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## **Are You Smarter Than a Third World Tenth Grader?**

*Free online challenge exam allows participants to test their knowledge against Indian tenth grade final exams*

**(ASPEN, Colo. – July 1, 2008)** Bob Compton, executive producer of the documentary film *Two Million Minutes*, announced today the release of the “**Third World Challenge**” powered by IndianMathOnline.

The Challenge is available to all who are interested, free of charge, and is based on the national tenth grade proficiency exams taken by students in India. It is now available on the *Two Million Minutes* website at [www.2mminutes.com](http://www.2mminutes.com) and at [www.indianmathonline.com](http://www.indianmathonline.com).

The **Third World Challenge** was developed as a result of the widespread American belief that the academic standards in the U.S. are higher than those in so-called developing countries, such as India and China. An advocate of the need for educational improvement in the U.S., Compton felt individuals should see for themselves how they compare to a global standard of education. “I personally do not consider India or China to be ‘Third World’ countries, because I have been to both countries and have business interests in each,” said Compton. “However, when a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education commented that America has nothing to learn from ‘Third World’ education systems, I just had to create this Challenge.”

Referred to in India as the “ICSE Standard X Exams,” this assessment is taken over several days, testing the students’ proficiency in seven subjects. Four exams are compulsory: English literature and grammar, Hindi or Sanskrit, a combined exam on world history, civics, and geography, and environmental education. Two exams out of nine possible choices are in the area of math, science (chemistry, biology, physics), economics, computer science, agricultural science, etc. Most students aiming for top-tier colleges typically take math and science.

Finally, the student must select one exam of a dozen subject exams ranging from computer applications to performing arts to fashion design to yoga. “To be crystal clear, not every high school offers classes for every subject. With 50% of urban Indian students attending private for-profit schools, there is competition among schools to offer the curricula Indian parents seek – and most Indian parents want rigorous English, math, and science curricula because that gives their child the best shot at a great college,” said Compton.

“There’s a global standard of education out there, and American students are falling further behind that standard every year. That’s dangerous for both the student and for America because the new industries and the best jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are going to go to the best educated,” said Compton. “So I decided to bring a sample of the ‘global education standards’ to Americans, providing them the opportunity to see first-hand how a “Third World” country measures its students’ academic achievement.”

In most high schools in India, a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student can pass on to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade if he or she has proficiency in at least five of the seven subjects on the Standard X Exams. However, the country’s most highly regarded high schools require complete proficiency in all seven subjects before they push on to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Most of the exams require writing expository or explanatory essays with very few multiple-choice questions. The Standard X Exam is a pivotal point in students’ lives and is largely indicative of what careers they’ll ultimately be able to pursue. When college graduates in India are interviewing for jobs, they’re often asked to provide their scores on these exams.

“Only a few short years after the completion of 10<sup>th</sup> grade, American students will be competing for jobs with students from all over the globe,” stated Compton. “It seems only reasonable that in a country as advanced as the United States, our students should be competitive at the 10th grade level with students in the developing world.”

The ***Third World Challenge*** is powered by Indian Math Online, which is an online math assessment, learning and practice system centered on the student and monitored by the parent. It is based on Indian national math standards and permits the student to accelerate his or her learning or do remedial work while allowing parents to monitor their child’s progress and quickly identify areas of weakness.

“The Third World Challenge we are offering is a sampling of the actual Standard X Exams which everyone in India, including myself, had to take as a 10<sup>th</sup> grader,” stated Suresh Murthy, president of Indian Math Online. “It’s about the equivalent of America’s SAT test, only longer with more subjects and in-depth questions and with few multiple choice questions.”

The ***Third World Challenge*** offered on the site was made entirely multiple choice so it is simpler to grade and is more objective for Americans. Sanskrit and Hindi are also excluded from the US version.

Please visit [www.2mminutes.com](http://www.2mminutes.com) or [www.indianmathonline.com](http://www.indianmathonline.com) to take the Challenge. Good luck!

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**About Two Million Minutes**

Titled *Two Million Minutes*, this documentary film takes an in-depth look at secondary education in the United States as compared with India and China and examines the implications this may have on the U.S. position in the global economy during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Two Million Minutes* is currently screening across the country. For more information, please visit [www.2mminutes.com](http://www.2mminutes.com).

#### **About IndianMathOnline**

Indian Math Online is a web-based learning system developed with the principles of mathematics as practiced throughout the Indian education system. These principles include: Start Early, Test Frequently, Practice Continuously, Build Steadily, Involve Parents Actively. By following these steps, children in grades K-12 will learn mathematics in a way that is challenging and proven. Assess, Learn, Practice, and then, Assess again - all based on a solid, stable math standard. That is our simple process for ensuring that children become proficient in the most important language of the 21st century - MATHEMATICS! Please visit [www.indianmathonline.com](http://www.indianmathonline.com) for more information.