

The Learning Curve



Start thinking!

What do you think makes a good school?
How would you improve your school?
Would you like to be a head teacher?



Reading

- 1** **2.07** Quickly read the newspaper article. Ignore the gaps for now. How has Abbot Hill School changed since Elaine Atkins became head teacher?

Top Marks!

Elaine Atkins, head teacher of Abbot Hill School in Manchester, has turned one of the worst schools in the country into one of the best. Ollie Dawson finds out how she did it.

Three years ago, Abbot Hill School had a dreadful reputation. Teachers didn't want to work there. Parents didn't want to send their children there. The pupils – as seen by the number of children who regularly played truant from school – clearly didn't want to go there. It was a failing school, and a school failing the community. Then Elaine Atkins was appointed head teacher. **1**

9 So how has **she achieved the impossible?**

'It actually wasn't that difficult,' says Elaine with her usual modesty. 'The school was in such a bad state that no-one – not the parents, not the students, not the teachers – valued anything about it. That made it much easier for

15 **an outsider** to come in and say, "**2** We're going to do it differently." And I did have a lot of help too.'

One of the first things Elaine did was call a meeting of all the students, staff and parents. 'Not all of them came, of course, but it was actually very well attended. That's when I realised I had **a chance**. They hadn't given up completely.' She told them some of the things which she wanted to change and put some key issues to the vote. **3** 'I said: "If I introduce a school uniform, will you support me?" The vast majority said they would.'

Elaine believes in things like school uniforms. 'It's all about creating **an environment** where there's discipline and a sense of pride. When I took over, Abbot Hill was out of control. Children were being bullied, and no-one stopped the bullies. **4**

A uniform is a symbol that there are limits and that we're all part of the same community.' Elaine is convinced that discipline is central to students' learning. 'How can they learn anything if there's chaos in the classroom? **5** We've managed to bring that back to Abbot Hill, and it's clearly working. Students are now leaving the school with the qualifications they need. That never happened before. Of course, some students still get in trouble. Children always will. But they know what the rules are, and they know they'll be enforced. There's much less bullying now.'

2 Some words and phrases in the text are in bold. For each one, choose what you think it's referring to.

- 1 she achieved the impossible (line 9)
 - a Elaine's becoming head teacher
 - b Elaine's making the school successful
- 2 an outsider (line 15)
 - a Elaine
 - b someone else
- 3 a chance (line 22)
 - a the possibility of being able to improve the school
 - b the opportunity to talk to the parents, staff and pupils
- 4 an environment (line 29)
 - a the natural world
 - b a school
- 5 things (line 51)
 - a lessons
 - b activities
- 6 the things which she'd done (line 63)
 - a the changes Elaine has made to the school
 - b Elaine's jobs before coming to the school

It's not all about punishment and discipline, though. Elaine has also introduced a large number of after-class activities. 'Everyone used to go home after the last lesson. Now, there are a huge number of **things** which the students can choose from. None of them are compulsory, so the students don't feel they're being forced to do them. **6**

You name it – we offer it! We also have regular school trips, which are educational and a lot of fun. Some parents come on them too, and that's a great way for us all to get to know each other better. I've always believed that the better you know someone, the easier it is to work together. I wondered what the students thought of

- 63** their head teacher and **the things which she'd done**. Sharon Tucker, 16, who I met outside the school gates, summed up the mood of all the students: 'I used to hate coming to this school. I dreaded it every single morning. Now, I look forward to coming. **7** Mrs Atkins has changed all our lives. We owe her a lot.'

3 Read the article again. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A–H the one which fits each gap (1–7).

- A No, we're not going to do it like that any more.
- B The teacher has to be in control.
- C There were actually many occasions when I thought I'd never succeed in changing the school.
- D I wanted them to feel they were part of what was going to happen.
- E I have a great time while I'm here, and I know it's teaching me loads of things I need.
- F They can choose from sports, aerobics, photography, pottery, drama, dance classes.
- G Today, the main problem she faces is a waiting list of parents who are desperate to get their children into the school.
- H The students thought they could get away with anything.

