EDUCATION IN BRITAIN

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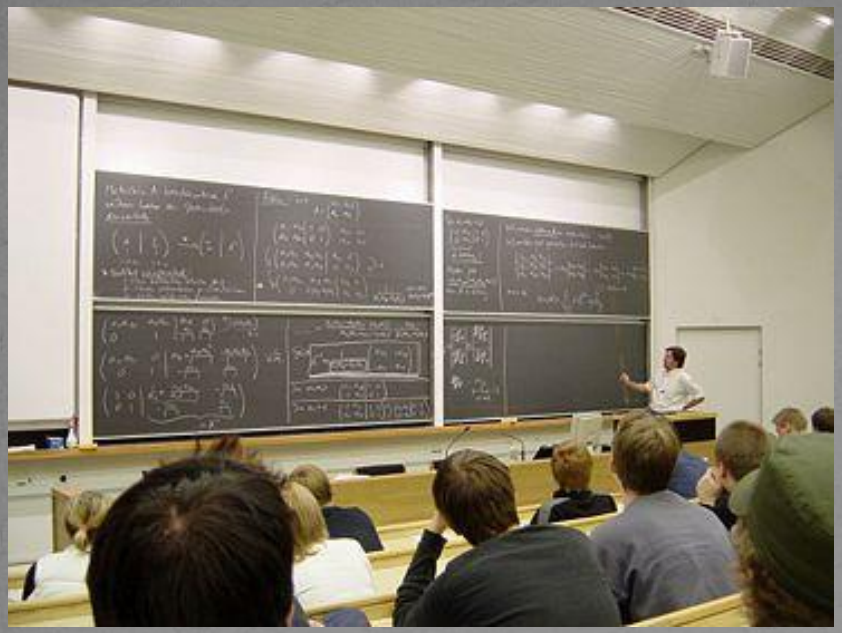


TOPIC PREVIEW.

WARM–UP QUESTIONS

1. When you went to school, did you like studying? What were your favourite subjects?

2. Have you ever had any problems at school?

3. Did your parents help you in your studies?

4. Many people think that the Russian system of education is the best one. Do you support this idea?

PART I. LISTENIING.

1. Click on the icon below and listen to the text "Schooling" by Vivien.

2. In your notebooks write T (true) or F (false) for each sentence:

1. Vivien went to a nursery school before she went to a real school.
2. When Vivien went to school at the age of five, she had quite an advantage over the other children.
3. Then Vivien went to grammar school that was an all-girls' school run by two old women, Miss and Ms McNamara.
4. At twelve Vivien took an exam called the eleven plus.
5. After a primary school Vivien went to a grammar school.
6. The students in the USA are respectful to teachers.
7. Vivien went to Leeds University because it had a very good Spanish department.
8. Vivien was given a grant at the University.
9. Vivien liked being in Leeds, because things were much cheaper.
10. Vivien doesn't think that exams can fairly represent however much you have learnt in three years.

PART II. READING COMPREHENSION .

1. Read the text "Schooling" by Vivien

2. In your notebooks write the answers to the following questions:

1. What was grammar school good for?
2. What are "O"- and "A" - level exams?
3. What is the difference between teachers in Hungary and in England?
4. Why did Vivien decide to go to the Leeds University?
5. What is the difference between being at university and being at school?
6. Compare educational systems in Russia and England. Which one do you prefer most? Why?

Schooling (by Vivien)

School in England usually starts at the age of five, but some children go to nursery school before that. I went to one for three days, when I was three, but I got really bored there and told my mum that I didn't want to go, so before I went, to a real school she taught me at home. Some people send their children to a crèche, where they're looked after during the day while their parents are out at work, but she got some books and taught me how to read and write, so when I went to school at the age of five, I had quite an advantage over the other children.

Anyway, my schooling really started when I was five, and from the age of five until I was nine, I went to a private school, which is quite unusual in England. It was an all-girls' school run by two old women, Miss and Ms McNamara. The standard was generally very high, and there were subjects like French, Math and English Literature. I also took subjects like Ballet and Elocution, where we learnt how to speak correctly and we had to memorize and recite poems.

Then my parents moved and I went to a village school in the countryside. This was a primary school which children usually go to from the ages of five to eleven. And then, at eleven we took an exam called the eleven plus. If we passed that we could go to grammar school, and if we failed we had to go to secondary school, which wasn't usually of such good quality. I think the system's changed a bit now. Fortunately, I passed my eleven plus. There were all kinds of general knowledge questions and things that, basically, you can work out if you've got any common sense.

Then I went to a grammar school. This was an all-girls' school as well, and it was called "Bishop Foxes". There was also an equivalent, all-boys' grammar school on the other side of town. So they kept us apart. That was also quite a good school. It was good for languages. So from the age of eleven until say sixteen when we took our "0" levels, which were "Ordinary" level exams, we studied about, maybe, nine subjects. First of all we had English Language and English Literature, History, Geography, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Art, and then other subjects like Cooking (they called it Domestic Science) and Technology (just woodwork, in fact) which wasn't very popular, it being an all-girls' school. There was also French, and then another language - I studied Russian. You could choose from Russian, Spanish, Latin, or German.

My favourite teacher was in fact my Russian teacher. She was a French teacher who was married to a very old Russian émigré. I was the only one studying Russian, so everyone used to call me "Vivien the communist", but it was good because it meant I had private classes. However, this made it more demanding because I always had to do my homework and there was no excuse.

