic, overcrowding and the job market) seem to have lower levels of Neuroticism. This may relate to Neuroticism's connection to everyday stress levels (see below).
- Economic change and boom/bust-related stress: Research has shown that Neuroticism is associated with episodic life stress. All the places on the most Neurotic cities list have growth and/or transitioning economies, with a strong presence of major companies and rapidly growing sectors of business, and all have grappled in some way with these economic transitions from San Antonio (transitioning energy sector, major growth in new service and call center jobs, border economy pressures), to Louisville (long-term shifts in manufacturing) to cities like Portland and San Francisco (major tech booms which resulted in significant economic disparities, skyrocketing cost of living, income inequality and overtaxed infrastructures). All of these stresses might be leading to higher levels of everyday stress and Neuroticism.
- Competitive cultures: For the most part, West Coast, East Coast and Southwestern cities scored higher in Neuroticism than Midwestern and Southern U.S. cities. The bustle and competitive nature of large coastal cities may contribute to higher rates of stress.

Which U.S. States Score Highest and Lowest on Neuroticism?





Top 5 Most Neurotic U.S. States	Top 5 Least Neurotic U.S. States
1. West Virginia	1. District of Columbia
2. Kentucky	2. Utah
3. Maine	3. Hawaii
4. Oklahoma	4. Georgia
5. Nevada	5. Colorado

What's Going On?

• Stress and volatile economies: Stress is related to Neuroticism levels and studies have shown that "financial challenge" is the #1 cause of stress in America. Most of the states high in Neuroticism face economic challenges, with a preponderance of states reliant on boom and bust cycles and more volatile economic patterns (for example mining, and energy extraction, like in West

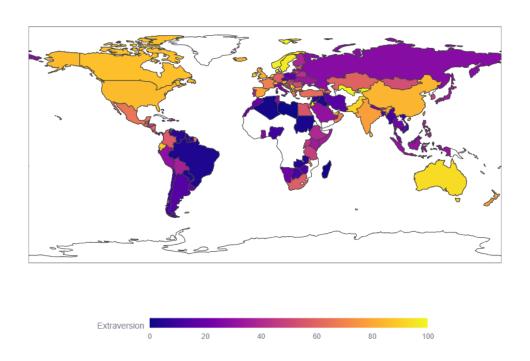
Virginia, Kentucky and Oklahoma). One can speculate that financial insecurity, unemployment and related stressors can contribute to higher levels of neuroticism. Additionally, it should also be noted that states like West Virginia have been ravaged by substance abuse epidemics, including opioid addiction, which would greatly contribute to everyday stress.

 Diversity: Interestingly, three of the top most Neurotic states also happen to be within the list of the top 10 least diverse states in the US, with West Virginia being both the most Neurotic state and the second least state diverse in the country, and Maine being the third most Neurotic state and the #1 least diverse state.

Global Data Findings

The Personality Atlas can also be used to explore Big Five personality factors among countries around the world. You can explore the global rankings on your own using the <u>Personality Atlas</u>, or take a look at some of the key findings and top countries in each trait category below.





Key Findings:

- Central Asia and European (specifically Scandinavian) countries are the most Extraverted, which may be due in part to their collectivist cultural values and close-knit communities.
- Eastern Europe is home to some of the most Open countries in the world, including Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Bulgaria. Meanwhile, the lowest ranking places for Openness, like China, Vietnam, and Somalia, tend to have cultures that prioritize tradition and conformity.

