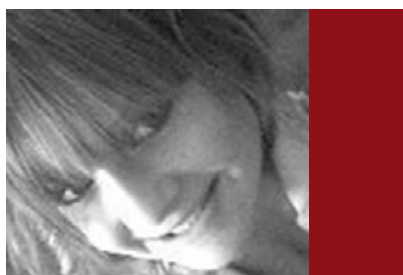


Are exams still useful? Your views ...

In August thousands of pupils around the UK wait nervously for their Sats, GCSE, A Level, Standards and Highers results. This year, for those who took Sats the wait has been longer because of problems with marking. This latest exam disaster, along

with growing concerns over the standard of exams and quality of teaching in schools, has led many to question whether exams are still a useful way of testing young people. We asked MYPs about their own exam experiences ...



Bethany Harvey

Age 14
Deputy MYP Walsall

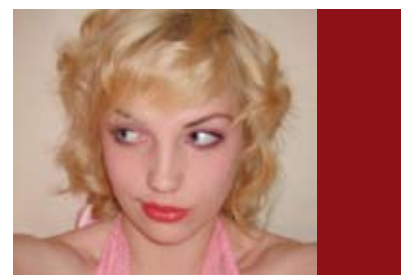
I am still waiting for my Sats results so personally I think they are a waste of time. Exams don't show what a student is really capable of; what if the pupil is having personal problems and they don't do their best because of it? What if a pupil doesn't do as well in the exam as they have in class? What if they haven't had enough support from their teachers? What if they are nervous because of the stress of exams? Exams just makes life even more difficult for teenagers to cope with. Sats are getting easier every year, and some of the things we learn aren't even useful. I can't think of a time in my life when I'll ever need algebra! To me exams aren't useful because they are stressful and they are not a good way to test ability.



Samson Adeyemi

Age 17
MYP Lewisham

Although it might not be the best way to ensure that students understand what they have been taught, I still think exams are useful. Without them, many students would probably not learn important study and time management skills. Many students are now more studious than ever before and are therefore performing better in exams. Exams help to divide students into levels and encourage further learning for advanced students. However, I don't think exams should be the only way to assess a student's ability or understanding. Research projects, presentations and continuous assessments could also be used.



Shannon Taggart

Age 14
MYP Stoke on Trent

Exams are the best way of monitoring progress throughout school life. I think the new path some high schools are taking with coursework-only subjects is rubbish. They do not test what you know, instead they test what you are doing at the time. This makes some subjects a whole lot easier to pass but that doesn't mean the student will be more knowledgeable. Exams are getting easier so I believe that from an early age children should be learning more advanced subjects such as foreign languages. These days you need to get ahead to be successful and schooling is the key for success in later life.

Are exams still useful?

Debate now at www.ukyp.org.uk/forums

FORUM RANT



Jessica Oliver
Aged 16
MYP Derbyshire

These days, success is measured entirely on exam results. For those that strive in exams this is great but for others who struggle with the pressure and stress of exams this can mean they are unfairly penalised. Despite the controversy about GCSEs getting easier, certain subjects have removed the intermediate option, and for those that are average, in between higher and foundation, exams are getting much more difficult.



Andrew Elliott
Age 16
MYP North Tyneside

I don't think Sats tests are useful or appropriate. Testing Year 6 students is a disgrace and Sats tests in Year 9 are just used by schools to determine which 'sets' or classes to put students into. It creates unnecessary pressure for young students. However, I believe that GCSEs and A levels are important as they are the nationally recognised standard of achievement.

"I just can't help but think if we were given that little more independence, we'd know how to handle ourselves and keep safe."

Rant by EmmaGallen

Flicking through the newspaper a few weeks ago there was a story about "America's Worst Mom."

First thing I thought was, "she must be really bad if it's making the news here." Did she sexually abuse her children? No.

Did she beat them till they were at death's door? No.

She's supposedly the worst mother because when her son asked if he could use public transport alone from the centre of New York city, she said yes and gave him the

money and subway cards. I know parents are getting ridiculously over protective everywhere, not allowed out in the dark by yourself, even though you are 17. No taxis alone despite you being 19.

I know it's meant to be "for our own good" and that they trust us "it's just all the other people who we don't trust."

I just can't help but think if we were given that little more independence, we'd know how to handle ourselves and keep safe.

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