

Human evolution is often spoken of in grand terms, a march from the plains of Africa to the complexities of modern civilization. Yet, as I sit with this thought, it occurs to me that each second, each fleeting moment of our existence, is woven into the areas of history. We, the so-called “evolved” beings, live in a world our ancestors could scarcely dream of—luxuries turned necessities, buses and cell phones becoming staples of daily life. And yet, amid this whirlwind of progress, there is one curious relic that seems immune to evolution: the education system.

Think about it—generation after generation, from fathers to sons, have navigated the same structured path. Eight to four, school bell to school bell, timed exams marking the rhythm of our youth. But what is the true purpose of these time-bound races? Are we teaching students to think or merely training them to run? When I reflect on it, I wonder how many runners have stumbled, broken under the pressure, their dreams trampled in the rush to finish first. How many have been pushed to believe that if they cannot meet the arbitrary demands of time, they are somehow unworthy of success?

The more I ponder this, the more the school system begins to resemble a trap rather than a tool for growth. We are told it prepares us for the future, but does it? Does scribbling a perfect answer within a tight frame of minutes prove mastery of a subject, or does it simply reveal how quickly we can recall and regurgitate information?

Consider this: hand a science student a power circuit on paper and ask them to construct it in real life. How many, after years of timed exams, could truly build it from scratch? The exams we take may not even test what we think they do. Are we assessing knowledge, or are we assessing speed? Is there real understanding, or just a performance under pressure?

And then there’s the deeper question: could we even create a system without time limits? Would untimed assessments be more fair, or would they simply become another kind of burden? Can a student truly reflect their understanding without any boundary to their test? Or would they drown in the weight of endless time, losing focus, energy, and purpose?

These questions swirl around in my mind, each thought pulling me in a different direction. And maybe that’s the nature of being human—never fully satisfied with one answer, always pulled between conflicting ideas. Perhaps there is no universal solution. But what if, instead of imposing a one-size-fits-all method, we adapted the system to the subject? Timed exams might be perfect for general knowledge, where quick recall is key. But for subjects like chemistry, biology, or complex mathematics, would it not make more sense to assess true comprehension, allowing time for deep thinking rather than hasty scribbling?

In the end, isn’t education supposed to help us grow, not simply perform? Isn’t it meant to teach us how to think, not how to run a race we never asked to be part of? The more I dwell on these questions, the more I find myself searching for an answer that lies beyond the limits of time.