INTEREST INTERPRETATION, STRONG INTEREST INVENTORY & HOLLAND’S THEORY OF VOCATIONAL INTERESTS

People take interest assessments:
To narrow choices, to confirm a choice, to generate career possibilities, and to gain self-knowledge (including why they are dissatisfied and what might be more satisfying). The Strong Interest Inventory is an interest assessment based on Holland's Theory of Vocational Interests.

You can use the information from your Strong Interest Inventory results to generate and explore career possibilities.

To make sense of your Holland Code you’ll need to understand John Holland’s Theory of Vocational Interests.
Holland’s Theory of Careers is based on the assumption that, since vocational interests are one aspect of what is commonly called personality, the description of an individual’s vocational interests is also a description of the individual’s personality.

Holland's Theory:
Holland’s work on personality focuses on the study of types (in other words, it is a “typology”):
1. He contends that each individual, to some extent, demonstrates characteristics of six personality types.
2. The more one resembles any given type, the more likely one is to manifest some of the behaviors and traits associated with that type.
3. Just as there are six basic types of personalities, there are six types of work environments, which, like personalities, can be described according to certain attributes or characteristics.
4. These Environments are characterized by the people who occupy them.

There are four basic assumptions that underlie Holland’s theory:
1. There are six basic work personality types that make up six dimensions of personality. We each have all six to a greater or lesser degree. The manner in which an individual chooses to relate to the environment indicates his/her type.
2. There are six basic work environment types.
3. People seek work environments that match their personality, environments that allow them to be who they are: to exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable tasks and roles.
4. The degree of the match between personality types and work environment is predictive of satisfaction, productivity, tenure, and well being.

Behavior is determined by an interaction between personality and environment, therefore, knowledge of a person’s personality and of his or her work environment allows for prediction of important outcomes such as career choice, job changes, and vocational as well as academic achievement.
The 3 highest scores, out of the six types, make up your Holland Code. As I describe them, think about to what degree the following descriptions fit you…you may want to underline or jot down the parts of each type that you can relate to.

The relationships between the six types are graphically represented on a hexagon. This illustrates psychological similarity across types. Each type shares some similarities with the types adjacent to it on the hexagon (for example, Realistics share some commonalities with the Investigative and with the Conventional types, Artistics share some commonalities with the Social and with the Investigative types, etc.)

SIX TYPES:
None of the six types are considered objectively better or worse than the others but I think you will notice that some descriptions may seem more or less flattering to you depending on your own interests.

1. REALISTIC: The Realistic orientation is characterized by
   --interest in activities requiring motor coordination, skill, physical strength.
   --people interested in the real world that find it rewarding to work with their hands or tools, they like to build, repair, or produce things.
   --Realistic types are robust, active, outside doing stuff. They may have trouble sitting still.
   --People oriented toward this role prefer to act out problems, they may avoid tasks involving interpersonal and verbal skills, and seek concrete rather than abstract problem situations/solutions.
   --In relationships, they express themselves physically. They score high on traits such as concreteness, physical strength, and lower on interpersonal communication and sensitivity…not big on “niceties”
   --These people may be strong silent “John Wayne” types, auto mechanics, forest rangers, farmers and truck drivers- Fred Flintstone, or Bob Villa types. Also engineers, pilots, architects.

2. INVESTIGATIVE: The Investigative (or intellectual) person’s main characteristics are
   --thinking about ideas, organizing and understanding and investigating, and they tend to be more private and less sociable.
   --They are intellectual abstract problem solvers & work better independently, they are typically not much interested in working with other people
   --These people tend to avoid close interpersonal contact. They may be, for example, chemists or biologists. (for example Grissom from CSI).
   --Investigative types share an interest in the real world with Realistic types but they don’t want to be out in it, they want to be behind a computer or a beaker studying it. They enjoy seeking answers and hypothesis testing.

3. ARTISTIC: The Artistic (or Esthetic) orientation
   --manifests strong self-expression, and indirect relations with other people through
artistic expression: they want feedback, an “audience”, they relish attention…they strive for 2 things simultaneously, 1) audience appreciation, and 2) creative expression.
--needs flexibility, dislikes structure, and prefers tasks emphasizing physical skills, especially fine motor skills, playing instruments, or dancing/acting or the indirect interpersonal interactions associated with performing.
--They are independent and less social, much like Investigatives, but differ in that they are more emotional/expressive, may show relatively little self control, and express emotion more readily than most people.
--Artistic types are emotionally involved in what they do…the key word here is “passion”
--they usually prefer to work alone, and to work when they experience bursts of inspiration (they don’t like to work “9 to 5”)
--This description fits the common stereotypes about musicians and artists. Some conflicts for Artistic types are lack of or limited artistic talent, competition, and difficulty making a living from their art.
Some artistic types approach careers not usually consider in the art realm as artists…engaging in them as creative heartfelt endeavors. For example teaching can be an art, psychotherapy can be an art, landscaping can be an art.