I had some other very good teachers, but I've noticed that teachers are really different in Hungary. In England they're not nearly as tactile, or affectionate with the students. They're very formal and quite strict. When I was sixteen, we went on an exchange trip to the States for a month. We went to a high school in Massachusetts, and it was interesting. In fact, it was quite an eye-opener. It was quite amazing for me really, as there were signs all around saying things like "No guns" and "No drugs", and it was quite violent. Also, I noticed that the students didn't have any respect for the teachers and would just shout at them, and coming from a strict school that was quite a shock. They would shout back at the teachers, call them names and hurl abuse at them, and they rarely listened to anything the teacher said. They weren't very interested in learning.

So, at the age of sixteen we took "0" level exams, and then some people left after that. That was one option, or we could go on to a technical college or "Tech", and maybe study some kind of vocational subject like nursing, or some kind of technical or computer studies, or we could stay on for another two years, as I did, and take "A" levels, which are Advanced level exams. I took "A" levels in English Literature, Russian and Spanish, which, in retrospect, wasn't a very good idea, because I had to read so many books. I had to sit and read Tolstoy, Dickens and Cervantes.

At the age of about eighteen, in August, everybody in my year was waiting for their "A" level results to see if they got high enough grades to go on to university. We had to apply for five universities, which we put on a list, with the best one at the top. If you want to go to Oxford or Cambridge, of course, you have to put that as number one, and then it goes down, so Oxford and Cambridge would have to be first, and then maybe Bristol, Manchester, Leeds and the rest. The Scottish universities are very good. The universities require a certain grade - 'A' to 'C' are passes. 'A' is the best, followed by 'B', then 'C'. Usually, they ask for three 'C's or above. I passed, fortunately, and I went to Leeds University, which was my first choice because it had a very good Russian department, and I studied Russian and Spanish. University usually lasts for three or four years. We were lucky, as when I was at university we were given a grant, or a lump sum of money to live on, and we didn't have to pay it back. The amount you got was graded according to your parents' income. So, if your parents didn't have very much money you got a full grant, which was not a lot of money, but you could live on it. So you could pay your rent, get food and go out quite a lot, as well as buy your books. Going to live in Leeds in the North was better, because things were much cheaper than, say, if I had been in London, where I imagine it's very difficult for a student to survive, especially these days.

At university, it's quite different from being at school because you have to rely on your own motivation. I know a lot of people who just didn't go to any of their classes because they weren't compulsory.

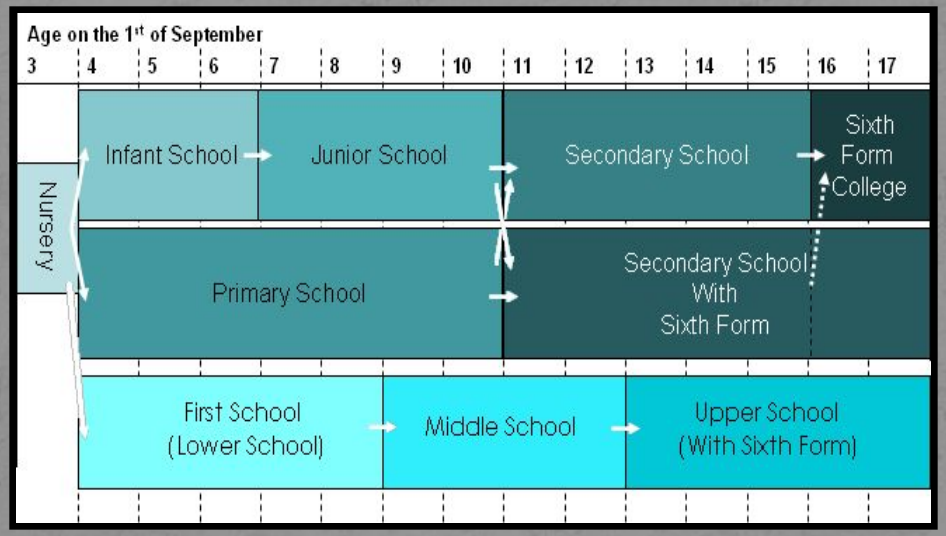
It was three years of enjoying yourself, basically, studying what you wanted to study, being away from home for the first time, and having some money and being able to go out to parties and concerts. For the first year, I lived in a hall of residence, which was a bit like being in a boarding school. There were lots of eighteen-year olds away from home for the first time, and of course they couldn't cook, and they weren't used to doing their own washing or looking after themselves. It kind of eased you into living on your own. So this was good, because we had to learn to look after ourselves, cooking and cleaning, and at the same time finding time to study for our finals. Final exams at university were based on the whole three years' studies, so there was a lot to learn and it was quite stressful in July when exam time came round. Some people think that this is not a good idea, and that maybe it would be better if there was some sort of system of continuous assessment, because there are a lot of people who do very well all year, and work very hard, but when it comes to doing exams they just go crazy with stress and can't remember anything when it comes to the three hour exam you have to do. So, I would be more in favour of that because I don't think three hours can fairly represent however much you have learnt in three years.

PART III. SCHOOL EDUCATION. VOCABULARY PREVIEW.

1. These are some words and phrases you will come across in the text. Translate the list, look up the unknown words in a dictionary.