WORD BOX

4 Use words or phrases from the whole article to complete the definitions. You've been given the first letter to help you.

- 1 If everyone at school wears a s_____, u_____, they all wear the same clothes.
- 2 If you are b_____, other children often make fun of you or even hit you.
- 3 People who have q_____ have passed exams and have received certificates.
- 4 If you are i_____ t_____, you are going to be punished for doing something wrong.
- 5 If something is c_____, you have to do it.
- 6 On s_____ t_____, you go with your classmates to visit places like parks and museums.



Have your say!

- Do you think schools should offer after-class activities?
- Discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages.

G Grammar clinic

Relative clauses

👁 Look at *Grammar database* pages 189–190 before you do the exercises.

1 Read the sentences from the article on pages 96 and 97. Decide if statements a and b are true (T) or false (F).

1 I wondered what the students thought of their head teacher and the things *which she'd done*.

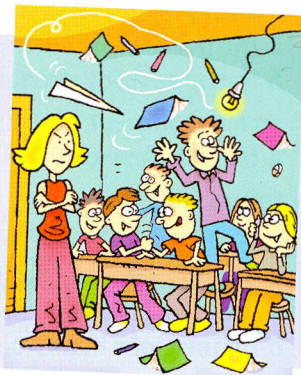
a Without the words in italics, the sentence makes complete sense.

b We could replace *which* with *that*.

2 We also have regular school trips, *which are educational and a lot of fun*.

a Without the words in italics, the sentence makes complete sense.

b We could replace *which* with *that*.



Read through the article again and underline all the examples of 'which' and 'who'. Decide whether they are like sentence 1 or sentence 2 above.

2 Decide whether the words in bold are defining (D) or non-defining (N) relative clauses.

1 My dad, **who went to the same school as me**, remembers all the teachers. D/N

2 My favourite subject, **which we have twice a week**, is chemistry. D/N

3 We had a lesson last week **that we all found interesting**. D/N

4 Mrs Edwards, **who teaches us German**, is very strict. D/N

5 The only teacher **that I don't like** is Mr Leech. D/N

6 The room **where we have science lessons** is on the fifth floor. D/N

3 Choose the correct option in each sentence.

1 The students _____ had finished were allowed to leave.
a whose b who c whom

2 Our school, _____ opened in 1975, has about 2,000 pupils.
a that b which c who

3 I went to school in Germany, _____ I was born.
a when b where c which

4 The school _____ my parents went to has been knocked down.
a whose b that c whom

5 My favourite teacher is Mrs Woods, _____ husband is also a teacher.
a whose b that c which

6 Any student _____ in the school play should contact Mr Butler.
a which b whose c who's

Vocabulary builder

Education

1 Match the words and phrases in the box with the correct definitions.

suspend • play truant • lesson • break up
prefect • term • expel • subject

- _____ a period of time (often 45 minutes) when students learn in a classroom
- _____ miss school without permission or without a good reason
- _____ a period of time (often 3 months) when a school is open
- _____ start a school holiday, such as the Christmas holiday
- _____ tell a student they can't come to school for a short time because they did something wrong
- _____ something you study at school, such as maths, French, etc
- _____ a student who is given extra responsibility for making sure other students obey the rules
- _____ tell a student they can't come to school ever again because they did something wrong

2 Complete the sentences using the correct form of the words in the box in exercise 1.

- Nick is having problems in history so he's having extra _____.
- My cousin was caught _____ and got into a lot of trouble.
- They usually choose older students to be _____.
- We have exams at the end of every _____ and at the end of the year.
- My brother was _____ for two days for fighting in the playground.
- They _____ a student last week for stealing from other students' bags.
- I can't wait until we _____ next week for the summer holidays!
- It's difficult to choose a favourite _____, but I quite like computer science.

