Lecture 5.
British Educational System

1. British Educational System: Historical Background.

2. Present-day British Educational System.

   a) *comprehensive* **system;**

   b) *selective* **system;**

   c) *private* (*independent*) **system.**

3. National Exams.

4. Further Education.

1. British Educational System: Historical Background

- The British government attached little importance to education until the end of the 19th cent.

- One of the last to organize education for everybody.

- Britain was leading the world in industry and commerce → felt that education must take care of itself.

19th century schools:

☐ **boarding schools** (pupils lived in them);

☐ for the sons of the *upper* and *upper-middle* classes;

☐ emphasis on *"character building"* and development of *"team-spirit"*;

☐ *its own customs and attitudes*: distinctive clothes, use of specialized items of vocabulary;

☐ aim: to prepare young men to take up higher positions (in the army, business, civil service, politics, etc.);

☐ these men formed the ruling élite, a closed group with their distinctive habits and vocabulary.

STEVENTON PARSONAGE

Stereotypical views on public schools in Britain:

- are for boys only from the age of 13;
- take *fee-paying pupils* (+ some *scholarship pupils*);
- are boarding schools (boys live there during the term);
- are divided into 'houses' with their 'housemasters';
- have 'prefects' among senior boys (have authority over the other boys + servants among the youngest boys);
- emphasis on team sports;
- use physical punishment;
- not at all luxurious or comfortable.

- In **1870** the *state took responsibility* for education:
  - education became *compulsory up to 13;*
  - the duty of *local* authorities – to establish *elementary & secondary* schools + curriculum.
- **By 1900** almost *total attendance* had been achieved.

Rab Butler introduced the Act which is also known as the Butler Act

The 1944 Education Act introduced *free compulsory secondary* education.

2 kinds of secondary schools:

1) **"secondary modern" schools** (**3/4** of pupils): education sufficient for manual, skilled and clerical employment;

2) **grammar schools** (**1/4** of pupils): more academic education, pupils were expected to go on to university.

Children got to grammar schools on the results of the **"11 plus" exam**.

+ *primary and secondary schools managed by the church*.

Grammar school

Secondary modern

Main idea of the *Education Act 1944* – equality of opportunity: allowing ***working class*** children to progress ***without*** being restricted by the demand to pay ***fees***.

1960s increasing criticism: little chance to develop academically later for those who failed the "11 plus".

Comprehensive schools

In 1965 the Labour government introduced **comprehensive** schools (a combination of grammar and secondary modern).

By 1980 almost all secondary modern and grammar schools were comprehensive.

The measure was *criticized* for *2 reasons*:

1) the *excellence* of grammar schools was *lost*;

2) some grammar schools chose to become *independent* (private) *fee-paying* establishments.

By 1980:

☐ A move **from traditional** teaching (based on *acquisition of knowledge*) **to so-called "progressive"** (based on *comprehension* through participation and discussion);

☐ *Low* level of achievement in *Maths* and *Science +* high drop-out rate at 16.

Education Reform Act (1988) – the greatest reform in schooling since 1944 with 2 major changes:

1) the role of *local* education authorities – *reduced*, while that of the *central government* – *increased*;

2) the introduction of **National Curriculum** with *"core"* (compulsory) subjects: Science, Maths, English & foreign language (usu. French).

Education Reform Act 1988

2. Present-day British Educational System

❖ British educational system is characterized by **decentralization**.

❖ Education is managed by 3 separate **government departments** for: 1) England and Wales, 2) Scotland, 3) Northern Ireland.

❖ These departments make decisions in broad terms.

❖ **Local Education Authorities (LEA)** decide on the details.

