

What's Your I.Q. on Graduations?



JUNE is the month of two important ceremonies: graduations and weddings. Taking first things first, here are some questions and answers on graduations. If you answer more than half correctly, you may go to the head of the class!

1. Why are the final school exercises called a commencement?

Because years ago the graduate received a testimonial permitting him to commence teaching or practicing his profession.

2. Why are diplomas referred to as sheepskins?

Because, before paper came into common use, all important documents were written either on sheepskin or calfskin.

3. What does the word salutatorian mean?

It means welcomer or greeter. The graduation salutatorian has the honor of making the welcoming address.

4. What does the word valedictorian mean?

It means "sayer of farewell." The valedictorian expresses the sentiments of his fellow graduates on leaving school.

5. Where does the use of caps and gowns come from?

Edwin R. Moore, a leading maker of academic gowns, has traced the custom to medieval England. At some English schools, students wear gowns every day.

6. What about the colors of these graduation costumes?

College graduates wear black; high-school and elementary-school graduates wear gray, blue or maroon, and Catholic and private schools usually wear white.

7. What is the standard-size diploma?

They average six by eight inches, but not so many years ago they measured 19 by 24.

8. Is it customary to frame a diploma?

Not any more. Of course, in some professions, the diploma is put on display because it is also a license to practice; but most are stored away as a memento.

9. Is it proper to applaud individual graduates as they get their diplomas?

This depends on the individual school. Many will ask you to wait until all the diplomas have been awarded, and applaud the entire class.

10. What is the meaning of the stiff, square cap worn by graduates?

Some believe the head covering was made to resemble the scholar's books. Others claim the "mortarboard" is patterned after the tool used by medieval master craftsmen.



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