

Unit 2 Education and learning

Lesson

A

How can schools be improved?

Schools in the United States

starting point

A Read these facts about schools in the United States. Which statements do you find surprising? Why?

FACTS ABOUT U.S. SCHOOLS

- ✓ Schooling is compulsory from ages 6 to 16.
- ✓ The typical school day starts at 8:00 A.M. and finishes at 3:00 P.M.
- ✓ The school year generally begins in September and ends in June.
- ✓ Students attend school approximately 178 days a year.
- ✓ Students who fail a grade are often asked to repeat it or attend summer school.
- ✓ 29% of students do two or more hours of homework daily.
- ✓ 84% of students watch TV two or more hours daily.
- ✓ 50% of all public schools have access to the Internet.
- ✓ Annual university tuition and fees cost an average of \$2,860 for students in public universities (about 80% of all students) and \$12,430 for students in private universities.

B Pair work Prepare four statements about schooling in your country that would be of interest to someone from another country. Then compare your statements with a partner.

In my country, schooling is compulsory from ages 5 to 18.

How can we make education better?

discussion

A Pair work Which of these suggestions would improve education in your country? Discuss each one and then agree on two recommendations.

- The school day should last longer so that students can take additional classes.
- Students shouldn't be given failing grades.
- Students ought to spend a minimum of three hours a day on homework.
- Schooling should be free until the age of 21.
- All students ought to have access to the Internet and ought to be allowed to watch educational TV in the classroom.
- The library ought to be replaced by a multimedia center with computers.

A: I think all students ought to have access to the Internet.

B: Why do you think so?

A: Well, it's a useful tool. And almost everyone likes to use computers. . . .

B Group work Join another pair. Choose the most important recommendation, and then share it with the class.

**grammar
focus**

Should and ought to in the active and passive

The modals *should* and *ought to* are often used to express suggestions.

Active = modal + simple form of verb

Teachers **shouldn't give** students failing grades.

Students **ought to have** access to the Internet.

Passive = modal + be + past participle

Students **shouldn't be given** failing grades.

Students **ought to be allowed** to watch TV in class.

A Complete these sentences with the active or passive form of *should* or *ought to* and the verbs in parentheses. Then compare with a partner.

- Computers *should be purchased* (purchase) for all students.
- Schools _____ (install) computers, videos, and CD-ROMs in their language labs.
- Class credit _____ (give) for foreign travel.
- Science _____ (teach) by famous researchers via television.
- Physical education classes _____ (make) optional.
- Students _____ (take) classes in all subject areas.
- Students' grades _____ (base) on class participation.
- Schools _____ (limit) class size to ten students.

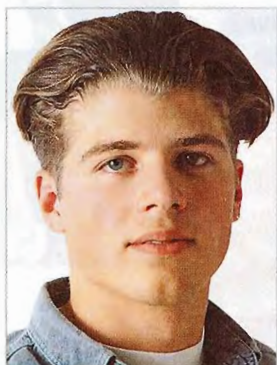
B Pair work Which ideas do you agree with? Explain why.

I think computers should be purchased for all students because then students can learn at their own speed.

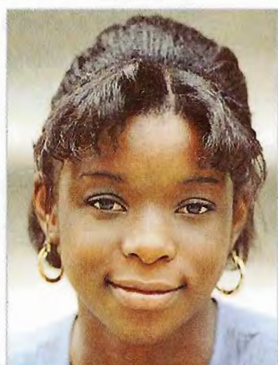
Maintaining educational standards

discussion

A Pair work Read these statements. Which people do you agree with? Why?



Students should be required to pay a fee for any class that they fail and need to repeat.



High school students ought to be able to choose all their own courses. They learn best when they study things that interest them.



More emphasis should be placed on helping students get job experience and less emphasis on courses like history and literature.



Teachers' salaries should be based on how popular the teachers are with students.

B Group work Join another pair and discuss your answers.

A: I think more emphasis should be placed on helping students get job experience. The whole point of education is to prepare you for a job.

B: I think job preparation is important, but courses in literature and history are important, too. They prepare students to be better citizens and live better lives.



School as preparation for life

discussion

A Academic subjects aren't the only things you learn in school. Here are some other things. Read this list. Can you add two more items?

- ◆ how to get along with others
- ◆ how to think for yourself
- ◆ how to follow a schedule
- ◆ how to organize your time
- ◆ how to speak with confidence
- ◆ how to finish something you've started
- ◆ how to become independent from your family
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____

B Pair work Now discuss these questions about the list in Exercise A.

