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# Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

Many students dislike exams and children of all ages seem to have a diet of more and more exams that they have to take. Coursework is being discredited as a way of demonstrating knowledge as it is becoming easier to plagiarise or even buy coursework over the internet. This leaves exams as the only obvious choice, but do they accurately & fairly test students' knowledge?

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## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

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## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

Yes because...

*A formal system needs to be in place.*

Academic competence and intelligence are not straightforward to measure and no method will fully capture the scope of a student's ability, but the fact remains that we need at least some formal system, otherwise the academic system will not work. We need divisions between ability levels and the amount of experience and knowledge students actually possess, otherwise students will be in environments unsuited to them

and won't be able to learn properly. There is no other way to divide them than by testing them in a fair and impartial manner. Exams are good at this because they are not vague - they have clear, measurable guidelines.

### No because...

Guidelines are neither clear nor measurable. Students are duped into believing their innate abilities and potential are being tested whilst they are largely being tested on test-taking ability, confidence and pushiness.

What this system encourages is practicing past papers in the hopes of mastering tests and not the subject. Tests do not encourage the pursuit of knowledge so much as the pursuit of great grades. Education should free the mind not restrict it to guidelines that are NOT transparent (As the pandemic of misunderstood Andagogy(opposite of pedagogy) keeps teachers from spoon-feeding or spelling things out).

Intellectual exploration is impeded with constant pulls towards mastering guess work and memorising 'standard' methods of answering 'repeated types' of questions that were originally set to test a student's response to unfamiliar problems.

Subjective/qualitative papers with essay questions are not as easy to measure as mathematics or other quantitative papers. There are times when different examiners grade the same paper by the same student/pupil very differently.

Marks on tests are frequently altered on students' coercion or a teacher/examiner's admittance of human error on his/her part. Pushier/convincing students can push examiners/tutors into raising their grades and exercise this talent frequently.

Tests simply require students to cram when studying, and after the test is taken, the information studied is almost immediately forgotten, so the purpose of the test in the first place is gone.

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

### Yes because...

#### *this s a student point of view*

so,first we have to consider about our world population.....ipsofacto (infact) our country's population....that would have answered all your questions...if not so continue reading this passage  
considering the population and the great competition developed at present because of that population....we have to prove ourself through some efficient method even in order to get a job.....and of course we don't have any efficient method for that purpose except examination.....  
lack of examinations may ...i'm sorry... will definitely cause some unsuited persons to get unsuited jobs and which 'll lead to improper development and will affect the country's development  
hence to select the good environment for the students according to their ability examinations are must...and im toooo suffering with those stuffs  
guyssssssssssssss.....

### No because...

the problem with examination for the purpose of proving ourselves or comparing our results to others is that exams are not required for such things. take for example someone who is planning to become a doctor or a surgeon. it may be helpful to exam them and test them to see if they can memorise a medical text book from cover to cover but does this prepare them for the more practical aspects of being a doctor such as conversing with patients to name but one. even the aspects which are tested in an exam format (body parts/systems, diseases and injuries) could be made into a more practical test which involves more than just writing and memory skills. By making exams the main way of categorising us we decide that in the real world memory and test taking are more important than the practical aspects of each profession.

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

### No because...

#### *Students can cheat in exams*

Even though exams are closely monitored and there are severe penalties if they are found cheating, students can still sneak information into exams. Exam papers can even be stolen or forged on their way to and from examination centers. Computers that contain the grades before they are formally released can be hacked into or go wrong on their own. It is more difficult to monitor students who don't take their exams in the main examination room or at the same date and time as the regular exams, because of disability adjustments or resits, and we can't do away with these. If exams are supposed to be a way to prevent cheating, they aren't infallible by any means.

I never said the method had to be perfect, I said a system that is being replaced because it is vulnerable to cheating shouldn't be replaced by another system that is vulnerable to cheating. You wouldn't replace a faulty computer with another faulty computer.

### **Yes because...**

We are mortal: we are all going to die: does that mean we should all kill ourselves and never attempt to prolong and improve our lives? no it does not

The system of testing exists for a purpose, which it may not serve 'perfectly' but serves to an extent. Tests can be improved and cheating can be reduced.

Tests with certain test-takers cheating, are better than no tests at all. You might as well not sell anything because some people steal. It is unfair that students who do not cheat and vye for a fair assessment of their abilities and standing on a subject, should be deprived of being tested because of a few bad eggs.

There is a difference between 'improvement' and replacement. Testing/exams can not be replaced the conditions in which they proceed are different for different exam centers and different students as you point out that doesn't mean testing should be chucked altogether. efforts can be made to make stringent and similar test-taking conditions( a faulty computer can be fixed that won't stop it from getting faulty again) for everyone everywhere however to expect perfect results is irrational.