Phrasal verbs with over

3 Phrasal verbs with *over* often have meanings connected to movement or control. Choose the correct option.

- A car almost _____ our cat just outside our house. Luckily, she was OK.
a ran over b got over c took over
- Our teacher was very ill but she finally _____ it and came back to school.
a took over b got over c looked over
- Why don't you _____ to our house for dinner tomorrow?
a bring over b look over c come over
- Mrs Riley had to leave the classroom so she asked another teacher to _____.
a go over b look over c take over
- If you _____ the page, you'll see the answers.
a turn over b pass over c put over

Magic metaphors

4 When we talk about the *mind*, we sometimes think of it as a *container*, like a box. Complete the sentences with the phrases from the box.

in your mind • at the back of my mind
filled with • an open mind • out of my mind

- What picture do you have _____ if I say 'summer holiday'?
- I've been studying really hard and I feel like my mind is _____ facts and figures.
- I heard a song on the radio this morning and I can't get it _____.
- When you meet people from other countries, it's important to keep _____.
- I like our history teacher, but I've got a feeling _____ that she doesn't really like me.

Listening

1 You are going to listen to five people talking about a school. Before you listen, talk about what the people might mention.

The head teacher: *exam results? achievements?*
 A pupil: *lessons? favourite teachers?*
 A teacher: *students? lessons?*

The caretaker: *cleaning? damage?*
 A parent: *exam results? their child?*

2 **2.08** Listen to five people talking about a school. For questions 1–5, choose from the list (A–F) what each person says about the school. Use the letters only once. There is one extra letter which you do not need to use.

- A This school doesn't have such good sports teams.
- B Someone is planning to leave the school.
- C Pupils don't have to do too much work at home.
- D This school doesn't cover modern subjects much.
- E People contact me when they have a problem.
- F This school is better than a lot of others.

Speaker 1: _____

Speaker 2: _____

Speaker 3: _____

Speaker 4: _____

Speaker 5: _____

Soundbite stress (1)

2.09 Read the phrases below and decide which words you think are stressed the most. Underline them. Listen and check.

As far as I'm concerned, ...	} home education is a great idea.
In my opinion, ...	
If you ask me, ...	
To my mind, ...	
From my point of view, ...	

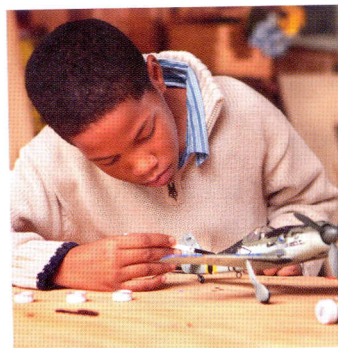
2 Work in pairs. Use the phrases from exercise 1 to help you make suggestions.

- Discuss how popular these after-class activities would be at your school.
- Decide which one you would recommend to your teacher.

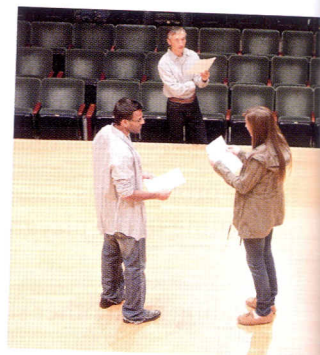


a school website

a debating group



an arts and crafts group



a drama group

Speaking

Useful Phrases

1 Complete the phrases using the words in the box.

out • as • second • least • of • as

- X is not _____ useful _____
Y because ...
- The most useful _____ all is Z because ...
- _____ of these ideas, X is most useful
because ...
- After X, Y is the _____ best idea because ...
- Z is probably the _____ useful idea
because ...

Look at *Speaking database - Comparing and Giving/Asking for opinion* on page 165.



Use of English

Relative pronouns and prepositions

Look at Grammar database page 190 before you do the exercises.

