

# The Fishbowl

## Objectives

- To highlight the differences between J and P behavior
- To begin to understand the role of the J and P attitude in our lives
- To underscore the need for appreciating the opposite behaviors on this preference (e.g., Js need Ps to help them stay open and Ps need Js to help them reach closure)
- To help participants validate a J or P preference

## Trainer Instructions

1. Choose a topic for participants to discuss. This could include:
  - Discuss east/west clothing styles
  - Discuss the economy
  - Discuss the environment
  - Discuss how to get ready for a vacation
2. Select a small group of Js and a small group of Ps whose preference clarity is clear or very clear.
3. Ask the chosen J and P groups to leave the room while you brief the participant observers. Do not tell the groups which preference they are representing.
4. Arrange the exact number of chairs needed in a fishbowl (a semi-circle at the front of the room).
5. When the chosen groups have left the room, brief the observers as follows:

“Each returning group will be given a topic to discuss. If this exercise goes well, Ps will broaden the content base. They may wander, redefine, change topics, and perhaps raise questions about whether or not to even discuss the topic. Furthermore, Ps will often personalize the subject matter. Js will define the subject in a concerted effort to focus and wrap up a discussion. If they wander too much, one of the group will call them back to the subject matter. If they have no opinion, Js may remain quiet. Js often speak in closed ended statements or in a, ‘yes, but . . .’ conversation style.

- Your job is to watch both groups and see if they show these tendencies. Please be silent, and don’t join or participate in either group’s discussion, even if invited.
- The J group will be first—the P group will follow them.”

6. Call in the J group (without telling them they are a J group—refer to them as “group 1,”) and give the following instructions:

“Thank you for being willing to participate in this exercise. Take a moment and amongst yourselves but so that everyone can hear you, discuss . . . (the topic you have chosen from above). I will tell you when your time is up.”

7. Monitor time but give them about 5 minutes—no more than 10. As much as possible, see that both groups have the same amount of fishbowl time.
8. Tell the group that they can stop, thank them again and let them know they were a group of announced Js, and now we are about to see a group of announced Ps. Invite the J group to take their seats and become silent observers.

## Category

J/P Exercise

## Exercise Stage

Basics

## Number of Participants

Minimum: 2 Js and 2 Ps

Ideal: 3 - 6 Js and 3 - 6 Ps

Maximum: This does not apply because this exercise is done in a fishbowl format.

## Time Required

Minimum: 30 minutes

Maximum: 45 minutes (Time will vary by group size)

## Materials Needed

- Flipchart paper (Some groups may use this in their assignment)
- Markers
- Masking Tape
- *MBTI Introduction Workbook*, J/P Highlights or Good J/P Words handouts (all optional)
- Enough chairs for exercise participants to form a fishbowl.



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9. Call in the P group (“group 2”) into the room and give the same instructions.

Thank you for being willing to participate in this exercise. Take a moment and amongst yourselves but so that everyone can hear you, discuss . . . (the topic you have chosen from above). I will tell you when your time is up.”

10. Tell the group that they can stop, thank them again and let them know they were a group of announced Ps and that the first group was a group of announced Js. Invite them to take their original seats and debrief the exercise.

### **Debriefing Instructions**

1. Ask the group: “What, if any, differences did you observe?”
2. Facilitate a discussion highlighting the differences in the two groups—drawing out specific behavioral examples of J and P behaviors predicted in the observers’ instructions and then witnessed by the observers.
3. To complete the group debriefing, give a brief lecturette and a handout to reinforce J and P differences and group learnings. (Consider using the J/P section of the *MBTI Introduction Workbook*, Good J/P Words or J/P Highlights handouts.)