

## Conceptual thinking to make students look beyond books

CBSE wants students to realise that exams are not just about scoring marks, but about preparing students for the future

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The ongoing CBSE exams have caused an uproar among parents and students. It evoked a mixed response with a few complaining of the question papers being tricky, lengthy and some even claimed a few questions being out-of-syllabus. There were complains of one section being tougher than the rest.

Sanyam Bhardwaj, Controller of Examinations, CBSE, says while preparing question papers, the regulatory body follows a blueprint wherein weightage to different sections are specified. "The question paper is divided among sections in a way that intelligent, average and below-average students can find scoring opportunities."

"There has to be a few tricky questions because an exceptionally easy question paper cannot differentiate between good and average students," he adds. Bhardwaj says that CBSE does not form question papers with the sole aim to aid students crack the boards. "Our goal is to develop the student holistically. Making the student a good citizen, honing their subjective skills, preparing them for higher education



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and foreign universities, and making them industry-ready."

Preeti Jasra, English teacher, DPS Rajnagar Extension, UP, expected a tougher English paper class X exam. "Memorising answers will not help students. Questions that make students share their perspectives should always be valued because they might forget what they memorised, but they will never forget what they imbibed. Students should grasp the message of the chapters and understand its meaning."

"If a literature student has written value points in their answers that are not mentioned in the answer key given by CBSE, but reads correct to the examiner, the regulatory body appreciates the perspective of the student."

Jasra highlights that questions based on concepts present in the NCERT books, which urges students to use their understanding should not be seen as out-of-syllabus. "Parents and students must understand that CBSE follows a well-structured system that gives marks for right answers and thinking; hence lenient or strict marking does not exist." CBSE instructs paper setters to ensure that questions are from within the syllabus, the papers have scoring sections for all kinds of students, can be completed within the time, without any ambiguity. "Around five academicians prepare the question papers for 90 lakh students from various streams. Post exams, CBSE considers feedback from students and subject experts to develop the marking scheme." "We have committees that hold meetings in March/April to discuss suggestions given by the academicians and students. We make changes based on a common consensus," says Bhardwaj.

"Paper setting is a meticulous job, and academicians do it out of sheer passion despite getting scanty remuneration. They are extremely learned, have deep understanding of subjects, thus, questioning their job is incorrect," he adds. Amitava Chakrabarti, a Kolkata-based Maths tutor, claims in the past five years, CBSE has been sticking to NCERT syllabus, but the questions asked are not direct. "However the Maths question paper has been getting tougher. Students in small towns and villages who cannot afford expensive reference books and coaching classes have been struggling."