1 Match to make complete sentences.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 They had corporal punishment at the school which | a my mum and dad went. |
| 2 The day which my dad left school | b was the school Sports Day. |
| 3 Yesterday I saw the old head teacher of the school where | c my parents went to. |
| 4 Our school is throwing a big party, to which | d all parents are invited to. |
| 5 The day when my dad met my mum | e all parents are invited. |
| 6 Every year, we have a school play, which | f on was his sixteenth birthday. |

Word patterns

2 Complete these phrases with the correct preposition.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 fond _____ | 3 aware _____ | 5 refer _____ | 7 interested _____ |
| 2 keen _____ | 4 concentrate _____ | 6 complain _____ | |

3 For questions 1–10, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

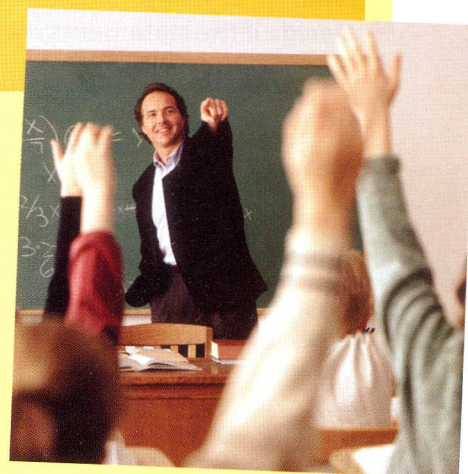
What would you do if your teacher said you could either stay to have your (0) lesson or you could go home? Well, just imagine a school where attendance wasn't (1) _____ at all! In Suffolk, in the United Kingdom, that school (2) _____. Summerhill School was founded in 1921 by a man called A.S. Neill. Neill was (3) _____ of the kinds of problems many children have at school and he believed that the only solution was to give (4) _____ complete freedom.

Children at Summerhill are under no (5) _____ at all to attend lessons. Most of them do, (6) _____. Often, they come from schools at (7) _____ they were unhappy and (8) _____ to do any work at all. After a while, though, they settle down and usually decide that attending lessons is more interesting.

The other unusual thing about Summerhill is the weekly meeting. All teachers and students decide the school rules democratically, with one (9) _____ each. If a student wants to (10) _____ about a teacher or a teacher wants to tell everyone about a student's bad behaviour, they can do so in the meeting.

Life at Summerhill is full of all kinds of challenges, but most of the people there agree that it's a very special place.

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 0 A subject | B work | C lesson | D timetable |
| 1 A necessary | B compulsory | C needed | D forced |
| 2 A is | B runs | C exists | D opens |
| 3 A interested | B concentrated | C expert | D aware |
| 4 A them | B these | C those | D their |
| 5 A stress | B rules | C pressure | D control |
| 6 A although | B however | C yet | D despite |
| 7 A that | B there | C where | D which |
| 8 A refuse | B object | C deny | D oppose |
| 9 A choice | B vote | C count | D decision |
| 10 A refer | B mention | C discuss | D complain |



4 What do you think of Summerhill School? Would you like to go to a school like that?



Writing

An informal letter/email

Look at *Writing database - informal letters/emails* on page 154 before you do the exercises.

1 Read this writing task. Why should your letter be informal?

Your pen-friend is doing a class project on the educational system in different countries. She has asked you for some information about your country. Read this extract from your pen-friend's letter and use the notes you have made to write your letter.

Write a **letter** of between **120** and **150** words. You must use grammatically correct sentences with accurate spelling and punctuation in a style appropriate for the situation. Do not write any addresses.

nursery, primary, secondary - mention ages
take exams in school every year
take important exams at 18 for university

Anyway, apart from that, I wanted to ask you for a favour. We're doing a project at school on education in different countries. Is there any chance you could give me some information about your country? You know, what kind of schools you have, when you take exams, that sort of thing.

Thanks.

Got to go (yes, more homework!).

Love,
Andrea

2 Tick (✓) the correct statements about the writing task in exercise 1.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 You don't need to write in paragraphs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 Correct spelling is important. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 You can use contractions such as <i>don't</i> . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 You should include all the information given. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 You can use chat phrases such as <i>lol</i> . | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 Correct punctuation is important. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 You don't need to write in sentences. | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 5 You should write addresses at the top. | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Working model

3 Read the answer to the writing task written by a French student.

4 Decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F).

- The writer has included all the information he had to.
- He has used an informal tone.
- He didn't need to use paragraphs in an informal letter.
- He asks his friend about a piece of news to begin.

