

Jensen A R. *Bias in mental testing*. New York: Free Press, 1980. 786 p.
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Standardized tests of mental ability show substantial mean differences between various groups in the US, most notably blacks and whites. Massive evidence generally supports the conclusion that tests are *not* biased against any native-born, English-speaking minorities. [The *SCI*® and *SSCI*® indicate that this book has been cited in over 325 publications.]

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A storm of controversy arose over my 1969 article, "How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement?"¹ (also a *Citation Classic*), in which I suggested as a plausible hypothesis that genetic as well as environmental factors are implicated in the observed average difference of about one standard deviation in intelligence quotient (IQ) and scholastic achievement between the black and white populations of the US. A popular argument against my position was that most of the widely used tests of mental ability are culturally biased and, hence, the observed racial differences are merely an artifact.

Although my 1969 article cited some evidence against this claim, a truly comprehensive, detailed, critical review of the psychometric research relevant to the question of test bias did not exist at the time. In the early 1970s I began empirical research on test bias. In the course of this

effort, I amassed virtually all of the then-existing literature on test bias. While digesting it all, it occurred to me that I could perform a service by writing a review on the methodological issues and substantive findings in this already vast literature.

I originally intended to write a small book that I could do quickly, as I wanted to get on with other research. But it was soon apparent that the problems of test bias could not be properly addressed independently of many technical issues in general psychometrics. With the necessary exposition of psychometric theory, in addition to reviewing virtually all of the empirical evidence directly related to the study of test bias in race, social class, and gender groups, the manuscript grew beyond anything I had imagined at the outset. The handwritten manuscript came to over 4,000 pages and the typescript to over 1,300, which then amounted to some 800 book pages. Never again! The rest of my books, I hope, will be as relatively short as *Straight Talk About Mental Tests*,² which has only 269 pages.

Probably because it was the first extensive treatment of test bias and because of the obvious educational and social importance of its topic, given the wide use of psychometric tests in the industrialized world, the book has attracted a great deal of critical commentary^{3,4} and has received over 200 book reviews. It is gratifying that a blue-ribbon panel of experts commissioned by the National Academy of Sciences⁵ has since examined much of the same evidence and arrived at the same main conclusions as are found in my book; also, the large majority of some 2,000 experts surveyed⁶ are essentially in agreement with my conclusions about test bias.

1. Jensen A R. How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement? *Harvard Educ. Rev.* 39:1-123, 1969.

(Cited 1,290 times.) [See also: Jensen A R. *Citation Classic. Current Contents* (41):16, 9 October 1978.]

2. ———. *Straight talk about mental tests*. New York: Free Press, 1981. 269 p.

3. Jensen A R et al. Précis of *Bias in mental testing*. *Behav. Brain Sci.* 3:325-71, 1980.

4. Reynolds C R & Brown R T, eds. *Perspectives on bias in mental testing*. New York: Plenum, 1984. 608 p.

5. Wigdor A K & Garner W R, eds. *Ability testing: uses, consequences and controversies. Part I: report of the committee*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1982. 242 p.

6. Snyderman M & Rothman S. Science, politics, and the IQ controversy. *Public Interest* (83):79-97, 1986.