Types of schools

nursery schools
infant schools
primary schools
junior schools
independent schools
voluntary schools
secondary school
comprehensive schools
grammar and secondary modern schools
special schools
boarding schools
state schools
private schools
technical schools



Other terms

benefit
maintenance
recruitment of the staff
state school system
administrative functions
curriculum
handicapped children
academic attainment
supervise
applicant
core subjects
compulsory education
vocational training

Abbreviations

The Department of Education and Science (DES)
local education authorities (LEAs)
the General Certificate of Secondary Education

PART III. SCHOOL EDUCATION.
READING COMPREHENSION.

1. Read the text The School Education.
2. In your notebooks fulfill the following exercises:

I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. It (DES) is responsible for the maintenance of minimum national …… of education.
2. In 1988, however, the …… was introduced, which means that there is now greater government control over what is taught in schools.
3. But many believe that these tests are unfair because they reflect differences in …… rather than in ability.
4. Boards of governors are responsible for their school's main policies, including the ……., of the staff.
5. The word "comprehensive" expresses the idea that the schools in question take all the children in a given area, without …… .
6. There are special schools adapted for the physically and mentally …… children.
7. All independent schools have to register with the Department of Education and Science and are …… to inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, which is absolutely independent.
8. Around 550 most privileged and expensive independent schools are commonly known as…… schools.

II. Complete the sentences with the best answer (a, b or c).

1. In exercising its functions the DES is assisted by

a) the LEAs.
b) the chief Education Officers.
c) Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

2. The new curriculum places greater emphasis on the more

a) theoretical aspects of education.
b) practical aspects of education.
c) advanced skills teaching.

The School Education

The aim of education in general is to develop to the full the talents of both children and adults for their own **benefit** and that of society as a whole. It is a largescale investment in the future.

The educational system of Great Britain has developed for over a hundred years. It is a complicated system with wide variations between one part of the country and another. Three partners are responsible for the education service: central government — **the Department of Education and Science (DES)**, **local education authorities (LEAs)**, and schools themselves. The legal basis for this partnership is supplied by the 1944 Education Act.

The Department of Education and Science is concerned with the formation of national policies for education. It is responsible for the **maintenance** of minimum national standard of education. In exercising its functions the DES is assisted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate. The primary functions of the Inspectors are to give professional advice to the Department, local education authorities, schools and colleges, and discuss day-to-day problems with them.

Local education authorities are charged with the provision and day-to-day running of the schools and colleges in their areas and the recruitment and payment of the teachers who work in them. They are responsible for the provision of buildings, materials and equipment. However, the choice of textbooks and timetable are usually left to the headmaster. The content and method of teaching is decided by the individual teacher.

The **administrative functions** of education in each area are in the hands of a Chief Education Officer who is assisted by a deputy and other education officials.

Until recently planning and organization were not controlled by central government. Each LEA was free to decide how to organize education in its own area. In 1988, however, the National **Curriculum** was introduced, which means that there is now greater government control over what: is taught in schools. The aim was to provide a more balanced education. The new curriculum places greater emphasis on the more practical aspects of education. Skills are being taught which pupils will need for life and work.

The chief elements of the National Curriculum include a broad and balanced framework of study which emphasizes the practical applications of knowledge. It is based around the **core subjects** of English mathematics and science (biology, chemistry, etc.) as well as a number of other foundation subjects, including geography, history, technology and modern languages.

The education reform of 1988 also gave all **secondary** as well as larger **primary schools** responsibility for managing the major part of their budgets, including costs of staff. Schools received the right to withdraw from local education authority control if they wished.

Together with the National Curriculum, a programme of Records of Achievements was introduced. This programme contains a system of new tests for pupils at the ages of 7, 11, 13 and 16.The aim of these tests is to discover any schools or areas which are not teaching to a high enough standard. But many believe that these tests are unfair because they reflect differences in home background rather than in ability.

The great majority of children (about 9 million) attend Britain's 30,500 **state schools**. No tuition fees are payable in any of them. A further 600,000 go to 2,500 **private schools**, often referred to as the "independent sector" where the parents have to pay for their children.

In most primary and secondary state schools boys and girls are taught together. Most **independent schools** for younger children are also mixed, while the majority of private secondary schools are single-sex.

State schools are almost all day schools, holding classes between Mondays and Fridays. The school year normally begins in early September and continues into the following July. The year is divided into three terms of about 13 weeks each.

Two-thirds of state schools are wholly owned and maintained by LEAs. The remainder are voluntary schools, mostly belonging to the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church. They are also financed by LEAs.

Every state school has its own governing body (a board of governors), consisting of teachers, parents, local politicians, businessmen and members of the local community. Boards of governors are responsible for their school's main policies, including the **recruitment of the staff**.

A great role is played by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Practically all parents are automatically members of the PTA and are invited to take part in its many activities. Parental involvement through the PTA and other links between parents and schools is growing. The PTA forms both a social focus for parents and much valued additional resources for the school. Schools place great value on the PTA as a further means of listening to parents and developing the partnership between home and school. A Parent's Charter published by the Government in 1991 is designed to enable parents to take more informed decisions about their children's education.

Compulsory education begins at the age of 5 in England, Wales and Scotland, and 4 in Northern Ireland. All pupils must stay at school until the age of 16.About 9 per cent of pupils in state schools remain at school voluntarily until the age of 18.