- African countries top the list of the most Conscientious, which may be attributed to cultural factors that emphasize discipline, responsibility and a strong work ethic.
- Middle Eastern and north African countries report the lowest levels of Extraversion. Political, social and cultural norms and practices may contribute to a preference for solitude or a more reserved social behavior.
- The Caribbean Islands appear to be the most Agreeable nations in the world, which suggests cultural norms that prioritize social harmony, cooperation and kindness. Individuals in these countries are also more likely than average to work in sales or service-oriented occupations, due to high levels of tourism in these regions.
- Conversely, Eastern European countries like Russia, Ukraine and Turkey are the least Agreeable. Ongoing political and social unrest may foster an environment where people may be less inclined to trust or cooperate with others.
 Additionally, economic challenges or systemic inequalities in these places could contribute to higher levels of competitiveness and individualism.
- The United States is one of the most Agreeable countries in the world (84th percentile), with higher Agreeable scores on average than even their friendly neighbors to the North in Canada.
- African countries like Somalia, Ghana and Ethiopia rank lowest for Neuroticism, which may suggest factors such as strong social support networks, collective resilience and a culture that promotes emotional stability.

Most Open: Montenegro Least Open: China

Most Conscientious: Ghana

Most Extraverted: Kyrgyzstan

Most Agreeable: Curacao

Most Neurotic: Poland

Least Conscientious: Russia

Least Extraverted: Libya

Least Agreeable: Russia

Least Neurotic: Somalia

What might be driving these personality clusters?

The <u>Personality Atlas</u> shows that different locations have their own unique personality concentrations. But why do these concentrations exist? Although it is not totally clear just what may be driving these above or below-average clusters of certain personality traits in certain areas, research has shown that factors such as career choice and population density can play a role in personality. For example:

- Research indicates that people who are higher in Agreeableness are not just
 attracted to less frenetic and crowded environments but may help create their
 neighborhoods' more calm and predictable feel. This could correlate to the
 study's findings that people high in this trait tend to be found in more rural
 states and less bustling or dense cities.
- We know that <u>low levels of relative Openness</u> tends to be more prevalent in less dense and more rural areas. This supports the study's findings, which shows that states like lowa and North Dakota – which have some of the highest percentages of <u>rural residents</u>, also rank lowest in Openness.
- Research indicates that certain professions, <u>like computer science</u>, <u>may attract</u> individuals who are more analytical and who may skew towards introversion. In addition, we know that those who thrive in Engineering roles, <u>tend to score</u> <u>lower in Agreeableness</u>. These findings may help explain the clusters of Introversion around major tech hubs like Portland, Oregon and the low levels of Agreeableness in the center of the world's tech economy with San Jose, California, being ranked as the #1 least Agreeable city in the US.

Read more on our blog, including a 0&A with the study's authors.

About the Study's Authors:

CAMERON BERG

Cameron graduated from Yale with a BS in cognitive science with distinction in the major and as the inaugural winner of the Robert J. Glushko Prize for Distinguished Undergraduate Research in Cognitive Science. Cameron was an Al Resident at Meta in 2022 and conducted research at the intersection of reinforcement learning and neuroscience. Cameron has previously conducted and published research related to personality psychology and the pandemic and individual differences in decision-making.

MOLLY OWENS

Truity's CEO and Founder Molly Owens holds a Masters in Counseling Psychology and, before founding Truity in 2012, worked both as a therapist and organizational consultant for Fortune 500 companies – specializing in using personality theory in the workplace. In 2023, she was named one of INC's Top Female Founders and has been interviewed widely on personality topics, including by Bloomberg's Emily Chang. Molly's full bio is here.

Methodology

<u>Truity's Big Five Personality Atlas</u> lets you explore and compare the <u>Big Five</u> personality traits from across the globe, powered by Truity's 3.6 million person database.

You can take <u>Truity's validated Big Five personality assessment here</u>. The code and data used for generating these analyses is <u>publicly available</u>. Longstanding evidence suggests that the Big Five is a valid measure of personality cross-culturally [1,2]. See here for an overview of this research subarea.

One important caveat of this research: Our analysis involved converting <u>user IP</u> <u>addresses</u> to real-world locations; especially for fine-grained city data, IP addresses can be a slightly <u>noisy source</u> of geographic data. We attempt to address this problem for cities by clustering data within a <u>radius</u> that is larger than the typical margin of error typically associated with IP addresses.