

SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

A. READING

Before you read



Read the facts below and decide whether the statements about schools in Vietnam are true (T) or false (F). Then compare your results with your partners'.

Facts about schools

1. Children start Grade 1 when they are 6 years old.
2. Schooling is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16.
3. The school year generally begins in September and ends in late May.
4. The students do not have any examinations when they finish secondary school.
5. A school year consists of two terms.

T F

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While you read

Read the passage and do the tasks that follow.

Schooling is compulsory for all English children from the age of 5 to 16. The academic year in England runs from September to July and is divided into 3 terms. Autumn Term is from the beginning of September to mid-December. Spring Term is from the beginning of January to mid-March and Summer Term from early April to mid-July. Each term is separated by a one-week break called half term, usually at the end of October, mid-February and the end of May.


There are two parallel school systems in England. The first is the state school system, which is free for all students and paid for by the state. The second category is the 'independent' or 'public' school system, which is fee-paying. The state school system, which educates 93% of the pupils in England, can be divided into two levels of education: primary education and secondary education.

See the Table below for more information about the school education system in England.

The National Curriculum is set by the government and must be followed in all state schools. It is made up of the following subjects: English, Design & Technology, Geography, Maths, Information Technology, Music, Science, Arts, Physical Education, History, and a Modern Foreign Language. English, Maths and Science are core subjects, which are compulsory in the national examinations at certain stages of the school education system.

School education system in England

Level of education	Grade/Year (from – to)	Age (from – to)	
Pre-school	childcare environment	3 – 4	
	in an Infant or Primary school	4 – 5	
Primary education	1 – 3	5 – 7	
	4 – 6	8 – 10	
Secondary education	7 – 9	11 – 14	
	10 – 11	14 – 16 (end of compulsory education)	General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)

 **Task 1.** Find words or phrases in the reading passage which have the following meanings.

1. Schools in which all children can attend without paying tuition fees


2. A stage of study for children aged from 5 to 10

3. A stage of study for children aged from 11 to 16

4. Put into force by the law

5. The examinations children sit at the end of compulsory education

6. A detailed plan for a course of study offered in a school or college

 **Task 2.** Answer the questions.

1. When do children in England start their compulsory education at school?

2. How many terms are there in a school year in England?

3. What are the two school systems in England?

4. Do children have to pay fees if they go to “independent” or “public” schools?


5. How many core subjects are there in the national curriculum?

6. When can students take the GCSE examination?

After you read

Work in groups. Tell the others one of the most difficult school subjects you are studying and what you would like your friends and your teacher to do to help you learn that subject more effectively.

B. SPEAKING

 **Task 1. Work in pairs.** Study the table below then ask and answer the questions about the school education system in Vietnam.

Level of education	Grade/Year (from – to)	Age (from – to)	
Pre-school	Nursery	3 – 4	optional
	Kindergarten	4 – 5	
Primary education	1 – 5	6 – 10	compulsory education
Secondary education	Lower Secondary 6 – 9	11 – 14	
	Upper Secondary 10 – 12	15 – 17	National examination for GCSE


Example:


A : When do the children in Vietnam go to primary school?

B : When they are 6 years old.

A : How long does the primary education last?

B : 5 years.

 **Task 2. Work in groups.** Talk about the school education system in Vietnam, using the information from Task 1.


 **Task 3. Work in groups.** Talk about the similarities and differences between the school system in Vietnam and in England.

C. LISTENING

Before you listen

- **Work in pairs.** Ask and answer these questions.
 - What school subjects are you good at?
 - Which ones do you enjoy most/least in your class? Explain why.
- **Listen and repeat.**
 - tearaway methodical well-behaved
 - disruptive actually struggle

While you listen

 **Task 1.** Listen to the conversation between Jenny and Gavin. Put a tick (✓) to the question to which the answer is “Yes”.

		Jenny	Gavin
1	"Did you always work very hard?"	✓	✓
2	"Did you always listen carefully to your teachers?"		
3	"Did you always behave well?"		
4	"Did you pass your exams easily?"		
5	"Did you always write your homework slowly and carefully?"		
6	"Did you think school days are/were the best days of your life?"		

 **Task 2.** Listen again and answer the questions.

1. When did Gavin think he listened to the teacher well?
2. How did Gavin find the exams?
3. Why couldn't Gavin pass the exams easily?
4. Why did Gavin say he didn't think his school days were the best time of his life?

After you listen

Work in pairs. Talk about the results of your current exams at school and what you will do to prepare for the next exams.

D. WRITING

In about 150 words, write a paragraph on the formal school education system in Vietnam, using the information given in Speaking Tasks on page 47. You may follow the suggestions below:

- Levels of education: primary (5 years; start from the age of 6)
lower secondary (4 years)
upper secondary (3 years)
- Compulsory education: 9 years (primary & lower secondary)
- The academic year: 35 weeks (9 months, from September to May)
- School terms: 2 terms: term 1 (Sept – Dec.), term 2 (Jan. – May)
- Time of the national examination for GCSE (early June)

E. LANGUAGE FOCUS

- **Pronunciation:** Stress in three-syllable words
- **Grammar:** Passive voice

Pronunciation

- *Listen and repeat.*

algebra	carefully	politics	physical
chemistry	academic	primary	statistics
computing	cinema	compulsory	September

- *Practise reading these sentences.*

The academic school year generally commences in September.

The typical school day normally finishes at 3.00 p.m. in England.

The national curriculum is usually set by the government.

The GCSE stands for the General Certificate of Secondary Education.

English, Maths and Science are compulsory in the national examination at certain stages of the school education system.

Grammar

Exercise 1. Fill each blank with the simple present passive form of the verb in brackets.

1. The academic year in England _____ into three terms. (divide)

The academic year in England is divided into three terms.

2. Each term _____ by a one-week break. (separate)

3. The national curriculum _____ by the government and _____ in all state schools. (set, must follow)

4. The national curriculum _____ of more than ten subjects. (make up)

5. The state school system _____ for by the state. (pay)

6. The advanced students _____ to take part in the annual International Olympic Competition. (select)

Exercise 2. Rewrite the following sentences using the passive voice.

1. They built this school in 1997.

2. They first published this dictionary in 1870.

3. The students in my class are going to organize a surprise party tomorrow evening.

4. They are painting the kitchen now.

5. Shakespeare wrote "Romeo and Juliet" in 1605.

6. They have translated Shakespeare's tragedies into many languages.

_____.

7. They have just built a new primary school in my village.

_____.

8. They will speak English at the conference.

_____.

9. Jane hasn't cleaned the floor yet.

_____.

10. They will repaint the house soon.

_____.

Exercise 3. Fill in the spaces of the following passage with the correct tense in passive voice of the verbs in brackets.

The world's first electronic computer _____ (1. build) by the University of Pennsylvania in 1946. However, computers _____ (2. sell) commercially for the first time in the 1950s. Much progress on computers _____ (3. make) since 1950. Computers are now much smaller and more powerful and they _____ (4. can buy) much more cheaply.

Computers _____ (5. use) in many fields – in business, science, medicine, and education, for example. They _____ (6. can use) to forecast the weather or to control robots which make cars. The computer's memory is the place where information _____ (7. store) and calculations _____ (8. do). A computer cannot think for itself – it _____ (9. must tell) exactly what to do. A lot of difficult calculations _____ (10. can do) very quickly on computers.