

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE TIME FACTOR IN EXAMINATIONS?

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The importance of the time factor in the successful completion of examinations is bound to vary with the type of test used. We are concerned here with the short completion, multiple choice, or true-and-false test given as part of the daily assignment in any class in science. Lack of time has so frequently been offered as the reason for failure to satisfactorily handle a test that the author for a period of over two months gave fifty tests to his classes, which were given with one minute by stop watch for each question, and then repeated with an additional one minute allowance per question, any changes or additions being made in different colored pencil.

The results were uniformly consistent. Doubling the time for answering succeeded in raising the average grades in every test given by less than 5 per cent. In many cases individuals actually lowered the grade made with the original one-minute allowance. Instances of lowering grades were particularly in evidence among pupils ranking consistently in the lower quartet of their classes.

In view of the fact that the beauty of the short daily test lies in the small amount of time it takes, it hardly seems advisable to give too much time for answering questions on tests of the type discussed, notwithstanding pupil alibis to the contrary.