

Exam Study Skills: The Biggest Myths about Exams

Why do examinations cause so much anxiety even to those who have already studied thoroughly? Many of our fears are based on wrong beliefs about tests in general, and these myths unfortunately prevent us from faring well. Be aware of the following myths about exams and see if you agree:

1. If you fail, you have wasted your time.

Nothing is wasted if you've tried your best. Many exams are graded subjectively and there's no reason for you to punish yourself over it. Besides, you have retained valuable information while studying and you can always take the exams again, that time with more knowledge on what will be taken up.

2. The exam could out you as a phony, exposing gaps in your education.

Are examiners going to pick your answers apart? Most likely not; in fact, they understand the pressures that an exam-taker goes through and usually go out of their way to deliberately seek out what's good in the answer you have given.

The more important thing to keep in mind is that the person checking your paper would be pleased with a show of effort, so even if you don't know the proper procedure, try your best to put together all the principles you've learned and come up with an educated guess and an evident effort to attempt a solution.

3. You should have studied everything.

At the late revision stages, there's no use worrying about what you weren't able to cover. By then it would be too late to cram too much stuff in your head. However, with the remaining time that you have, choose the material for last-minute revision wisely. First, don't bother reading on the subject matter that hasn't been taken up – that won't be included. Second, brush up on the things that are more likely to come up on the exam.

How would you know what these are? Here are some clues:

a. Try to recall subject matter which your professor has mentioned more than once. b. Read about topics he has assigned as homework. c. Take note of items he has written on the blackboard, such as terms, names, formulae, or dates. If they were written down, they're likely to be included. d. If your teacher tells you that a particular topic will be included in the exam, there's a 99% chance that it will.

4. If you haven't understood what you have read, there's no use taking the exam.

University is so much different than high school in that there's a large volume of information you have to learn about in so little time. Because of this, it's highly unlikely that you would be able to comprehend each topic fully. When examination time comes

around, it's only normal that there is a huge percentage of information that you don't really understand.

What's important is for you to ask your teacher or classmates for clarification if you still have the time. If not, take the exam anyway – half your classmates probably don't know it all, either - just remember to have the subject matter explained to you after the exam so it will add to your stock knowledge.

5. The exam questions are not easily understandable.

Test designers don't want to make it difficult; they just want to make it difficult for cheaters. Expect some degree of difficulty as it's not an IQ test or a test of general knowledge but of the course that you're taking up.

6. Exams are for people with good memories.

Very few teachers these days give exams based on your having to enumerate several items or memorize a list of terms. They are now more concerned with testing your comprehension skills – how well you analyze a topic, how you compare and contrast, how you relate an item to the general lesson.

7. Exams are just for people who work extremely fast.

There are time limits in examinations because these are based on topics that have already been taken up; it's not as if you're about to solve a Math problem whose solution method you'll be seeing for the first time. If there's anything new in an exam, it's only the manner of presentation: same principles, different data.

8. Calculations are either right or wrong.

As was mentioned earlier, credit is almost always given for effort. Even if you don't get the final answer right, you'll still be credited for attempting a solution. Who knows, you might even find a correct solution that has never been tried before!

Mark is the author of the most comprehensive and straightforward exam success guide. The article above is an excerpt from his award-winning <http://www.lazysmartstudents.com/exams/>, which can be accessed by going to <http://www.lazysmartstudents.com>.

Source: <http://www.amazines.com>