Dear Andrea,

Thanks for your letter! How was your party? You asked about the educational system here. Well, most people go to nursery school between two and six years old. I went when I was four and I loved it! Then, from six onwards, education is compulsory and everyone goes to primary school. The schools are usually quite small and you stay there until you're 10.

From 11 to 14, we go to secondary school. At 15, we move to another school - a bit like senior high in America. We stay there till 18 and then either get a job or go to university.

We take exams at school every year but the really important ones come at the age of 18. You have to get good grades to get into university.

I have to go shopping with my mum now. I hope that was useful! Write soon!

Best wishes,
Paul

Ready to write!

5 Complete the passage using the words and phrases in the box.

secondary • sixth form • senior high • primary elementary • junior high • nursery

Education systems in Britain and America

Britain and America have different education systems. In both countries, most children go to (1) _____ school (or kindergarten) between the ages of three and five. Then, in Britain, they start (2) _____ school, where they stay until they are 11. This is followed by (3) _____ school until age 16. If they stay at school, they go into the (4) _____ until they are 18. Sometimes, this means going to a special college.

In America, children go to (5) _____ school from five to 11. Then, they go to middle school (also called (6) _____ school) until age 14. From 15–18, American children attend high school (sometimes called (7) _____ school).

6 You are going to answer the writing task in exercise 1. You are going to write about your country. Make a plan of your answer.

- How are you going to start your letter?
- What news are you going to ask your pen-friend about first?
- What are you going to tell her about nursery schools?
- What are you going to tell her about primary schools?
- What are you going to tell her about secondary schools?
- What are you going to say about exams?
- How do you want to close your letter?
- How are you going to write your name at the end?

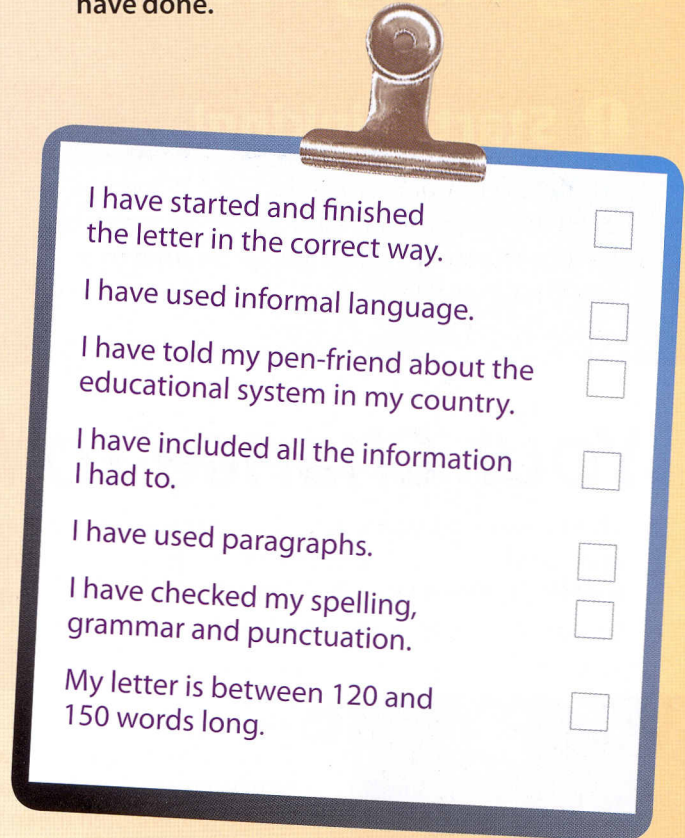
Now complete *Writing Planner 11* on page 160.

Now write!

7 You are now ready to write your letter to your pen-friend. Use informal language. Include all the information you have to.

Check it out!

8 Check your work. Tick (✓) what you have done.



Look Back

Can you answer these questions? If you can't remember, look through the unit for the answers.

- 1 What do the children at Abbot Hill School wear now?
- 2 Which of these is correct?
school journey school trip school excursion
- 3 When a relative clause just gives us extra information, do we use commas or not?
- 4 What do you not do if you 'play truant'?
- 5 What is unusual about Summerhill School in the UK?