1. Which of the skills did you learn in school? How did you learn them?
2. Was there a particular teacher who helped you learn these skills?
3. What subject areas helped you to learn these skills?

foreign languages literature music science
 history mathematics physical education other: _____

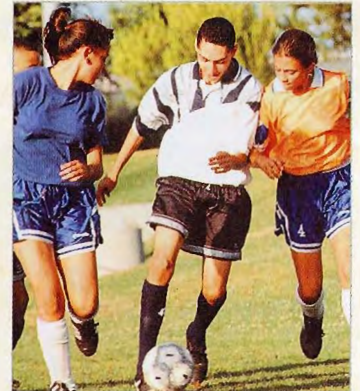
4. What are some important skills that you feel you didn't learn?

C Group work Look at this list. How could education be improved by making changes in these areas? How could the skills in Exercise A be better taught?

- ▶ extracurricular activities
- ▶ course offerings
- ▶ classrooms and equipment
- ▶ teaching methods
- ▶ examinations and grades

There should be more extracurricular activities available for students. That way, students would learn to get along with each other.

Also, students should be required to participate in at least one or two extracurricular activities.



What they learned in school

listening

A Listen to Carol and Michael talking about experiences they had when they went away to college and what they learned from those experiences. Complete the chart.

	College experience	What they learned from it
Carol		
Michael		

B Pair work Are your experiences similar to Carol's or Michael's?

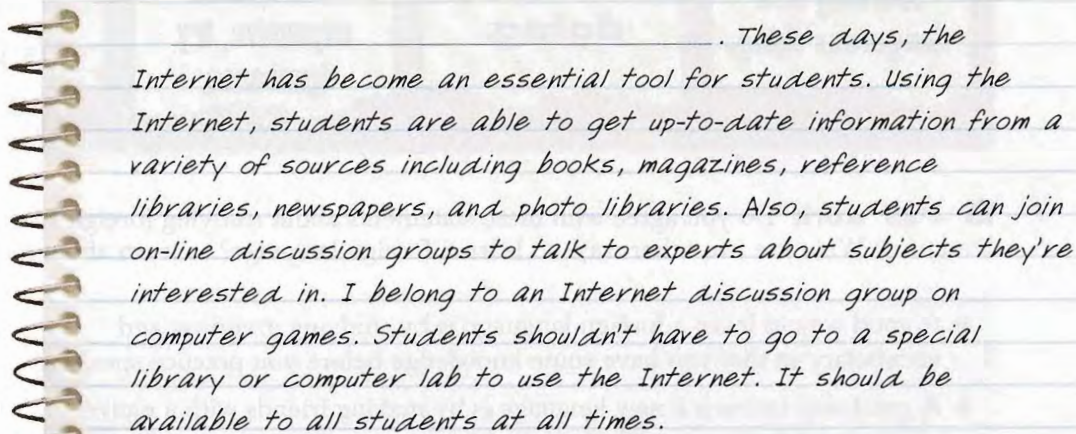
Identifying topic sentences

writing

The topic sentence contains the main idea and states a belief or opinion. The rest of the sentences in the paragraph support this belief or opinion.

A Read this paragraph. Then choose the best topic sentence from the three choices. How did you make your choice?

The library should get new computers.
Students are not accustomed to using computers.
Students should have access to the Internet.



..... These days, the Internet has become an essential tool for students. Using the Internet, students are able to get up-to-date information from a variety of sources including books, magazines, reference libraries, newspapers, and photo libraries. Also, students can join on-line discussion groups to talk to experts about subjects they're interested in. I belong to an Internet discussion group on computer games. Students shouldn't have to go to a special library or computer lab to use the Internet. It should be available to all students at all times.

B Read the paragraph again. Is there any information that doesn't explain the main idea of the paragraph? Cross it out. Then compare with a partner.

C Choose one of these topic sentences. Write a paragraph to support your belief. Make certain your sentences all give good reasons for your opinion.

I think/don't think schools ought to pay teachers higher salaries.
Students should/shouldn't have to study a foreign language.
I think/don't think students should be required to take physical education.
I believe schools should/shouldn't place a lot of emphasis on music and art.

D Pair work Exchange your paragraph with a partner, and answer these questions.

1. Write a title for your partner's paragraph. How did you come up with your title?
2. Is there any information that doesn't belong? Cross it out.
3. Do you have any questions about your partner's ideas? What sentences do you agree with? Are there any ideas that you don't agree with?