

Myths and Truths about Gifted Learners

Myths	Truths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifted students are a homogeneous group – all high achievers. • Gifted students do not need any help. If they are really gifted, they can manage on their own. • Gifted students have fewer problems than others because their intelligence and abilities somehow exempt them from the hassles of life. • The future of a gifted student is assured: A world of opportunities lies before the students. • Gifted students are self-directed; they know where they are heading. • The social and emotional development of the gifted student is at the same level as his or her intellectual development. • Gifted students are nerds and social isolates. • The primary value of the gifted student lies in his or her brain power. • The gifted student's family always prizes his or her abilities. • Gifted students need to serve as examples to others and they should always assume extra responsibility. • Gifted students make everyone else smarter. • Gifted students can accomplish anything they put their minds to. All they have to do is apply themselves. • Gifted students are naturally creative and do not need encouragement. • Gifted children are easy to rear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifted students are often perfectionists and idealistic. They may equate achievement and grades with self-worth, which sometimes leads to fear of failure and interferes with achievement. • Gifted students may experience heightened sensitivity to their own expectations and those of others, resulting in guilt over achievements or grades perceived to be low. • Gifted students are asynchronous. Their chronological age, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development may all be at different levels. For example, a 5-year-old may be able to read and comprehend a third grade book, but may not be able to write legibly. • Some gifted children are sequential learners while others are spatial learners. Spatial learners may have no idea how they got to the right answer (they conclude by intuition). Sequential learners may get lost in the steps leading to the right answer. • Gifted students may be so far ahead of their chronological age mates that they know more than half the curriculum before the school year begins. Without proper programming, their boredom can result in low achievement and grades. • Gifted children are problem solvers. They benefit from working on open-ended, interdisciplinary problems; for example, how to solve a shortage of community resources. • Gifted students often think abstractly and with such complexity that they may need help with concrete study and test-taking skills. They may not be able to select one answer in a multiple choice question because they see how all the answers might be correct under certain circumstances. • Gifted students who do well in school may define success as getting an "A" and failure as any grade less than an "A." By early adolescence they may be unwilling to try anything where they are not certain of guaranteed success.

Myths and Truths adapted from *Planning for Gifted Students*, 2nd edition, by Sandra Berger.