Education within the state school system comprises either two tiers (stages) —primary and secondary, or three tiers —first schools, middle schools and upper schools.

Nearly all state secondary schools arc comprehensive, they embrace pupils from 11 to 18.The word “comprehensive” expresses the idea that the schools in question take all the children in a given area, without selection.

NURSERY EDUCATION. Education for the under-fives, mainly from 3 to 5, is not compulsory and can be provided in **nursery schools** and nursery classes attached to primary schools. Although they are called schools, they give little formal education. The children spend most of their time in some sort of play activity, as far as possible of an educational kind. In any case, there are not enough of them to take all children of that age group. A large proportion of children at this beginning stage is in the private sector where fees are payable. Many children attend pre-school playgroups, mostly organized by parents, where children can go for a morning or afternoon a couple of times a week.

PRIMARY EDUCATION. The primary school usually takes children from 5 to 11. Over half of the primary schools take the complete age group from 5 to 11. The remaining schools take the pupils aged 5 to 7 — **infant schools**, and 8 to 11 — **junior schools**. However, some LEAs have introduced first school, taking children aged 5 to 8, 9 or 10. The first school is followed by the middle school which embraces children from 8 to 14. Next comes the upper school which keeps middle school leavers until the age of 18. This three-stage system (first, middle and upper) is becoming more and more popular in a growing number of areas. The usual age for transfer from primary to secondary school is 11.

SECONDARY EDUCATION. Secondary education is **compulsory** up to the age of 16, and pupils may stay on at school voluntarily until they are 18. Secondary schools are much larger than primary schools and most children (over 80 per cent) go to **comprehensive schools**.

There are three categories of comprehensive schools: 1) schools which take pupils from 11 to 18, 2) schools which embrace middle school leavers from 12, 13 or 14 to 18, and 3) schools which take the age group from 11 to 16.The pupils in the latter group, wishing to continue their education beyond the age of 16 (to be able to enter university) may transfer lo the sixth form of an 11-18 school, to a sixth-form college or to a tertiary college which provide complete courses of secondary education. The tertiary college offers also part-lime vocational courses. Comprehensive schools admit children of all abilities and provide a wide range of secondary education for all or most of the children in a district.

In some areas children moving from state primary to secondary education are still selected for certain types of school according to their current level of **academic attainment**. These are **grammar** and **secondary modern schools**, to which children are allowed at the age of 11 on the basis of their abilities. Grammar schools provide a mainly academic education for the 11 to 18 age group. Secondary modern schools offer a more general education with a practical bias up to the minimum school-leaving age of 16.

Some local education authorities run **technical schools** (11-18). They provide a general academic education, but place particular emphasis on technical subjects. However, as a result of comprehensive reorganization the number of grammar and secondary modern schools fell radically by, the beginning of the 1990s.

There are **special schools** adapted for the physically and mentally **handicapped children**. The compulsory period of schooling here is from 5 to 16. A number of handicapped pupils begin younger and stay on longer. Special schools and their classes are more generously staffed than ordinary schools and provide, where possible, physiotherapy, speech therapy and other forms of treatment. Special schools are normally maintained by state, but a large proportion of special **boarding schools** are private and fee-charging.

About 5 per cent of Britain's children attend independent or private schools outside the free state sector. Some parents choose to pay for private education in spite of the existence of free state education.

These schools charge between £300 a term for day nursery pupils and £3,500 a term for senior boarding-school pupils.

All independent schools have to register with the Department of Education and Science and are subject to inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, which is absolutely independent. About 2,300 private schools provide primary and secondary education.

Around 550 most privileged and expensive independent schools are commonly known as public schools.

The principal examinations taken by secondary school pupils at the age of 16 are those leading to **the General Certificate of Secondary Education** (GCSE). It aims to assess pupils' ability to apply their knowledge to solving practical problems. It is the minimum school leaving age, the level which does not allow school-leavers to enter university but to start work or do some vocational training.

The chief examinations at the age of 18 are leading to the General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level). It enables sixth-formers to widen their subject areas and move to higher education. The systems of examinations and assessment are coordinated and **supervised** by the Secondary Examination Council.

Admission to universities is carried out by examination or selection (interviews). Applications for places in nearly all the universities are sent initially to the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS). In the application an **applicant** can list up to five universities or colleges in order of preference. Applications must be sent to the UCAS in the autumn term of the academic year preceding that in which the applicant hopes to be admitted. The UCAS sends a copy to each of the universities or colleges named. Each university selects its own students.

3. The practical application of knowledge is based around the core subjects of

a) mathematics and chemistry.

b) English, mathematics and science.

c) science.

4. Education for the under-fives, mainly from 3 to 5, is not compulsory and can be provided in

a) nursery classes.

b) nursery schools and nursery classes.

c) playgroups.

5. In some areas children moving from state primary to secondary education are still selected for certain types of schools:

a) grammar schools and secondary modern schools.

b) comprehensive schools.

c) secondary modern schools.

6. Admission to universities is carried out by

a) examination or selection.

b) interviews.

c) application.

III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.