It is not tests themselves that allow cheating it is the conditions in which they are conducted. You cannot say that a T.V lying on the road then getting stolen, is responsible for getting robbed. It is the condition(sitting on the road, entirely not the T.V's fault) that leads to the crime/theft.

## **Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?**

### **No because...**

### ***The Right Discipline***

Examinations are, at times, good and necessary ways of testing a student's ability to commit information to memory, to work under pressure and to find out what they know.

However, examinations must not become regular.

Regular examinations result in students working toward exams and exams only. They do not work in order to learn. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is rid of in a system where examinations reign supreme. It becomes knowledge for the sake of passing the class, receiving an "A" etc.

Whilst coursework may easily be cheated on, it is ridiculous to suggest that the only other way of testing a student's abilities and knowledge is through examination.

Class discussions and debates are, with active class participation, one of the most effective ways of learning and retaining information. Through being forced to better one's own views and opinions, theories and answers, the student gains a deeper insight into their own arguments, becomes better at discussing their views, and the class benefits from listening to these views and thinking about how the views of their peers compare to those of their own. Through this they can alter their own opinions or form new ones. Class participation is a necessary requirement seeing as how even if one person refuses to engage in the discussion, their own ideas are never put to the test of both the peers and their teacher, and so receive no benefit for their own beliefs, and the class also receives no benefit from that particular student. And this is just one student! Full class participation is an absolute requirement.

How do we accurately test students? We test them through what they are best at and what they are happiest with through immediate student and teacher feedback during and after classes. Weekly or monthly the parents/guardians of those students will receive report cards, showing which subjects their son/daughter is best at, and which they need the most help with. It will also be noted which classes are that child's

favourite. Parents and students must also be able to suggest ways in which their classes could be made better, so long as the suggestions are realistic, reasonable and that they contribute to the learning environment in such a way that the students learn more and at no cost to student/teacher and student/student relationships. For example, bullying must not become more common as a result of changes to the class.

Examinations should appear annually, but no more than that. If there are discrepancies between one's examination and one's school work, then this must be investigated, as it would be within the current system now. However, discrepancies are far less likely within this proposed framework, as all the progress and learning goes on during school hours and under the supervision and encouragement of the teacher. (This does not mean to say that kids should not be assigned homework, but the homework itself would be judged on how well the student can prove that they did it i.e., through class discussions the next day).

### Yes because...

Discussions and debates are useless as a measure of your academic performance if you just can't speak confidently in real time.

What do you do in cases where your favorite subject isn't the subject you perform best in? it might seem obvious that people will perform best in subjects they are enthusiastic in and try the hardest in because they like it, but my grades were almost universally best in subjects i hated - because i tried my hardest to 'get them over and done with' so i didn't have to think about them any more, which people mistook for efficiency, and i would write completely mechanically and impartially about them, which made me look more disciplined, especially when the subject was maths and it mostly was mechanical. the subjects i liked were the ones i was more relaxed in and quite often would assume beforehand that I would do well in, causing me to make less effort.

But how can you determine whether someone has absorbed information or attained knowledge and can eloquently reproduce it under pressure whilst being timed, without him or her being tested??

<http://newsforums.bbc.co.uk/nol/thread.jsps?forumID=7102&edition=2&ttl=20091016093241>

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

### No because...

#### *The fact remains the truth because*

The fact remains the truth because EXAMINATION IS NOT THE TRUE TEST OF KNOWLEDGE . Its every where , Instances where after exams student forget most if not all they've learnt during the session all because they were reading only to pass the exams and nothing more . this is becoming more and more common among those who just want to find an easy way out to study where student cram solutions to past questions just to pass the exam.....And the exams has not help in anyway either since its has always been repetition of past questions or modification of past question. I really don't know what to call this but in most cases the teacher will always want you to give them what they give , what am saying is that they want you to write it the way they taught you in the class, you know, I really don't know what this thing called examination is ? . I will give you an instance , back then when I was in school , ....we had the subject in physics which was very wide and we did a lot of examples and class work , due to the complexity of the course we had to read both text books and all necessary materials we could lay our hands on ....during the exams the questions where just examples we did in the class , and you wont believe it many student failed . What am I saying ....this thing called examination which test how best you can cram and how lucky you could be ? ....what I mean by that is , there are instances where you will go to an exams and your area of concentration will not even be part of the exams , ....not that you don't know it or you've not read but the aspect of the course where you are good is not on the exams .....so you see there are a lot to this examination of a thing....i think there should be a better way of testing students knowledge about what they've learned and how deep they understand it .....and not just making them cram past questions and answers..

