

What is Boris Johnson's real MBTI Type?



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I'm interested in leadership. I'm interested in Personality Type. I've worked with leaders all over the world to explore their Personality Type and I've always found it useful to help them look at their strengths, superpowers and weaknesses. If you're interested in why it took me so long to write this article, and some thoughts on guessing other people's types, I'll explore that a bit at the end of this post.

What Personality Type do people think Boris is?

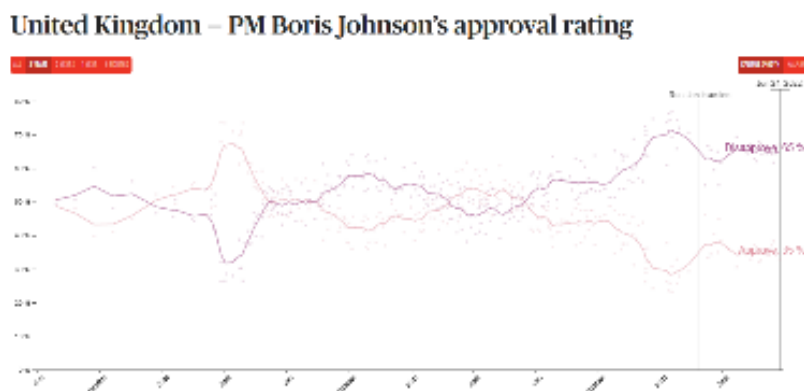
A check on some of the most popular Personality sites gives his Type as ENTP. Where there's voting, ENTP gets way more votes, although ESTP does come in second or third on the list. So the general conclusion seems to be ENTP, although I'm not completely alone in thinking otherwise.

- Personality database: [ENTP](#) 72%, ESTP 23%
- SoSyncnd: [ENTP](#)
- Personality List: [ENTP](#)
- MBTI lounge: [ENTP](#) 50%, ESTP 11%.

Why do people think he's ENTP?

He definitely does have some characteristics that are typical of ENTPs:

- 1. Intellectual pursuits.** ENTPs are often interested in the intellectual and the man's written books. He's also got a 2:1 from Oxford, and they don't give those away. Trust me, I live in Oxford and have asked many times.
- 2. Verbally fluent.** He seems to enjoy debating, and his combative style has served him well. ENTPs are famous for enjoying debating, in particular taking the devil's advocate position to encourage greater debate and exploring unfamiliar opinions.
- 3. Taking things lightly.** ENTPs are well-known for their humour, and willingness/ ability/ flaw of not taking things too seriously.
- 4. Good in a crisis.** Both Types have what I'd call the Adaptability superpower: able to bring out their best under pressure and to keep a cool head when things are chaotic. Boris gets his highest rating during times of crisis: Covid lockdowns and the start of the Ukraine crisis.



The thing is, that all these areas are also really typical of most ESTPs too. So read on to discover what ENTPs typically do that we don't see from Boris, or other ESTPs?

What are we missing from ENTP?

There are some really key characteristics of ENTPs that I don't see in Boris.

Go Long: when under pressure, ENTP leaders are likely to make bold, long-term plans. We just don't see Boris talking about his long-term plans much. Where does he see the country in three to five years time? Now there are electoral cycles and news cycles and all that, but when under significant pressure we'd expect an ENTP to come up with a bigger, bolder vision. The greater the pressure, the more outlandish their plans tend to be.

Desire to be prove competence. We don't see Boris needing to prove his competence. We don't see him talking about the competence of the team that he builds up around him. These are typical of ENTP leaders, particularly when they're feeling insecure or under pressure.

What's the case for ESTP?

There are certain characteristics that are much more typical of ESTPs than ENTPs:

Troubleshooting. When under pressure, ESTPs are likely to take decisive short-term action, what we call the Troubleshooting superpower. This does seem to be what we see with Boris. Under pressure, he shows his ability to quickly pivot and to launch an immediate policy, or a distracting attack. This has been a real strength. He's also shown the flipside of this: focussing on immediate problems at the expense of addressing long-term challenges.

I see other ESTP leaders with this temptation to jump into troubleshooting and firefighting because it's exciting and they can see immediate results. As leaders though they also need to look at the longer term, and as we've seen more recently understand that getting out of a difficult question today isn't enough if you're making tomorrow worse.



Taking on different roles. Boris is famous for his willingness to dress up when he's visiting factories, warehouses, fishmongers. ESTPs tend to have a much higher tolerance for silliness than ENTPs, who are often more worried about looking foolish. This is also linked to the ESTP ability to adaptably move from one role to another.



<https://www.indy100.com/politics/boris-johnson-costumes-mr-benn-b1970516>

Enjoying food and drink. ESTPs like good food and drink. It supports their desire to experience interesting and novel stimulus. It also means that they're more likely to indulge in less healthy amounts and types of food and drink when they're under pressure.



TOLGA AKMEN/AFP

Based in Reality. Let's return to the books Boris writes: history and real-life fiction (a farce based in Westminster. I'm not going to add more). This is really fitting with that Sensing desire for reality. Why have we made up things? Real life has so many interesting stories to tell.

Additional Evidence

Mis-typing. ESTP leaders in my experience very likely to be mis-typed as ENTPs, often because they're given a description of Sensing that's all about details and remembering stuff. That's not how ESTPs use their Sensing at all. ESTPs live in the moment, with an amazing ability to focus on what's happening right here and right now. They are also famously chameleon-like, able to adapt their behaviour to suit the situation, so they often struggle to settle onto one Type.

Playing the odds. This is often overlooked when thinking about people's Types, but worth considering. There are about twice as many ESTPs as ENTPs in the general population (MBTI data supplement UK population sample, ESTP 5.8%, ENTP 2.8%). It doesn't tell the whole story, but it is useful to bear in mind.

Conclusion

I think it's pretty clear from his external behaviour that Boris is much more typical of an ESTP than an ENTP. Of course, the next step is to consider how what we know about Type and leadership could help him out...

About the Writer

I'm interested in leadership. I'm interested in Personality Type, so I'm interested in why it's taken me so long to write this article! Well there are a couple of good reasons:

1. Despite the title, we'll never know for sure what someone else's personality Type really is. Anyone in the public eye we can judge only from their behaviour, not the personality that drives that behaviour. Plus that behaviour will often be adjusted, stage managed or [edited](#)
2. A lot of people say Boris is ENTP, which is my Type and I guess that made me reluctant in case I came across as defending my Type against someone who's facing problems.
3. Politics. In any analysis it's easy to blend the leadership stuff with what I think about him. Say what you like about his politics, his successes or failures, he has achieved significant things as a leader, so there are lessons to be learnt for anyone looking to learn.

So why bother? Is it to demonstrate my superior knowledge of Type? (I'm ENTP so that's a question that's always worth asking.). Not this time. Instead I think that it gives an interesting look at the overlaps and differences between ESTP and ENTP, whilst letting us look at leadership behaviour in a different way.

Gareth English is a Business Psychologist who has trained thousands of people all over the world to work with Personality Type to achieve their goals. He is one of the co-creators of the award-winning Type-Pro online learning programme.

He is the author of [The Power of Personality](#).