1) The aim of education in general is to develop to the full the talents of both children and adults.
2) However, the choice of textbooks and timetable are usually left to local education authorities.
3) State schools are almost all day schools, holding classes between Mondays and Fridays.
4) The school year is divided into two terms of about 19 weeks each.
5) A Parent's Charter published by the Government in 1991 is designed to enable parents to take more informed decisions about their children's education.
6) Nearly all independent schools are comprehensive, they embrace pupils from 11 to 18.
7) Secondary modern schools offer a more general education with a practical bias up to the age of 18.
8) However, as a result of comprehensive reorganization the number of grammar and secondary modern schools fell radically by the beginning of the 1990s.

IV. Answer the questions.

1) What is the aim of education in general?
2) Examine the functions of the partners responsible for the education service in Great Britain.
3) What are the chief elements of the National Curriculum, introduced in 1988?
4) What is the aim of the Records of Achievements Programme, introduced together with the National Curriculum?
5) Describe the organization of school education referring to state schools and the "independent sector".
6) Examine the role of governing bodies (boards of governors) and the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) in school life.
7) What are the principal examinations taken by secondary school pupils at the age of 16 and 18?
8) How is admission to universities carried out?
9) Examine:
    a. the Nursery Education,
    b. the Primary Education,
    c. the Secondary Education.

3. Write an essay of approximately 250-300 words on one of the topics given below:

1) The significance of the education reform of 1988 in Britain.
2) What is your opinion of the abundance of various types of schools in primary and secondary education?
3) Is it reasonable to begin compulsory education at the age of 5?

PART IV. PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
READING COMPREHENSION.

1. Read the text "Public schools".

2. In your notebooks fulfill the following exercises:

I. Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. The gentlemen are not identical with the ..... although they include it.
2. In public schools which follow the inherited pattern, older boys known as ....., rule over their younger fellows.
3. Religion holds an important place in school life. But the teaching of the ..... , though still important, is no longer the chief education concern.
4. Most public schools were founded in ..... times, but many of them are several hundred years old.
5. The public schools are mostly ..... where the pupils live and study, though many of them also take some day-pupils.
6. So, the public schools tend to hand over social and economic power and privilege from one ..... to the next.
7. Less than one per cent of British children go to public schools, yet these schools have produced over the centuries many of Britain's most ..... people.
8. Eton, with its 700 pupils, is like the other public schools in many ways, but has its ....
9. About twenty Prime Ministers of Great Britain have passed through ..... .
10. Public schools have small ..... and high ..... .

Public Schools.

Although income and occupation are important elements, British class distinctions also depend heavily upon other considerations: education, tradition, behaviour, manner of living and even accent.

In the past, people have generally been divided into those who are "gentlemen" and those who are not. The gentlemen are not identical with the nobility although they include it.

The public school system is valued because it produces leaders, it is a separate system of education for the rich. The English gentleman in the conventional sense is mainly the product of his public school. Those who have been educated at one of the good public schools are set apart from those who have not. In such schools the traditional aim is to develop "gentlemen" who are disciplined, loyal and decent, who "play the game", bear pain and discomfort with a "stiff upper lip" and know how to use authority and how to get respect from those they rule. In public schools which follow the inherited pattern, older boys, known as prefects, rule over their younger fellows. Participation in sports is considered of great importance, though the emphasis on sports is not as great now as it used to be. Religion holds an important place in school life. But the teaching of the classics, though still important, is no longer the chief education concern.

The public school system has often been criticized for its lack of democracy and for its tendency to consider intellect less important than good sportsmanship and the acceptance of the traditional code of behaviour. But many Englishmen and many people in the English-speaking world admire the type of citizen which these schools produce.

Though limited in number (about 500) the public schools are the largest and most important of the independent (private) schools. They accept pupils at about 12 or 13 years of age usually on the basis of a strict selection. They are fee-paying and very expensive, their standards for entries are very high. Most of them are boys' boarding schools, although some are day schools and some are for girls. A few have even become coeducational. Most public schools were founded in Victorian times, but many of them are several hundred years old. The nine most ancient and aristocratic remain among the most important public schools: Eton (1440), Harrow (1571), Winchester (1382), Westminster (1560), St.Paul's (1509), Merchant Taylor's (1561), Rugby (1567), Charter House (1611) and Shrewsbury (1552).

The oldest of the public schools were founded to give free education to clever boys whose parents could not afford to educate them privately. They were under "public" management and control. Originally they depended mainly on grants by noble founders and wealthy donors. They were intended to put education within the reach of anyone intelligent enough to take advantage of it, whether their parents were rich or poor. Today these schools and similar ones founded within the past 150 years, are the most expensive of the indpendent schools in Britain and depend almost entirely on the fees paid by their pupils' parents. So, it is clear from this definition that public schools are now not public in the usual sense of the word.

The public schools are mostly boarding schools, where the pupils live and study. Though many of them also take some day-pupils. Most of them have a few places for pupils, whose fees are paid by a local authority, but normally entrance is by examination, and state schools (which are free) do not prepare children for this. So parents who wish to send their children to a public school often send them first to a preparatory (prep) school.

A preparatory school is an independent school for children aged 8 to 13, whom it prepares for the public schools. At 13 pupils take the Common Examination for Entrance to Public Schools, or simply Common Entrance exam (Common is used because the examination is set jointly by the main public schools and is common to all). Nearly all preparatory schools are for boys and many of them are boarding schools.