### Yes because...

"I've been making a list of the things they don't teach you at school. They don't teach you how to love somebody. They don't teach you how to be famous. They don't teach you how to be rich or how to be poor. They don't teach you how to walk away from someone you don't love any longer. They don't teach you how to know what's going on in someone else's mind. They don't teach you what to say to someone who's dying. They don't teach you anything worth knowing." - Neil Gaiman

Given all that you've said the absence of exams/tests would ipso facto, be an even worse assessment of knowledge, potential and/or ability. Since there is no alternative measure that if it were given the importance given to formal testing would/does not fail in all the areas that exams have failed. It is important to know how people perform under pressure since work (and everything else that exams prepare and assess you

for) is generally thought to be very stressing. It's not just that we have to give exams so that we can pass, but with exams we revise what we read and when we learn all these things they settle in our mind.

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

**No because...**

### *Flawed tests can defeat a good student*

I have never been comfortable with a very good grade (an A) or a very bad grade (an F) I may have received as a result of taking a test. Grades on either extreme often leave me wondering if I've learned anything at all. One thing I have learned recently, as a result of failing miserably on a test, is that the test itself can be flawed. A little research reveals that the skills required to develop a fair, meaningful and comprehensive test, regardless of the subject matter, are considerable. Imagine for example, a mid-term exam, in this case applied mathematics, with an extremely narrow subject bandwidth, as compared with the overall course material, and limited to essentially three questions, two of which are worth 40 points each with the third worth 20 points. None were multiple choice or matching type questions. Miss just one of the 40 point questions and you get an F! To receive an A required a correct answer on 100% of the material! What does a test like this say, to me or the instructor, about what I've really learned in this class? Not much!

**Yes because...**

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

**No because...**

### *There are too many flaws*

Likes try to take a case in point, of mathematics class which one student takes online versus another who takes in class. Now the student in class may actually be a harder worker, smarter, an overall better student but he is challenged to the fact, that he must take the same exam as the online student, who is able to use his notes, book, online resources. So does the exam treat the student's fairly? Lets look at another fact of exams, in a generalization most classes consists of 3-4 exams, each exam covering 2-3 chapters, then a compressive final covering all chapters and of course homework. Most classes go by weighted scores, such that your exams consists of 50% of grade, your final 30% of grade, and your homework 20%. Student's put emphasis on these weighted scores, by creating priorities such that, homework is considered the bottom of the food chain. Why work on homework, when the tests are more important? When the scary realization is that homework is the tool, that provides the best way to create lasting knowledge. How do you get better at a math theory? You constantly use that math theory on dozens of problems over and over again, such as you would find on homework. However on the flip-side on a test, you memorize a theory, use it once, and forget about it. So exams fails to create lasting knowledge, which is the whole point of classes. My final point, doesn't necessarily point the flaw in examination but the flaw in the examineer. We've all had times, where a teacher would vaguely touch on subject, yet the subject becomes a big part of the test. Some teachers fail to recognize the flaws in their teaching method, as most teaching methods consists of trying to create ever lasting knowledge which takes a long time, and repetition. When tests mock the fact of this by exploiting student's who are good at the skill of learn and forget, studying whats going to be on the test, rather than knowledge provided by the teacher, which sometimes isn't even on the exam. To finish, I'd like to suggest alternatives tests that would better replace traditional exams. The best I feel would be oral exams, a one on one talk with the examiner as he goes through different questions, would eliminate exams problems that have weird worded question or ask vague questions, and then the examiner could full evaluate the person knowledge and ability use set knowledge in "test" sort of situation. Take home tests, are another, but cheating is an increased chance, so an implement of different tests would have to be used. The student benefits from this, for being forced to research again the knowledge that he or she has probably lost over the course. Which I think should be the true reason for a final test, a refresher on what you've learned. Also the final suggestion would be to lose the weighted score of tests, maybe making homework 50% of grade, 3-4 tests 7-10%, and the final test 20%, that way it gets rid of the one thought knowledge test. Because even a student who is copying answers, as long as he copies the method, he is learning something, such the same as a kid who copies theories from a book. Writing or retyping is effective way to create knowledge.

**Yes because...**



## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

No because...

***Examinations do not show if someone has truly acquired certain knowledge.***

Candidates can score high on an examination by revising hard beforehand, only to forget it immediately afterwards.

Surprise examinations are perhaps more effective in showing the candidate's knowledge.

Yes because...

A surprise exam still sounds like an exam to me. One major question is are there any other ways of testing our knowledge that do not involve some kind of examination? You have practical testing or testing while on the job but that is really just an exam by another name.

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

No because...

***The microscopic and responsive nature of examining does not reflect how we use intelligence and knowledge in the real world.***

In the world of work, in the world of relationships, in the world of family life, relaxation, further academic study, in all these worlds, one requires the ability not just to learn facts and hold understanding of certain intellectual systems in your head, but to make decisions, come up with ideas about how you want to proceed in using any of these things. You need a much more interactive relationship with the world than a simple 'it exists and I know certain things about it'.

