

## University students take 'impossible' exam

1st February, 2015



Final-year students at a university in England are angry after they took an economics exam. Students from the University of Sheffield have signed a petition to say the exam questions were 'impossible' to answer. Nearly all of the 100 students who took the exam complained and signed an online petition.

They want the university to look into this. The students say the exam contained questions on topics that were not in their course. They also say the questions included a lot of difficult maths that they had not been taught. One student said a lecturer told them they would only need 'simple' maths. They are now worried that they will get low test scores, and that this will affect what kind of degree they get.

The head of the economics department, professor Andy Dickerson, told the BBC that the exam was fair. He said not all the questions needed maths. He said the level of maths in the exams was the same as the level taught to students on the course. Professor Dickerson also said all the exam questions were on topics the students had studied. He said: "All questions were based on topics taught in the course and for which further reading was provided." He added that one question in the exam used a term that students may not have seen before. He said this was no problem because the question explained the meaning of the term. The university said it would look carefully at the results.

Sources: *Independent.co.uk* / *BBC.com*

## Writing

Doing a project is a better way to test people than taking an exam. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*student / angry / impossible / complain / petition / question / topics / maths / degree / economics / course / studied / reading / explained / meaning / university / results*

## True / False

- Students in the in first year at university are angry over exams. T / F
- Over 100 students signed an online petition. T / F
- The students said all topics in the exam that were on the course. T / F
- A lecturer told students they would only need simple maths. T / F
- The head of the department told the BBC the exam was not fair. T / F
- A professor said students had studied all the topics in the exam. T / F
- Students were given extra reading for all topics in the exam. T / F
- There was only one term in the exam that students didn't know. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. angry     | a. subjects   |
| 2. nearly    | b. included   |
| 3. contained | c. concerned  |
| 4. simple    | d. expression |
| 5. worried   | e. furious    |
| 6. head      | f. given      |
| 7. topics    | g. boss       |
| 8. provided  | h. almost     |
| 9. term      | i. definition |
| 10. meaning  | j. easy       |

## Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of exams?
- What do you do the night before an important exams?
- What's the worst feeling you've had over an exam?
- What do you think about what you read?
- Should the students get a new, easier exam?
- Has an exam ever made you angry?
- How good are you at maths?
- What do you think of universities?

## Phrase Match

- |                                     |                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. signed a                         | a. department          |
| 2. exam questions were 'impossible' | b. test scores         |
| 3. questions on topics that were    | c. have seen before    |
| 4. worried that they will get low   | d. needed maths        |
| 5. this will affect what kind of    | e. petition            |
| 6. head of the economics            | f. to students         |
| 7. not all the questions            | g. not in their course |
| 8. the same as the level taught     | h. degree they get     |
| 9. a term that students may not     | i. at the results      |
| 10. look carefully                  | j. to answer           |

## Discussion – Student B

- How difficult do you think it is to write a fair exam?
- How long do you spend preparing for an exam?
- Are exams the best way to test people?
- What do you think of English exams?
- How could people get over the stress caused by exams?
- Would you prefer to take an exam or do a project?
- What else can the students do to get a new exam?
- What questions would you like to ask the students?

## Spelling

- they took an somcione exam
- signed an online tpeoniit
- topics that were not in their seuorc
- One student said a ertoclue told them
- they will get low test cesors
- what kind of egrede they get
- orpsesfor Andy Dickerson
- the level tghatu to students
- efrrhut reading was provided
- one question in the exam used a remt
- The question ndeeixlap the meaning
- look carefully at the treussl

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. j	5. c
6. g	7. a	8. f	9. d	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Sleep

You think sleep is the best thing to pass exams. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): coffee, getting up early or studying with a friend.

### Role B – Coffee

You think coffee is the best thing to pass exams. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): sleep, getting up early or studying with a friend.

### Role C – Getting up early

You think getting up early is the best thing to pass exams. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): coffee, sleep or studying with a friend.

### Role D – Studying with a friend

You think studying with a friend is the best thing to pass exams. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): coffee, getting up early or sleep.

## Speaking – Taking exams

Rank these with your partner. Put the best advice for taking exams at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| • sleep        | • study with a friend         |
| • make notes   | • get up very early           |
| • drink coffee | • take a lucky mascot         |
| • relax        | • sit next to the top student |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.