On the whole, the public school boys are sons of people who have a substantial social position, very good homes and the benefits of prosperity. So the public schools tend to hand over social and economic power and privilege from one generation to the next. For instance, two-thirds of Eton's pupils are sons of former Etonians. This makes it more than any other school a hereditary club for the rich and influential. However, it may be pointed out that many boys of public schools are the sons of men who were not themselves educated at public schools, or men who are by no means rich.

Less than one per cent of British children go to public schools, yet these schools have produced over the centuries Many of Britain's most distinguished people. So parents who can afford it still pay thousands of pounds to have their children educated at a public school.

The major public schools in the narrow sense are peculiar to Britain, and especially to the southern half of England, where most of them are situated. More than any other part of the educational system, they distinguished Britain from other countries. Although few parents send their children to them for religious reasons, these schools have their own chapels, where their chaplains or headmasters conduct services according to the prescriptions of the foundation. Some of them are Catholic, but most are Church of England.

Many public schools have had a profound influence on English social attitudes. By their nature and existence they have emphasized a sense of class division. Although less than 2 per cent of all men have been educated in such schools, these include most high court

judges, directors of banks and insurance companies and Conservative members of Parliament. Contacts made at school may open the way to good jobs.

One of these schools, Eton, is perhaps, better known by name outside its own country than any other school in the world It was founded by King Henry VI in 1440, across the Thames from Windsor Castle, About twenty Prime Ministers of Great Britain have passed through Eton. More than half of all peers who have inherited their titles are old Etonians. Eton, with its 700 pupils, is like the other public schools in many ways, but has its special customs. Boys still dress every day for class in morning suits.

Most public schools are in small towns or villages and have about 700 pupils. They have been much concerned to develop it) their pupils a strong sense of duty, obedience combined with ability to exercise authority and a habit of suppressing private feelings. Loyalty to group had been encouraged by the system under which a school would be divided into about ten "houses" (each having around 70 boys), with selected older boys as prefects (monitors). Until quite recently the prefects imposed a strict discipline, often with brutal punishments. Good sportsmen (rugby and football players) have great prestige and reputation. The system of the houses gives pupils more scope to follow their own interests and more privacy.

The schools have shown skills in adapting themselves to new values, with more attention to music and the arts as well as academic work as distinct from team games. Many of their teachers, who are mostly male and called "masters", stay at the same school all through their working lives, and do not count their hours of work. Public schools have small classes and high standards.

Some time ago it was claimed by Labour party supporters that the public schools would die a natural death. But in the 1980s most independent schools of all types, including public, had more applicants for admission than before. This was caused by the poor reputation of the state comprehensive schools, and by the huge growth in the incomes of the highly-paid people. Public schools were more firmly established than ever.

II. Complete the sentences with the best answer (a, b or c).

1. The public school system is valued because it produces leaders, it is a separate system of education for

a) the nobility
b) the rich
c) all who can pay

2. The English gentleman in the conventional sense is mainly the product of his

a) society
b) public school
c) university

3. Originally they (public schools) depended mainly on grants by

a) local authorities
b) noble founders and wealthy donors
c) universities

4. So parents who wish to send their children to a public school often send them first to

a) a primary school
b) a middle school
c) a preparatory school

5. On the whole, the public school boys are sons of people who have a substantial social position, very good homes and the benefits of

a) property

III. Are the statements true or false? Correct the false statements.

1. Although income and occupation are important elements, British class distinctions also depend heavily upon other considerations: education, tradition, behaviour, manner of living and even accent.
2. But many Englishmen and many people in the English-speaking world do not admire that type of citizen which these schools produce.
3. The oldest of the public schools were founded to give free education to clever, boys whose parents could not afford to educate them privately.
4. Nearly all preparatory schools are for boys and girls, and many of them are boarding-schools.
5. Nowadays the public schools are less obsessed by team-spirit and character-building, they are more concerned with examinations and universities, especially Oxford and Cambridge.
6. For instance, half of Eton's pupils are sons of former Etonians.
7. However, it may be pointed out that many boys at public schools arc the sons of men who were not themselves educated at public schools or men who are by no means rich.
8. Until quite recently the prefects imposed a strict discipline, often with light punishments.
9. Some time ago it was claimed by Labour party supporters that the public schools would die a natural death.
10. But in the 1980s most independent schools of all types, including public, had less applicants for admission than before.

IV. Answer the questions.

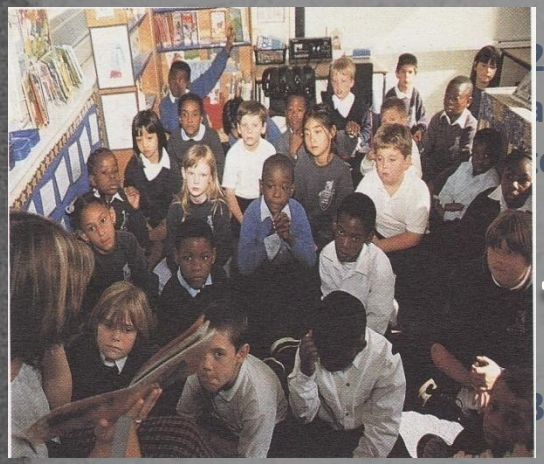
1. What is the public school system valued for?
2. Why has the public school been often criticized?
3. When were public schools founded and why were they called "public"?
4. Who can afford to study at public schools?
5. What is the aim of the preparatory school?
6. "The major public schools in the narrow sense are peculiar to Britain". E
7. Why is Eton better known by name outside its own country than any other school in the world?
8. Describe the major functions of the prefects at public schools.

