

EDUCATION & LEARNING / STUDYING

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Exam preparation, test experiences, expressing opinions and giving advice

Activity 1: Exams — love them or hate them?

Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. Do you usually feel confident before an exam? Why or why not?
2. What is the best way to prepare for a test?
3. Have you ever studied hard but received a disappointing result?
4. Do you think exams are a fair way to measure a student's ability?
5. Should students be allowed to use computers during some exams?
6. What is more important: getting high marks or understanding what you learn?
7. Should students have a second chance if they fail an exam?

Activity 2: Exam preparation vocabulary

Complete the sentences using the words and phrases in the box. Use each one once.

revise · pass · fail · deadline · nervous · memorise · result · cheat · practise · resit

1. I need to _____ for my English exam this weekend.
2. If you get a high enough mark, you should _____ the test.
3. If you don't pass, you may have to _____ the exam later.
4. Some students feel _____ before an important test.
5. We have a _____ for handing in our assignment on Friday.
6. You shouldn't _____ during an exam because it is dishonest.
7. I find it difficult to _____ long lists of facts.
8. You should _____ answering questions, not just read your notes.
9. I was disappointed when I received my exam _____.
10. If you don't get the required mark, you may _____ the exam.

Activity 3: Debate — are exams the best way to assess students?

Work with a partner. Student A supports exams as a useful way to measure learning.
Student B believes other methods should be used more often. Consider these ideas:

- Exams test knowledge under time limits.
- Projects allow students to demonstrate practical skills.
- Some students know the material but perform poorly under pressure.
- Group work teaches cooperation.
- Regular assignments can show progress over time.

Try to give reasons, examples and responses to your partner's arguments.
Then swap positions and argue the opposite side.

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Activity 4: What would you do?

Discuss each situation. Decide what the student should do and explain why.

Situation A: You have an exam in three days and still have a lot to revise.

Situation B: Your friend asks you to send them answers during an online test.

Situation C: You know the subject well, but you become nervous as soon as the exam begins.

Situation D: You receive a lower mark than you expected, even though you studied carefully.

Situation E: You have two exams and a major assignment due in the same week.

For each situation, discuss:

1. What is the biggest challenge?
2. What are two possible solutions?
3. What might happen if the student does nothing?
4. What advice would you give?

REAL ENGLISH BOX

Useful expressions for talking about exams and pressure:

- I'm a bit on edge. — I'm feeling nervous or tense.
- I've got butterflies in my stomach. — I'm nervous about something important.
- Fingers crossed! — I hope things go well.
- I gave it my best shot. — I tried as hard as I could.
- I drew a blank. — I suddenly couldn't remember something.
- It went better than expected. — The result or experience was better than I thought it would be.
- I'll learn from the experience. — I'll use what happened to do better in the future.

Activity 5: Exam advice role-play

Work with a partner.

Student A: You have an important exam soon. Explain what worries you and ask for advice.

Student B: Ask questions to understand the problem. Suggest practical ways to prepare and manage time.

Encourage your partner without promising that everything will be perfect.

Discuss:

- What to study first
- How to organise revision time
- What to do if a question is difficult
- How to prepare the day before the exam
- How to respond to a disappointing result

Swap roles and choose a different concern.

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Teacher's Key

Activity 2:

1. revise, 2. pass, 3. resit, 4. nervous, 5. deadline, 6. cheat, 7. memorise, 8. practise, 9. result, 10. fail.

Activities 1, 3, 4 and 5:

Answers will vary. Encourage realistic advice, clear reasoning and respectful disagreement.

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