

Create a Test

Contact: www.createatest.co.uk | Reviewed by: John Dabell

Since time began teachers have always made their own tests. DIY makes sense, because you can normally craft something with more personalisation and that fits what you are teaching. However, the downside is that it is time-consuming, both in terms of setting the questions and formatting. And ultimately, while your home-grown test might be top-notch in terms of content, your presentation can easily let you – and therefore, your students – down.

However, I have some good news, because I have stumbled across an assessment package that makes homespun testing professional, perceptive and purposeful. It's called Create a Test and it enables you to build classy-looking maths and physics test papers in moments.

Accessing the site for the first time – with maths in mind – I was impressed at just how fast the process is. The software at work is whizzy and enables you to make unit tests, topic tests, end of term tests, mock exams and more with a real polished look to them. You can even include answers and working out sheets. And not everything has to come from you, either, as the site is packed with 12,000 questions of its own that you can use. All KS3/GCSE questions come with completed mark schemes which are exam board style documents that can also be given to students so they can see where their marks were gained or lost. All the questions are categorised into a syllabus structure which means easier tracking of pupil progress.

Personal touches

You probably have loads of resources on hand to support assessment – but ultimately, tests that others have created are rarely specific enough, quickly become outdated, and cannot be expected to address the needs of individual classes, let alone students. This is where Create a Test steps in; personalised testing really does make sense, because it zooms in on strengths and weaknesses and so drives progress. With this package, you can build papers customised to your scheme of work and pupils – and there is even the option to include multiple instances of a question with the same format, but different

outcomes; which is a real innovation, and key to a mastery approach. If there is a question you want that isn't there, then you have the power to create it and include it.

Logging into Create a Test takes you to a satisfyingly simple page that is modern looking and uncluttered, with a down to business feel about it. There are four sub-menus containing everything you need to get cracking: create, manage, assess and learn. Whilst it is tempting to dive straight in and start making tests of your own, you know the drill: always read the user manual first. The 'manual' in this case is actually a collection of 13 tutorials, each of which offers just a few minutes of instruction that tell you just what to do and where to click. These are without a doubt incredibly useful because although you could certainly create a test in a few seconds, Create a Test is far more sophisticated than that, and it would be a shame to waste its potential.

The tutorials cover how to create a blank paper from scratch, making a target paper, advice for marking, question building, equation creation, altering and editing pre-existing questions, refreshing paper questions, editing appearances of tests, exporting tests as worksheets, adding new teachers and more. Although Create a Test genuinely is intuitive with in-built expertise, the tutorials are a must if you want to get the most out of the system.

More for your money

It is worth pointing out that although Create a Test is feature laden, the level of this depends on which account option you go for. One is free; the other involves a licence that costs between £150 and £350 a year. The free version is fine in itself but has limited access, so I think it's worth paying the extra and going premium. When you do, you get the option to create unlimited questions and papers, up to 50 questions per paper, and unlimited access to assessment features and previously created papers, as well as a quick test creation wizard. You also get access to a community of users in 50 countries so you can share papers and questions.



For me the key strength of Create a Test is the personalisation: you can add images, tables, equations and plant your students' names into tests for a nice added touch. Not only that, you can choose what font you think is appropriate and alter its size, enabling you to more easily meet the needs of students with issues related to reading text.

Assessment is often the weakest link in the chain of teaching, learning and assessment because poor testing materials or unsuitably matched ones don't always tell teachers what their students can and can't do. Create a Test gives you control and makes testing a potent tool for making a difference because it mixes formative and summative together rather than treat them as diametrically opposed entities. Create a Test recognises that one feeds the other and that understanding this enables teachers how to plan next steps in learning.

Verdict

PASSES THE TEST

This clever system is instinctive, powerful, quick, professional and a real time-saver. Creating assessment resources has never been easier or more enjoyable; tests don't have to be pests if you make them work for you.