PART V. EXTENSION.

1. a) Click on the icon and listen to the text "An Interview with Mavis Grant".

   b) In your notebooks answer the following questions:

1. Why is it so hard to run a school in what is known as a difficult area?
2. How do these problems affect the teaching?
3. What is the "Ticket to Learn" bus?
4. What should the government do to help?



2. Read the text "The Great Educational Debate". In your notebooks write a short summary of what you have read including your personal attitude to the problems discussed.

TRANSLATOR'S CORNER

3. Click here. Translate sentences from Russian into English.

The Great Educational Debate

If you ask almost any teacher in Britain what he or she thinks of the situation in our schools today, you will receive everything from torrents of articulate anger to frenzied cries by those who think they are going crazy! Ask parents and you will find they are confused and often distressed. Ask the Government, and you will be faced with proposals, commissions, investigations and endless alterations to a mass of rules and regulations. Ask statisticians, and you will discover that more children are leaving school with better qualifications than ever before. Ask the children, and naturally you will hear contradictory verdicts.

Our education is in a state of crisis. The reasons are extremely interesting, and if explained fully would reveal to you much about the workings of our society and the conflicting philosophies on which it is based. In a short chapter, I can only outline a few of the issues. In no way is this a comprehensive account.

Russian textbooks on English education still tend to examine the arguments about grammar-and-secondary-modern schools versus comprehensive schools. This was the great educational debate of the nineteen sixties. Today the issues are different. My description is of the present system in England and Wales — arrangements in Scotland are not quite the same, and there are variations in Northern Ireland. In all parts of the United Kingdom, although laws govern the ages at which our children must attend school, and the hours that they must work during the year, the organisation of education is the responsibility of each local authority (elected council controlling a certain area). Therefore there are many variations of detail from one authority to the next.

The present government would like the system to be more centralised, as it is in France or, indeed, was in the Soviet Union. Since, in practice, education is paid for by the state (from our taxes) with only a small proportion of the costs paid from local taxes, the government argues that it should have more control over what happens in schools. Local authorities argue that they understand local conditions better, and that they are more directly responsible to the parents of the children they educate. One educational consequence of this quarrel is that the government passed laws to ensure that all children spent a high proportion of their time on a group of "core subjects" — English, mathematics, science, and, in the secondary schools, a foreign language. Nobody doubts that these are very important subjects; problems arise when teachers or local authorities argue that other subjects should be given more time because they also are important. How do you squeeze into a timetable not only the core subjects but also history and geography, other sciences (a choice of physics, biology, chemistry, instead of a general science course), art, another foreign language, music, practical subjects like woodwork and needlework, maybe Latin, even Greek, P.E. (physical education), religious studies,

courses for personal development — and what about economics, politics, commercial subjects...? The list can continue for a long time if we count all the different kinds of courses offered in normal comprehensive schools across the country. Not all courses exist in all schools; but local authorities argue for variety, central government is concerned that all children should have a proper basic education.

Arguments about what should be studied in the schools are closely related to the structure of the schools, and also the relationship between state and private schools. In England, about 93% of children attend state schools. The other 7% attend “private” schools, sometimes called “independent” schools. A minority of these private schools are boarding schools where children live as well as study. In fact, probably less than 3% of children are “boarders”. Private schools are very expensive, whether they are day schools or boarding schools, so the pupils at them are the children of our privileged elites. But many parents who could afford to send their children at least to a day school actively choose not to do so. The vast majority of children, including those from professional and business homes, attend state schools.

All children are required by law to attend school full-time, between the ages of 5 and 16. For younger children there are a few state kindergartens, some private kindergartens and a few “nursery classes” in ordinary schools. About half our four-year-olds have a few hours of education a week, but for under-fours very little is provided.

A typical school day starts at about 9 a.m. with three hours of lessons (divided by short breaks) in the morning, followed by a “dinner hour” at which cheap meals are provided, and then two more hours of lessons in the afternoon. So school finishes around 3.30 or 3.45. For younger children the day is shorter. We have no school on Saturday or Sunday. Instead of one very long holiday in the summer with very short breaks at other times, our children have three 'terms' in a year, with about $2^1/_2$ weeks of holiday at Christmas/New Year, 2 at Easter and 6 or 7 weeks in the summer. In addition are short mid-term breaks of a few days.

For the first two years of schooling (5-6) children are expected to learn to read and write, to do simple sums, to learn basic practical and social skills, and to find out as much as they can about the world through stories, drama, music, crafts and through physical exercise. From 7 to about 11 or 12, children are at a school where the class teacher is still a central figure for them, because he or she teaches many basic lessons. But increasingly there is emphasis on subjects with subject teachers. There will probably be a special teacher for maths, another for crafts, another for French, if French is provided at this age. But at these ages, except perhaps for maths, children are not usually divided into different levels of ability. However, within each class there may be several different groups, each working on a different part of the subject, requiring different intellectual understanding.

At about 11 or 12 children move to a new school, usually "comprehensive" that will accept all the children from three or four neighboring junior schools. Changing to the “big” school is a great moment in life for them.

