

LearnSmart Frequently Asked Questions

How is the grade calculated?

The grade is based on a projection of your estimated performance at the final deadline. This assumes that you continue working as you have been so far. LearnSmart analyses how quick you are to learn, how you forget, and how long time you spend in the system each day. The system knows about the typical learning relationship between the questions, and can thus estimate a probability that you know related areas - even if you were not asked about those so far.

How is the percentage calculated?

The percentage indicates how many of the questions in the module you have answered correctly. Since the questions are repeated when answered incorrectly, the percentage roughly indicates how much of the module you have learned so far.

How is the high-score calculated?

If you click "Easy", and answer the question correctly, you will get the most points. However, if you do not know the answer after clicking "Easy", your score will be deducted. If you click "Unsure", you will not be deducted even if you get the question wrong.

You can increase your score by going through the same module multiple times, always being as honest as possible when rating yourself. In essence, the more you learn, the better the score.

Why is the system repeating questions I have already answered?

If you answer a question incorrectly, it will be repeated later in the same session to give you a chance to learn. It might not be the exact same question, but a variant that represents the same learning objective. The system will adjust the difficulty of the questions according to your performance. In addition to this, the system will present the same questions the next day to help you remember the material over time.

The first day, you might see a Multiple Choice Quiz question about a concept, and the next day, a fill-in-the-blank for the same concept to make it more difficult. This will assess whether you really know the subject, or were just lucky the first day. It closely monitors which exact questions you have been exposed to before, and will intelligently vary this in an attempt to match and improve your knowledge level.

Why am I only working on part of a module each day?

Instead of asking you to go through, say, 300 questions in one go, LearnSmart spreads the items and the rehearsal of these over a period of time. Spreading the learning events over multiple sessions increases the likelihood of memory retention.

Why does it make me start all over on the module when I come back?

The module does seem to start over when logging in the next day, because research has shown that you have to repeat the same material multiple times separated by sleep to really learn it. So if you complete 100 cards the first day, then 25 of those will be repeated each of the next four days. In case you get all of these correct, around 7 will be repeated the next 14 days, and so on. The program will automatically calculate the best repeat interval for the individual student, based on your individual "forget curve" that it tracks in detail. You can use the "My Learning Plan" feature to see an estimate of how much work you need on each module every day until the deadline. This plan will also adjust in case you skip a day or two, or if you work ahead.

Why is it so strict about spelling?

If you make a small spelling mistake, the program will accept your answer as good enough. If you make a larger mistake, you will be prompted about the same topic again later, and thus get a chance to improve your score and improve your spelling. It might not be the exact same question you see again, but rest assured that the program will give you another chance to prove your competence.

Fill-in-the-blank questions are often the most difficult questions, because they rely on active recall, rather than recognition. Once you know the fill-in-the-blank questions, chances are that you are learning things for real.

Why do I need to click the "Easy", "Think I've got it" buttons?

The "Easy", "Think I've got it" buttons affect the high-score as described above. In addition, it also affects how the program will schedule the questions for you. It uses this information to find out whether you are consciously competent, or **unconsciously incompetent**. It will use this analysis to improve your learning path by adjusting which questions to present to you, as well as the difficulty of these.

The first step to improve your learning, is to know what you do not know. If you are as honest as possible when rating yourself, you will learn faster.

Why are there so many questions?

This program is not just a testing system, but a learning system. The modules cover almost all of the material in the book, so if you work your way through the modules, you will cover most of the material that you need to learn in the course. The system will at any time present you with the most important material first. So if you do not have time to complete the entire module, just work until you are out of time, and you can be sure to have been through the most important items.

When you come back later, the system will know what you have learned so far and what needs to be rehearsed again. Based on that, it will present you with the most important items at any point in time, which might be rehearsal of important items previously learned, or learning new items.

Why do I have to work on a module when the deadline for this module has passed?

The program will prompt you to keep rehearsing the same module to make sure that you do not forget what you have learned. This is based on research on how people forget things, and it will automatically adjust to your own "forget rate". Use the "My Learning Plan" feature to see how much time the system estimates you need to spend to remember what you have learned until the final deadline.

If you follow the schedule proposed by the system, the workload for rehearsal will be minimal.

Why has my grade decreased when I come back?

You forget some of the things you learn. The system estimates how much you have forgotten using your individual "forget curve". Therefore the grade can sometimes be lower when you come back.

It could also be that you are spending less time than you usually do, and therefore your estimated grade might also fall. To get the grade back up, just work through the modules as recommended under "My Learning Plan".

How do I change the deadline?

Click the date beneath the red grade icon, and set a new deadline. (Sometimes the coach will cover the date - in that case, just close the coach by clicking the X, and you can set the date.) The system will automatically recalculate the entire learning plan based on how long time you have left, as well as your knowledge so far. Click "My Learning Plan" to see the estimated amount of work you need to spend each day.

How can I change my name in the high-score?

Just click your name in the list, and you can change your name or become anonymous.

How do I read the learning plan?

The learning plan lists the number of learning items you need to work on each day in each module to become proficient, and not forget things you have already learned. The time needed each day is listed in the right hand column. This estimate is based on how much time you needed to learn things so far.

Should I continue to drill after my exam?

If you want to commit your new knowledge to long term memory, we recommend that you keep working the modules even after the deadline. You can optionally set a new fictitious deadline maybe 6 months in the future as a target. The system will continuously monitor what you know, and what you tend to forget. It will not prompt you to work on things you most likely remember, and thus the work-load will be minimal. This will be the optimal way to learn the content and make it stick.