

Should we fear maths? 我們有必要害怕數學嗎？

詞彙：maths 數學

How good are you at maths? Some people love the challenge of **algebra** or enjoy working out number **puzzles** such as **Sudoku**. Maths is all around us, from working out how to **split the bill** after a meal, to **calculating** your household bills. But many dread the moment when they have to deal with numbers and **figures** and feel a real sense of worry and confusion. It can seem daunting, but this ‘**maths anxiety**’ is perfectly normal, and you’re definitely not alone. And anyway, our worries and fears don’t necessarily reflect our **ability**.

The problem really starts in childhood, at school. Research has found that maths teachers who are **nervous** about teaching the subject can pass on their anxiety to the pupils, and girls may be more likely to be affected. The Programme for International Student Assessment found around 31% of 15 and 16-year-olds across 34 countries said they got very nervous doing maths **problems**, 33% said they got tense doing maths **homework**, and nearly 60% said they worried maths classes would be difficult. Shulamit Kahn, from Boston University’s Questrom School of Business, told the BBC she believes giving students, particularly girls, good **role models** “is critical, especially at a young age”. She thinks the key is to get people, especially women, who love teaching maths to younger children.

Writing for BBC Future, David Robson says “It’s not clear why maths arouses so much fear compared to geography. But the fact that there’s a right or wrong answer – there’s no room for **bluffing** – might make you more worried about **underperforming**.” And once we assume we’re not a ‘maths person’, we avoid **solving** things that we probably could do.

Psychologists have been trying to work out why **mental arithmetic** can bring us out in a sweat. That seed of fear may come from many sources, but some suggest that **articulating** your fears can loosen their hold on you, and encourage children to see a maths test as a **challenge**, not a threat. Ideally, we need to think positively about maths and give it a **second chance**.

詞彙表

algebra	代數
puzzle	謎題，智力遊戲
Sudoku	數獨遊戲
split the bill	分攤費用
calculate	計算
figures	數字
maths anxiety	數學焦慮症
ability	能力
nervous	緊張的，擔憂的
problem	習題，問題
homework	家庭作業
role model	榜樣
bluff	蒙混過關
underperform	表現不佳
solve	解決
mental arithmetic	心算
articulate	清楚表達
challenge	挑戰
a second chance	第二次機會

測驗與練習

1. 閱讀課文並回答問題。

1. When does maths anxiety really begin?
2. What can happen if teachers are nervous about teaching maths?
3. True or false? *If we don't like maths, we are unable to solve mathematical problems.*
4. How should children view a maths test?
5. What does Shulamit Kahn think should be done to help children enjoy maths?

2. 選擇意思恰當的單詞或片語來完成下列句子。

1. According to my _____, we've actually made a profit this year.

algebra	figures	ability	solving
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2. You can't afford to pay for us both so let's _____.

split the bill	spilt the bill	splits the bill	split my bill
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3. I've _____ how much you owe me for the shopping – it's 20 pounds!

calculated	bluffing	solved	puzzled
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4. Climbing the mountain was a real _____, but it was worth it when I got to the top.

ability	role model	challenge	nervous
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5. I am useless at _____, so I always use a calculator.

mentals arithmetic arithmetic mental	mental arithmetics mental arithmetic
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答案

1. 閱讀課文並回答問題。

1. When does maths anxiety really begin?

The problem really starts in childhood, at school.

2. What can happen if teachers are nervous about teaching maths?

Maths teachers who are nervous about teaching the subject can pass on their anxiety to the pupils.

3. True or false? *If we don't like maths, we are unable to solve mathematical problems.*

False. We assume if we're not a 'maths person', we avoid solving things that we probably could do.

4. How should children view a maths test?

Children should be encouraged to see a maths test as a challenge, not a threat.

5. What does Shulamit Kahn think should be done to help children enjoy maths?

She thinks the key is to get people, especially women who love maths, teaching younger children.

2. 選擇意思恰當的單詞或片語來完成下列句子。

1. According to my **figures**, we've actually made a profit this year.

2. You can't afford to pay for us both so let's **split the bill**.

3. I've **calculated** how much you owe me for the shopping – it's 20 pounds!

4. Climbing the mountain was a real **challenge**, but it was worth it when I got to the top.

5. I am useless at **mental arithmetic**, so I always use a calculator.