At this stage comes the debate about “streaming”— that is, dividing pupils into different groups according to ability. A few local authorities still send clever children to one school and slow children to another but now that the vast majority of secondary schools are comprehensive (i.e. accept children of all abilities) the decisions have to be made within the schools. Very few teachers believe that it is possible to educate children of all abilities together if some are going to study advanced mathematics, for example. On the other hand, few teachers want to go back to rigid streaming where children were kept apart, and those at the bottom were always at the bottom.

When the pupils reach the age of 14-15, some of those problems tend to solve themselves because of subject "options". Russian school children sometimes believe that life in British schools must be wonderful because pupils can decide for themselves what they are going to study. Life is not quite so simple! Every pupil has to take a national examination at 16, called GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). The examination must be taken in 'core' subjects, plus three or four or five other subjects. These are chosen, in discussion with teaches, from a list. But there is no "free choice" because of timetables and demands for a coherent education. One of the subjects must be practical, another must be part of “social studies”— geography, history, etc. Academic pupils will be able to choose mostly academic subjects, those who find school work more difficult can concentrate on practical and technical subjects. The examinations involve written (and sometimes practical) papers, sometimes two papers in each subject, and they are marked nationally. There is a complicated (and changing) system of marking. We never have anything as simple as your “5” or “4” or “3”. Exams are usually marked, out of 100, and then “converted” into grades —maybe five or seven or eight grades. This means that there is far less subjective impression of whether this or that pupil deserves a good mark or a not-so-good mark.

At the end of the year in which he or she reaches 16, a British pupil can leave school. Many do; though of these, some go on to further training for employment. Although the situation has been improving slowly, far fewer children in the United Kingdom stay on after 16 at school than in most European countries including Russia. Why do children rush to leave school, even if their future is probably unemployment? Has school failed them? Are they already condemned to miserable lives because they have not been properly taught the essentials? Have they suffered from a lack of discipline? Or have they had too much discipline? Should lessons be devoted more to practical skills and “training for jobs” so that, at least, they will find that school has been useful? These are the questions that are constantly raised in our intense and often bitter debates about what education is for.

Pupils who stay at school can take a variety of further courses. The most important is the “A-level”, which is usually studied in three subjects. Pupils who want to enter university spend their last two years at school (17-18) studying intensively just those three subjects. It means that when they start their university course they are already much more advanced than undergraduates in most other countries, and a first degree in three years is common practice. But is that too narrow an education for adolescents? It is convenient for the universities, but is it fair on the pupils to be forced to specialise so soon? Some teachers and educationalists want a broader education for these older pupils, others support the present “deep” education.

“A-levels” are also marked nationally. At this point the grades are crucial, because the university and polytechnic places are awarded on the basis of A-level grades. Bad A-levels can change your life! And because they are marked nationally, there is no personal appeal against them.

All British universities and polytechnics are state institutions. Entry is by academic merit, and those who win places get their fees paid and are also paid a grant (stipend), as in your country. Students enter university at 18 or 19, are almost always living away from home, and are probably more independent in outlook than your students. Most of them complete their degrees in three years, a few in four years. A degree is awarded on the basis of examination, and sometimes of "course work". Afterwards a minority competes for places to do graduate research work; the rest go out into the world to look for jobs. Jobs are not easy to find; and undergraduate unemployment can be quite high in the first few months after leaving university. Polytechnics also provide degree courses; and for those who do not reach university or polytechnic, there are all sorts of lower courses and qualifications by studying part-time at local colleges.

Another major debate at university level is about "assessment", which, in turn, requires university lecturers to reconsider what is actually taught. This particular argument is now becoming ever more urgent in the secondary schools. It illustrates some of the biggest differences between your system and ours.

British education has traditionally been directed towards academically clever children. These children have to “prove” themselves from an early age by writing long examination papers. Emphasis has therefore been on memory, on clear expression of arguments, on intelligent selecting of evidence and reaching of conclusions - not just a memory test, but a test of knowledge and rational judgment. The same process happens in universities, where a degree used to be awarded on the basis of many examination papers taken at the end of the course.

Teachers will recognise at least some of the problems I have tried to describe here. But why the sense of crisis? Consider: over the last few years, schools have been at the centre of quarrels between local and central government; they have been restructured within and without in response to local demands for comprehensive schooling, or because of falling birth-rates, or rearrangements of age-groups. More and more children stay on to compete for university places but there are in some subjects fewer teachers to teach them. Meanwhile an alarmingly high proportion of children leave school early. Politicians are forever questioning teachers about their methods and expecting them to justify them. Behind it all there are three conflicting philosophies of education. Should schools provide training and vocational skills to prepare pupils for working life? should they be providing social skills and prepare them to be good citizens; or should they be encouraging each child to develop his or her sense of their own worth? Each philosophy requires a different approach from the teacher, and conflicting methods of assessment. Everybody is full of ideas but the ideas develop in opposite directions. This has been going on for several years. British teachers now feel utterly exhausted at trying to respond to everything that has been demanded of them. Now they want money, time and quiet. But they will not get what they want – or maybe they will get just a little!

6 “EASY” SENTENCES TO TRANSLATE:

1. Салли учится в школе (она школьница).
2. Мистер Паркер учился в одной школе с моим отцом.
3. Он посещает курсы испанского языка.
4. Клер учится в университете на экономическом факультете.
5. Мои дети хорошо учатся в школе.
6. Мои родители – люди с высшим образованием.

UNIT COMPLETED

THANK YOU FOR COOPERATION