Trait identification and measurement
- Lexical approach: all relevant dimensions of personality exist in the natural language
- Theoretical approach: start with a theory which guides selection of terms and questions formation
- Psychometric theory - Statistical approach. Use factor analysis to guide selection of terms and questions
- Can use combination of the above

The essential trait approach
- The essential trait approach attempts to reduce large numbers of traits to a few traits that are essential to understanding personality
- The goal is to find the smallest number of traits by which individual differences in personality can be adequately described
- Underpinned by psychometric theory and factor analysis

Psychometric Theory
- Psychometrics refers to the theory and methods of psychological measurement
  - includes intelligence testing, measurement of personality traits and vocation testing
- The impact of testing on the individual and in wider society is substantial, therefore it is important to have high professional standards for the development, administration and interpretation of tests

Factor Analysis
- Lies at the heart of psychometrics. Statistical method that allows a lot of data to be reduced to a few important factors
- Statistical technique used by Hans Eysenck and Raymond Cattell and it eventually resulted in the Big Five
  - many disagreements between different theorists are result of differences in their use of factor analysis. Why it is important to have some understanding of the technique

Factor analysis - Brief explanation
1) Measure a large no. of people in various ways using various items
2) Correlate scores on each measure with scores on every other measure (correlation matrix)
3) Determine how many factors (traits) need to be hypothesised in order to account for the various clusters of inter-correlations
   - when items show high correlation with one another the thought to measure the same ability/characteristic - this is called a factor or trait
4) Subjectively decide the meaning of each factor and label it
5) Standardise the personality measure: test the measure on hundreds of people representative of the population you want to measure
   - Analyse these responses and develop ‘norms’. All future scores are then assessed against these norms