4. SOCIAL: Social (or supportive) people
--share a tendency toward communication with Artistics, however the difference is that they tend to communicate directly rather than indirectly.
--Social people seem to satisfy their needs for attention through teaching or therapeutic situations, their passion is providing service to other people, helping.
--In sharp contrast to Realistic and Artistic people, Social people seek close interpersonal situations and are skilled in their interpersonal relations while they may avoid situations where they might be required to engage in scientific, intellectual problem solving or use extensive physical skills.
--they are friendly, gregarious, nurturing, often articulate speakers
--more willing to embrace other people and ideas, more open minded (also true for Investigative, Artistic)
--they are team players and not very interested in money
--They choose occupations such as social work, nursing, counseling, or teaching.

5. ENTERPRISING: Enterprising (or persuasive) people, like Social types, are people oriented.
--They are verbally skilled but rather than use their verbal skills to support others, as the social types do, they use them for leading and persuading, or sometimes for manipulating & dominating people.
--Enterprising types are very charismatic.
--Social types use verbal skills to help, Enterprising types use them to “get things done”.
--They are very practical, oriented towards action
--They are impatient with details, or time consuming research, they want the bottom line.
--They are concerned about power and status and aspire to it.
--They may want the “trappings of success” (material things).
--They show caring by taking charge, for example-planning and orchestrating a romantic evening out.
These are the entrepreneurs, salespeople, and politicians. Donald Trump, Bill Clinton, Ronald Regan, Martha Stewart, Oprah Winfrey types.

6. CONVENTIONAL: The Conventional style is typified by concern for rules and regulations, self-control, the ability and the need to be focused and organized.
--They respect power and status, honoring others who have it.
--They are business oriented, like Enterprising types, but they prefer to be behind the scenes, and are detail oriented.
--This kind of person prefers structure and order and thus seeks interpersonal and work situations where structure is readily available.
They like the “9 to 5” and want to know exactly when they are expected to be at work and what they are expected to do.
--They are responsible, dependable, and loyal
--They also share a practical orientation with Realistic types. These people are often prized secretaries, bookkeepers and bank tellers, but also financial advisors, CFOs, the people behind the scenes that make businesses, law firms and governments run smoothly, efficiently, productively.

While one of the six types usually predominates in people, there are also subtypes or personality patterns that provide more complete descriptions.
A person’s complete profile would contain all six types, but a three letter Holland Code is the most commonly used.
This is a subtype made up of the three most prevalent types found in an individual.
Look at the six types and pick the 3 you think fit best.

The top 3 of the 6 make up your Holland code (for example, my Holland code is ASI because my highest score is Artistic, my second highest is Social, and my third highest is Investigative).

Low scores can be as important and informative as high scores by helping us predict what types of work would be un-satisfying along with what types would most likely be satisfying.
The relationships between all scores are rich with useful information to help you interpret them...for example I am more Artistic than Social or Investigative, but I am about equally Social and Investigative...where my score for A is very high, my scores for both S & I are only moderately high.

So, in summary, interpret scores/types by figuring out how these types fit you - what parts of each type you relate to. When a type is a good fit and describes you well, you should consider seeking careers that are characterized by that type(s). Then, consider the types you do not relate to, these will be career categories to avoid since they do NOT match your interests.

Your interests may be best captured by 1 or 2 rather than 3 types.

Pay attention to your General Occupational Themes, Basic Interest Scales (for each
Theme), Occupational Matches, and Personal Style Scales in your Strong Results.

The next step is to use your Holland code to evaluate career possibilities...

Using your Holland Code in Career Exploration:
Holland’s theory and related measures are the most used in current career counseling settings. At many career centers occupational information libraries are organized according to Holland Code types. Counselors use simple handouts, as well as both paper and pencil and computerized assessments of Holland Code types to help students struggling with Career Planning.

The Strong Interest Inventory is one such assessment. Your "General Occupational Themes" (or GOT) illustrate your Holland Code Type.

Software, such as the Eureka program (in Internet Resources Assignment), guides students through searches for descriptions, necessary preparation, and locations of training programs for occupations organized and referenced by Holland Codes. Once you know your Holland Code, you can explore the fit between your interests/personality and possible careers online as well.

To explore the web for sites that apply Holland Codes...
1. Check out the Occupational Outlooks Handbook online by going to google.com and doing a keyword search (type in “occupational outlooks handbook”).
2. Try words like “Holland Codes” or “Holland Code Types”, or “John Holland’s Career Theory” or “Holland’s Codes” (sometimes word endings make a difference)...see what you can find.

After completing the Strong Interest Inventory, read through your results carefully and consider how they can guide you in your career planning.