

NMT B2 Task 2 practice (4)

Read the text. For questions (1-6), choose the correct answer (A, B, C, or D)

Einstein: the truth behind the myths

Although it is true that many highly intelligent people are not appreciated during their own lifetime, the same cannot be said of super-scientist Albert Einstein. His death, on 18 April 1955, shocked not only the scientific community but the whole world. Since then, his fame has continued to grow. Today, there are many widely believed 'facts' about him as a character and as a scientist, but not all of them are actually true.

Myth no.1

Today, Einstein is most famous for his theory of relativity and most people think that this won him the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921. However, at the time - and indeed, for many years afterwards - the theory of relativity was considered unproved. He was actually awarded this Nobel Prize for his work on the movement of energy between light and electrons.

Myth no.2

It is often claimed that Einstein was a weak student in mathematics. Nothing, however, could have been further from the truth. It is said that Einstein began to teach himself advanced mathematics at the age of 12 - years before his classmates. Although no one really knows where this rumour came from, one popular explanation is that Einstein's school changed its grading system so that the highest mark for one year became the lowest mark for the next. Thus, under the new system, it wrongly appeared that Einstein failed many of his classes in earlier years.

Myth no.3

It is also thought that Einstein failed his college exams. Although it is true that he failed the entrance exam for the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, this doesn't

quite tell the whole story. While education at the Institute started at 18, Einstein was only 16 when he sat the exam. The myth doesn't mention the fact that he failed only because of poor marks in subjects such as French and biology; his maths and physics scores were excellent.

Myth no.4

It is often believed that geniuses never make mistakes. In fact, Einstein made a great many. His greatest mistake (according to Einstein himself, at least) was accepting that the universe was fixed rather than expanding. However, though the theory was incorrect, scientists today believe that its mathematics could actually be used to explain other theories about the universe.

Myth no.5

This last myth has some truth to it: Einstein had an unusual personality. According to many reports, he had several strange habits. Among other things, he liked to go sailing when there was no wind because he found it more interesting, and he refused to wear socks.

With or without the myths, Einstein is generally considered one of the most important scientists in modern history. Aside from his work in physics, he also used his fame to make a difference outside of the scientific community. He offered money to the war effort - most famously, around \$6 million from the sale of a handwritten copy of his notes on relativity (an incredible amount in 1944, which showed just how popular he was with the public at the time) - and spoke out in support of equal rights.

- 1 What does the writer say about Einstein's death?**
 - A. It finally made people appreciate him as a scientist.
 - B. It was an event which affected many people.
 - C. Many reports of his death were not true.
 - D. The cause of his death was unknown.

- 2 Why is it often believed that Einstein was awarded a Nobel Prize for his theory of relativity?**
 - A. Nowadays this theory is considered to be Einstein's most important work.
 - B. It was the only theory he had tested at the time.
 - C. The theory was published in the same year as the Nobel Prize.
 - D. Einstein had found more proof to support relativity than his other theories.

- 3 What is usually accepted as the reason for the myth that Einstein was not good at mathematics?**
 - A. He once got the lowest possible mark for maths.
 - B. He didn't start to study maths until he was 12.
 - C. He changed schools many times.
 - D. His school's marking system changed.

- 4 According to the text, why did Einstein fail his college entrance exam?**
 - A. He was weak in some subjects.
 - B. He failed because of his age.
 - C. The exam was written in French.
 - D. He had not yet learnt advanced maths.

- 5 Which of the following is true of Einstein's mistake about the expansion of the universe?**
 - A. Scientists nowadays have proved that his theory was correct after all.
 - B. Although the main theory was wrong, the mathematics is still useful.
 - C. Einstein never admitted that he had made a mistake.
 - D. The theory was correct, but Einstein made a mistake in the mathematics.

- 6 Why does the writer mention how much one of Einstein's handwritten manuscripts was sold for?**
 - A. to show how popular Einstein was
 - B. to prove that he supported the anti-war effort
 - C. to show how the value of money has changed since those days
 - D. to prove that Einstein didn't really care about money