

Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Literary Non-fiction**

## Bring Back Oral Examinations

Once a standard way of judging the progress of a student, oral examinations, in which an examiner asks a student questions and the student is required to supply an answer that demonstrates sufficient knowledge of the subject, has fallen out of fashion in American secondary schools. However, its efficacy as a way of assessing a student's knowledge is no less today than it has ever been. There are several reasons why it would only improve the American education system to bring back the oral examination.

Oral examinations allow instructors with an immediate opportunity to give feedback to the student if the student is under misconceptions, or has failed to fully understand the material, the instructor can both diagnose and correct the problem in real time. For this reason, oral examinations often take on an intensity that can allow a student to experience real educational breakthroughs.

Because students often feel they will be put on the spot, having to actually face their instructor with their inability to answer a question, rather than merely skipping a question on a written exam, students tend to prepare more for oral examinations. Oral examinations also tend to require a student to have fully digested and synthesized the material, rather than merely spitting back out memorized answers or making a reasonable guess from amongst multiple choices on a written exam.

Oral examinations also require students to "think on their feet," an invaluable life skill. They require the student to develop skills in organization, information synthesis, evaluation and critical thinking. Not to mention that some students who really know the material well but who don't do well on written or standardized tests are sometimes thought to be less skilled than they actually are because they are not permitted to showcase their knowledge in a way that comes naturally to them.

The oral examination is also closer to what a student will experience in real life while practicing their career. Not to mention how much it prepares them for the interview process for college or graduate school.

A final benefit of the oral examination is for the instructor. Though actually administering the examinations takes more time, the time spent grading the examinations is significantly reduced, for an overall time savings and much less after-school-hours hassle.

It's time we married education back up to real-world skills and reinstated the oral examination for secondary school students.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Literary Non-fiction**

1. What does the author want? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Discuss one of the author's claims. Is it supported with reasons and evidence? Explain.

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3. Is the author's overall argument effective? Why or why not?

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