State Education in England

NURSERY SCHOOL (VOLUNTARY)	

```
 1
 2
 3
 4
 5     PRIMARY SCHOOL
 6     (AT LEAST 6 YEARS PRIMARY EDUCATION)
 7
 8
 9
10
11
12
13     SECONDARY SCHOOL
14     (AT LEAST 5 YEARS SECONDARY EDUCATION)
15
16     GCSE (TAKEN AT 15-16)
17     'A' LEVEL EXAMS (TAKEN AT 17-18)
18
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11 YEARS COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Nursery education is under 5.

Primary education (5 to 11 years): <u>infant</u> schools (5-7 years) + <u>junior</u> school (8-11 years)

Secondary education (12-18 years)

Secondary education

There are many types of secondary schools in Britain but they all fall under **3 main systems**:

a) the **comprehensive** system;

b) the **selective** system;

c) the **private (independent)** system.

a) the comprehensive system

Introduced **in 1965**.

More than **90 %** of children going to state schools in England and Wales attend comprehensives.

They are **non-selective**.

2 alternatives:

1) at 11 children go directly *to the upper school* (a comprehensive);

2) children go *to a middle school* (approx. from 9 to 13), then – an upper (comprehensive) school.

b) the selective system

Introduced **in 1944**.

Children selected according to their ability.

Selected at 11 on the results of their **"11 +"** **exam**.

2 alternatives:

1) successful pupils go to *a grammar school* with more academic education;

2) others to *a secondary modern school* intended to train for a job (leave at 16).

c) the private (independent) system

7 % of children go to private schools (=23 % of all those passing A-levels & 25 % of those entering university).

3 levels of private school:

1) **primary** schools (4-8 years);
2) **preparatory** (prep) schools (8-13);
3) **public** schools (until 18).

Public (=private fee-paying) are several hundred.
"Clarendon Nine" – the most famous public schools, distinguished for their social superiority and antiquity:
1) **Winchester (1382)**
2) **Eton (1440)**
3) St Paul's (1509)
4) Shrewsbury (1552)
5) Westminster (1560)
6) The Merchant Taylor's (1561)
7) **Rugby (1567)**
8) **Harrow (1571)**
9) Charterhouse (1611)

Eton College (1440)

❖ Has educated boys for 6 centuries.

❖ Founded by King Henry VI who wanted to give education to 70 poor boys so that they could go to Cambridge university afterwards.

❖ Referred to as "the chief nurse of England's statesmen".

❖ It's a boarding school (for boys 13-18), each boy has a small room with a bed and desk.

Eton College (1440)

❖ Students wear old-fashioned uniform with a black tailcoat to be worn at all times.

❖ The college looks old-fashioned but it is well-equipped with state-of-the-art laboratories.

❖ Students learn two modern languages (choosing from French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish).
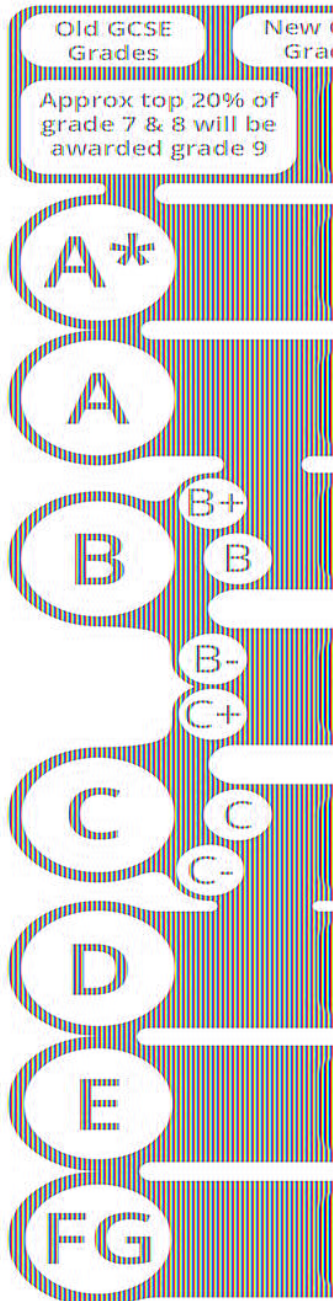
❖ Tuition fee – over 55,000 dollars a year.

3. National Exams

All schools share the same school-leaving examinations.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE):

✔ introduced in 1988;

✔ main exam taken at 16;

✔ taken in 5 or more subjects;

✔ upon introduction graded on a letter 7-point scale (from A to G + U "unclassified");

✔ after 2010 – a move to a numerical grading system (but not in Wales and Northern Ireland).

GCSE

Core subjects:
→ *English*
→ *Mathematics*
→ *Science*
→ *Languages* (modern or ancient)
→ *Humanities* (History or Geography).

After GCSE students:
1) continue to study for another 2 years;
2) leave school.

Old GCSE Grades | New Grades

Approx top 20% of grade 7 & 8 will be awarded grade 9

A*
A
B+
B
B-
C+
C
C-
D
E
FG

2 years after GCSE:

- **General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A level**), usu. done in 2 or three subjects.

- *Previously existed: S level exams* ("S" = "Special" or "Scholarship") provided additional harder papers for A-level students (mostly intended for Oxford or Cambridge applications).

- *Previously existed: two-stage A-levels*

  1) *A/S level* ("Advanced Supplementary") taken in year 12; accounted for 40% of ones A-levels;

  2) **A2-level** taken in year 13.

  A/S level and *A2-level* exams make full A-level.

  Now taken mostly in Wales and Northern Ireland.

4. Further Education

Higher education in Britain consists of:

❖ **universities** (give their own degrees);

❖ **polytechnics** (give nationally approved degrees);

❖ **colleges of further education** teaching at a lower level.

Oxford University

Cambridge University

British universities:

☐ self-governing institutions;

☐ 1ˢᵗ universities set up in *medieval* times and *Tudor* times:

✔ *Oxford founded* in 1167, *Cambridge* – in 1209;

✔ *London university* – in 1828 and it has become the largest in the country.

Red-brick universities:

Manchester University

Sheffield University

6 Original RBU: in **Bristol** (1876), **Manchester** (1880), **Birmingham** (1900), **Leeds** (1904), **Sheffield** (1905) and **Liverpool**.

❖ appeared with the rapid growth of cities;

❖ created to fill local needs;

❖ originally emphasis on the study of science and technology.

The Open University in Leeds

The Open University:

- established in the 1969;
- provides awards by distance learning;
- has become Britain's largest university (about 200,000 students);
- courses can be studied anywhere in the world;
- students work with tutors.

Monitoring Questions

1. What types of schools are there in Britain?
2. What is their difference?
3. What exams and when do children have to take?
4. Do children have to take an exam to go to a *comprehensive* school?
5. What is a *public* school?
6. When were Oxford and Cambridge universities founded?

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