

DID YOU KNOW?

LEAP YEARS

Leap years, which occur approximately every four years, contain an extra day observed on February 29. So, during leap years, there are 366 days in a year instead of 365. The purpose of integrating leap years into our calendars is to maintain synchronisation between the human-made calendar year and astronomical year, the latter of which is determined by the Earth's orbit around the sun.

The tradition dates back to the Julian calendar, which observed three years of 365 days, followed by one leap year of 366 days. This was further refined in the Gregorian calendar, where the extra leap day occurs in years that has an integer which is a multiple of 4. Other calendars account for leap years as well, with the Hebrew calendar adding a 13th lunar month seven times every 19 years and the Hijiri calendar adding an extra day when needed to make sure that the following year begins on the March equinox.



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ARE YOU EXPERIENCING TESTING FATIGUE?

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

As an A2 level student entering the final stretch of her school years, I am both elated and tired. After fourteen unrelenting years of schooling, I finally see a light at the end of the tunnel. However, thinking of the path that I need to take before reaching that end makes me unbearably weary.

The syllabus is complete, all the theories have been studied. All that's left now are tests. Lots of them. Topical mocks and full mocks and coaching mocks and school mocks and pre-tests and tests and finally the actual A level. Trying to traverse these final few miles fills me with more dread than anything else in recent memory.

The climate around our education makes it seem like a high-stakes game that students have to win by fighting tooth and nail against their peers. At the age of eight in our exam-centric education system, I remember being made to study things not for the sake of learning, but so I could pass a test. This hyper-competitive, high-strung mess for the past decade has left me drained and afraid of making any mistakes for the sake of learning.

At this point, I simply don't feel like taking any more tests. I understand that doing well in my board exams doesn't necessarily require me to take all these mocks. Preparing at my own pace, in my own time can truly be enough. For education curricula that are based on problem-solving, such as the Cambridge A level, getting to the crux of the content and practising past papers with particular attention to detail can often prove to be sufficient. Forgoing mocks is honestly the best decision I can possibly make for myself.

If you, in any way, resonate with my feelings, there is a good chance that you are suffering from testing fatigue, too. My best advice would be to consider making the same choice. However, I do realise that different people respond to different education plans. If you feel that mocks are crucial for you to properly prepare, go for it by all means. But make sure you're not compromising your mental and/or physical wellbeing. Those late nights and endless grinding sessions will catch up to you, sooner or later. Prepare well, but intersperse your study sessions with plenty of breaks to take your mind off of your exams.

At any point, if you feel that you are pushing yourself too hard, it might be best to stop taking tests. Feeling burnt out from studying will not do you any good in the long run; it might even prove detrimental to your overall exam prep. So, just know where you need to draw the line, and don't be afraid to draw it.

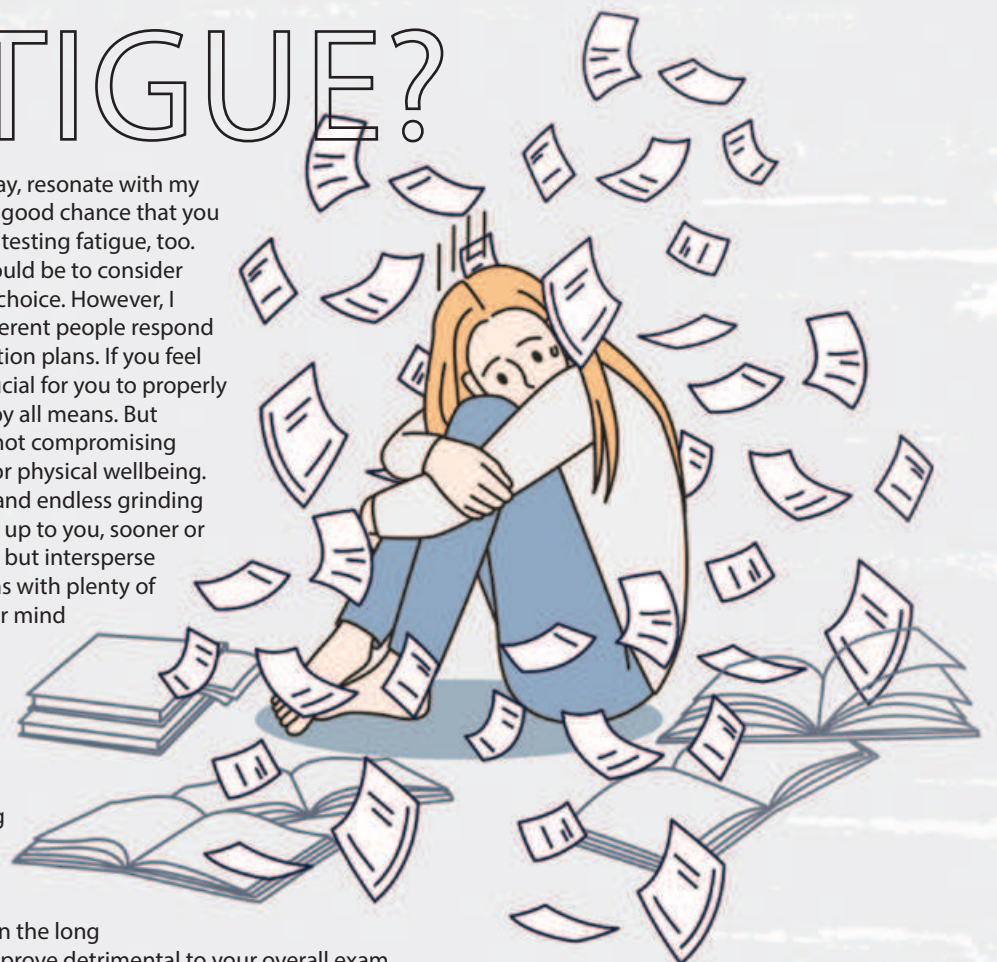


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