

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

OUTLINE

Greeting	
Dear Sir,	A polite greeting is needed. Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dear Sir or Madam • Dear Sir • To the Editor
Opening	
I am writing to express my views on the issue of examinations, an issue which appears often in your paper. It appears that it is fashionable nowadays to deride the examination system, a system that has the aim of helping our young people achieve their goals and succeed in society. Videos on YouTube, as well as articles in your own paper, seem to suggest that exams only serve to harm students and that other forms of assessment must be brought in to replace them. As a lifelong educationalist, I am afraid that I cannot agree with this view.	Refer to the issue you are writing about. If you're responding to an article, say where you read it and who wrote it. State your own view as clearly and briefly as possible (one sentence)
Main body	
No one is saying that standardized testing is the goal to which everything leads. In fact, standardised tests are just a <i>means to an end</i> – they are the best way to help our children grow in knowledge and develop as citizens. They are indispensable for three reasons. First of all, they are fair. When children sit down with an exam paper in front of them, they are without help from outside. Each child is judged according to his or her own ability. Now, people may wish to believe that having a system where some people do better than others is unfair; but I hold the opposite view. It's just a fact that some people <i>are</i> more able than others, and examinations are a way to demonstrate this accurately.	State your main argument: standardised testing helps children. Give your reason why and explain it, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are fair • because students are judged on their own abilities.
Secondly, it's not right to suggest that tests favour richer children and disadvantage poorer ones. In fact, this is an insult! Many children from poor backgrounds have gone on to become professors at university, or led active lives in demanding social positions such as in politics or in the media. Similarly, many richer children do very poorly. The fact is that success in exams is down to one thing only: hard work. I have two children, and one of them works hard and excels at school, whereas the other is lazy and does not. Of course I love them both, but the point is that they are in identical socio-economic situations and yet they perform very differently.	Give a second reason why and explain it, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardised tests are the same for poor and rich alike • because success depends on hard work, which is independent of wealth
However, the most important reason why we need to stand up in defense of standardised testing is that it is useful in the workplace. Employers demand it. The economy demands it. If we want our children to succeed in good jobs and be prosperous, we must educate them in the ways of the real world – a world of competition, a world in which some people succeed and others fail. Can you imagine if the banking world suddenly decided that competition was a bad thing and that it privileged richer people at the expense of the poor? You might think that sounds like a nice vision, but it is unrealistic.	Give a third reason why and explain it, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it's useful in the workplace • because the work place is competitive (so education should be too)
Closing paragraph	
As you can see, testing is fair and useful. And whilst it is popular to criticize it at the moment, it remains the bedrock of our educational and economic lives.	Restate your main position. Tell your reader that you have

	demonstrated that you are correct in your letter (“as you can see...”/ “As I have shown...”)
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