Perhaps this aspect of growing up is best provided elsewhere, such as the playground, where certain survival instincts and behavioural tactics are learned or beaten into you, but it seems incredible to me that the educational system couldn't go some way towards alleviating the disparity between how we are examined in the exam hall and how we come to use what we have learned in wider life.

Yes because...

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

No because...

***Exams test memory more than analysis, creativity, or real understanding.***

Exams test memory more than analysis, creativity, or real understanding. If you have a good memory you can get away with doing very little work throughout the course and still get very good grades.

Yes because...

Things such as open book exams, viva voces, and questions which ask you to evaluate information are not testing merely memory, but your ability to apply your knowledge.

## Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

**No because...**

***Coursework is a much more genuine assessment of a candidate***

Coursework is a much more genuine assessment of a candidate because it takes into account research, understanding of the issues and ability to express oneself, not just ability to answer a question in a very limited period of time.

**Yes because...**

Coursework is valuable but should be used in conjunction with exams. A student might answer a question very well given time and help from teachers, family and textbooks, but then be unable to apply what they have learned to another question coming from a different angle.

**Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?**

**No because...**

***The pressure attached to A'levels and GCSEs is huge and causes many problems.***

The pressure attached to A'levels and GCSEs is huge and causes many problems. Some students have breakdowns and, in extreme cases, attempt suicide because they cannot handle the pressure, especially with university places relying on grades.

**Yes because...**

Coursework can involve a lot of pressure as well, especially with the meeting of deadlines. Schools should, and do, teach pupils about relaxation and stress-management for both exams and coursework.

**Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?**

**No because...**

***As well as causing personal problems, pressure can lead many bright students to under-perform.***

As well as causing personal problems, pressure can lead many bright students to under-perform. Exams test your ability to keep your cool more than they test your intelligence.

**Yes because...**

Pressure is a fact of life and children must be prepared for it. Pressure only increases at university and in the workplace and we must teach children how to perform well in these conditions rather than protect them from them.

**Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?**

**No because...**

***Examination results depend on the opinion of the individual examiner.***

Examination results depend on the opinion of the individual examiner. The same paper marked by two different examiners could get completely different results. This is exacerbated by the short time that examiners spend marking a paper.

**Yes because...**

Coursework must also be marked by individuals, so the same criticism applies. It is not significant however, as moderation and examiners meetings ensure that papers are marked to the same standards.

60

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Are Examinations a Fair Way of Testing Our Knowledge?

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The answer is simple. Exams are not a fair way of testing your knowledge. Grades only tell what you did in the paper. Exams can never be flawless and its best to judge students based on their overall skills seen throughout a period of two to three years instead of forcing them to work under a very specific paper pattern. Exams are little more than modern slavery.

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sdsds

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The fact is that if you are always tested, you'll get nervous and anxious as soon as you're given work to do and develop medical conditions after a while

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emaan

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students should not only be tested on how well they do in their exams but also they should be marked on presentations and projects as it gives them the opportunity to explain in their own words what they have learnt and then apply it.:)

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Jonathan

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Honestly, I think this is a very good system, each subject should have a balance of presentations and exams. But I should also add this, there should also be an option for students who are dissatisfied with their results to present their understanding of their subject once again to see whether they actually understood the concepts but didn't do well because of the system. No system is perfect, which is why I feel this is a good idea.

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🕒2 years ago

student

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a student who works hard, is fully antentive in class, solving problems independently and who has a regular study schedule will not face any problem in answering the question paper. It does not matter too much that wheather the student is poor or not it depends on the students hard work. Exams identify in which field will the student exel and this simplify the career choice. Only the students who want to exel in life will work hard enough

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🕒4 years ago



Jonathan

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I disagree. There are times when the teacher fails to teach the proper format and how to answer questions. A person who understands the concepts and know how to apply them very well is useless when in a rigid formal system that discourages creativity and exchanges self expression of their good understanding of the course with formal rigid structures. I don't fail, but I have done badly in exams with high formal structures in university, one of the few assignnrs I did well was one that had absolutely no structure, I was free to express my understanding of the subject.

The way I see it, as long as the student is able  
To express his understanding in a clear and concise manner, it does not matter if it does not follow the exact format of the written examination.

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🕒2 years ago

monster

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test taking skills are also needed for good scores.  
If we don't know test taking skills, then we can't get a high score, so it is not a good way to test our knowledge.  
what if a student is too poor to learn these skills? Then they can't get a high score even though they study harder than students who know a lot of testing skills.  
it is not his/her fault that their family is poor.

Therefore, examinations are not a fair way of testing our knowledge.

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