

Ten Characteristics of Gifted Children

Excellent Memory	Dislike for routine and drill; <i>need for early mastery of foundation skills</i>
Persistent, goal directed behavior	May be perceived as stubbornness; <i>include logical problem-solving in curriculum</i>
Verbal proficiency; large vocabulary; breadth of information in advanced areas	May be verbally manipulative; <i>encourage wide reading and research</i>
Questioning attitude; intellectual curiosity; demanding of consistency and logic in requirements	May challenge assignments; impatient with drill and irrelevant work; <i>needs differentiated work, not more of same</i>
Able to abstract, conceptualize, analyze, synthesize at younger ages; problem-solving a strength	May resist directions; may tend to skip details and focus on the big picture
Evaluative of self and others, including adults; critical thinking	Has difficulty accepting the illogical or irrelevant; may have peer difficulties but works well with older students
Sensitive, intuitive; empathetic; tends to take on grown-up concerns	Vulnerable, does not want to be singled out; may intrude into areas that are not appropriate
Diversity of interests; many hobbies and activities	Needs flexibility and individualization; <i>more of the "guide on the side" than the "sage of the stage"</i>
High energy, alert; eager for new challenges	Frustrated with inactivity or slow pace and is not reluctant to let others know about it; <i>needs differentiated assignments</i>
Independent; preference for individualized work; self-reliant	May reject or rebel against group work perceived to be irrelevant; <i>needs to understand the "why" of assignments</i>

Some characteristics of gifted students that are potential problems:

Personality

- Values and attitudes of the gifted/creative are likely to be diverged and different from the "norm."
- The highly imaginative are prone to fantasy. This can be misinterpreted as "immaturity," laziness, or daydreaming.
- Gifted will at times become highly frustrated when they confront subjects or situations they cannot handle. They are not accustomed to this and often feel they should know all the answers. Because of this, they don't know how to ask for help when they need it.
- Bright students have more latent ego strength to channel. This sometimes comes out in the form of disruptive behavior.

Relationships

- Highly creative students tend to be isolated from peers and teachers.
- They have difficulty in finding true peers since they are in a minority. They often seek activities with those beyond their age norm.
- Some have difficulty in asserting social leadership roles simply because they don't know the "ropes" or methods in getting respect and following from peers.
- Parents of gifted frequently have ambivalent relationships toward them. They are proud but tend to undervalue their child's worth and potential.

Interests/Abilities

- Three "problem" ways gifted deal with their abilities:
 1. Withdraw – if they feel misunderstood or not listened to
 2. Show off – to get attention; make others aware of what they know
 3. Refuse to participate in class – if they feel other students will mock them for being a "brain"
- Gifted don't always realize their own abilities. Many students never have the opportunity to do truly outstanding work because teachers do not provide them with work which is difficult enough to fully challenge them.
- They tend to exert high energy in personal/outside of school projects. This can conflict with schoolwork.
- Intense single interests may reduce application in other areas of academics and social life. Also, they tend to work only on those things that interest them and exclude other areas.

Academics

- Thinking is divergent and independent from teachers and peers.
- Overemphasis on verbal skills misses other aspects of the gifted.
- Many have poor and inefficient study habits.