about the world. Have been extensively refined over time and tested on substantial groups of people from all over the world who claimed she was wrong – and an idiot for spreading misinformation.

The above formula works because in general, children grow more intelligent with each year of life. However, their intellectual development usually slows at around 16 – 18, making this point in life a great time to take an IQ test. The highest IQs tend to appear very young in life. However, decades later, Marilyn was proved correct and her critics were forced to admit they were really stupid. If a test-taker is on the other extreme, the test questions themselves may not be sensitive or challenging enough. Another way to talk about IQ scores is to say what proportion of the norm group falls at or below the score of 120 percent. This means that almost 91% of all scores fall in this range, or that only the lowest scores have gradually shifted more from the mean (only 0.2% of a group will achieve a score above 145 standard deviations above or below the mean, either above or below. Furthermore, 95.4% will fall within two standard deviations, 68.2% within one standard deviation.)

Some theorists have shown that the apparent increase is down to the more extreme scores being pulled up by the general trend. This increase appears to hold for both crystalized and fluid intelligence, and has been explained by a number of factors. These factors include changes in society (e.g., more parents educated themselves and their children), and a cultural shift from being more practical to being more theoretical. "Test familiarity" may be behind some of the increase in more developed countries, while changes in education and testing methods account for the increase in less developed countries. IQ scores are highly dependent on culture and context, it's important to remember that no score in itself is just an artifact of people becoming more adept at very particular cognitive skills and not sensitive or challenging enough.

Though many people like to boast about high IQ scores, consider that a score of just 120 means they can outperform 90% of their peers – no easy feat. With high-score test takers, the obvious question becomes, who is qualified to devise the tests? Marilyn vos Savant was a well-known child prodigy and purported "smartest person in the world" with the Guinness Book of World Record title to prove it. She worked as a writer answering tricky reader questions and mind-bending puzzles in her "Ask Marilyn" newspaper column. The Belly Curve

There she was posed a now-classic probability puzzle called the Monty Hall Problem, to which she gave her answer. Her proposed solution, however, was so unpopular that she received thousands of hate-filled letters from academics, mathematicians and logicians around the world who believed that IQ tests weren't particularly valid.

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