

# Finding the most boring person in the world

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The most boring person in the world has been discovered by University of Essex research—and it is a religious data entry worker, who likes watching TV, and lives in a town. The peer-reviewed study into the science of boredom has uncovered the jobs, characteristics, and hobbies that are considered a stereotypical snooze. After examining more than

500 people across five experiments researchers found the blandest jobs are seen as data analysis, accounting, cleaning and banking. The paper—published in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*—also discovered that religion, watching TV, bird watching, and smoking were amongst the duller hobbies. Boring people were also perceived to shun large settlements to live in small cities and towns

Led by the Department of Psychology's Dr. Wijnand Van Tilburg the research revealed that stereotypically boring people are generally disliked and avoided due to preconceptions. And people may expect to be paid a minimum of £35-a-day to spend time with them as recompense. He launched the study to explore the stigma of perceived boredom and how it can impact perceptions.

He says that "the irony is studying boredom is actually very interesting and has many real-life impacts. This paper shows how persuasive perceptions of boredom are and what an impact this can have on people. Perceptions can change but people may not take time to speak to those with 'boring' jobs and hobbies, instead choosing to avoid them. They don't get a chance to prove people wrong and break these [negative stereotypes](#). The very fact that people choose to avoid them can lead to social ostracization and increase loneliness leading to a really negative impact on their lives."

The study also showed that being perceived as boring likely conveys low competence and low interpersonal warmth. Those perceived as boring may thus be at greater risk of harm, addiction and [mental health issues](#). And despite the negative perception society needs people to perform roles such as accounting and banking.

"It was interesting to me to see the study showed that boring people were not seen as competent," said Dr. Van Tilburg. "I would have thought that accountants would be seen as boring, but effective and the perfect

person to do a good job on your tax return. The truth of the matter is people like bankers and accountants are highly capable and have power in society—perhaps we should try not to upset them and stereotype them as boring!"

## **Lists:**

### **The top five most boring jobs:**

1. Data Analysis
2. Accounting
3. Tax/insurance
4. Cleaning
5. Banking

### **The top five most exciting jobs:**

1. Performing arts
2. Science
3. Journalism
4. Health professional
5. Teaching

### **The top five most boring hobbies:**

1. Sleeping
2. Religion
3. Watching TV
4. Observing animals
5. Mathematics

**More information:** Wijnand A. P. van Tilburg et al, Boring People: Stereotype Characteristics, Interpersonal Attributions, and Social Reactions, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (2022). [DOI: 10.1177/01461672221079104](https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672221079104)

Provided by University of Essex

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