

Back to school, age 35

1 VOCABULARY education

a Answer the questions in pairs.


- 1 When did the *Second World War* end?
- 2 What is the *capital* of *Colombia*?
- 3 Who wrote *Don Quixote*?
- 4 How many *kilobytes* are there in a *megabyte*?
- 5 Who invented the *theory of relativity*?
- 6 What's $5 \times 18 \div 4$?
- 7 How many *legs* does an *insect* have?
- 8 What is *water* made of?

b Match the questions with these school subjects.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| geography | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| history | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| information technology | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| literature | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| math | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| physics | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| biology | <input type="checkbox"/> |


c  p.150 **Vocabulary Bank Education.**


2 PRONUNCIATION & SPEAKING /ʌ/ or /ju/?

 The letter *u* between consonants or at the beginning of a word is usually pronounced /ʌ/ or /ju/.

a Put the words in the correct column.

computer	lunch	fun	usually	result
study	subject	uniform	university	

	/ju/

b  4.1 Listen and check. Practice saying the words. Why do we say *a university* but *an umbrella*?

c  4.2 Practice saying these sentences. Listen and check.

- 1 What subjects did you study in high school?
- 2 Do students at that school wear uniforms?
- 3 Most students have lunch in the cafeteria.
- 4 We usually have fun in our music class.

d Interview your partner using the questionnaire. Ask for more information.

Your education

What kind of high school / you go to?

/ you like it?

How many students / there in each class?

How much homework / you have?

/ you have to wear a uniform?

/ discipline very strict?

/ students behave well?

Which subjects / you good and bad at?

Which / your best and worst subjects?





So school these days is easy? Think again.

People and politicians complain that school is getting easier. Damian Whitworth, a 35-year-old journalist, decided to see for himself. He spent a week as a student at a British secondary school, Brentwood County High School. It's a large public school and has about 1,800 students, girls and boys, ages between 11 and 18.

3 READING

- a Look at the photo above. What's unusual about one of the students?
- b Read the introduction. Why did Damian Whitworth go back to school? What kind of school did he go to?
- c Read Damian's diary for one of the days he spent back at school. Does he think school is easier or harder now?
- d Read the text again and put the phrases A–H in the correct places.
- A A crowd of students is watching.
- B However, the students are totally involved.
- C He's friendly with the students but not *too* friendly.
- D When I was the same age as these kids, I had never used a computer.
- E It's a magical moment and the most effective class I have seen.
- F "Are you really in our class?"
- G One boy says he has fries every day.
- H Phones that ring in class are confiscated until the end of the week.
- e In pairs, look at the **highlighted** words and phrases. Try to guess what they mean from the context. Then check a dictionary.
- f In pairs, look at each heading and say if what happens is the same, similar, or different from the high school you went (or go) to.

French

My first lesson is French. I am in a class of thirteen-year-olds. Outside the classroom some girls start **interrogating** me. ¹ "Are you really in our class?" "How old are you?" "How old do you think I am?" I reply. "Well... you're not 13!"

First we have a listening test that I find difficult. I get 14 out of 20. Not bad. Then we make review lists on the computer. ² _____ . Now every student has one.

Math

As we wait outside the math classroom a teacher tells me to button my shirt all the way up. The math teacher uses an interactive whiteboard that has graphics and video, but the students don't look very interested in the lesson. A cell phone rings and the owner hurries to turn it off. ³ _____

History

Mr. Fishleigh is the history teacher. He doesn't have any problems controlling the noise level. (Other teachers do.) ⁴ _____ He talks to them as if they were adults and gets their attention **in return**.

Lunch

In the **cafeteria** we can choose between traditional and fast food. Burgers and fries are the most popular meal. ⁵ _____

Information and communication technology

We are designing **spreadsheets** for cell phone sales and I cannot imagine a more boring lesson. ⁶ _____

Most students have Internet access at home and the school has a website where parents can see what homework their children have and when they have to **hand it in**.

Religious education

The teacher introduces us to meditation. We sit cross-legged and try to fill our minds with blackness and think positively about people who we have been thinking negatively about. For 15 minutes the students sit, eyes closed, in total silence. When they leave the class they are slightly dazed :

"Incredible!"

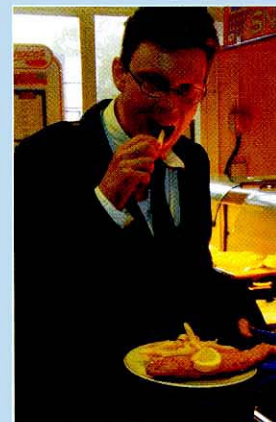
"Amazing!"

"We should do this in math!"

7 _____

The bell rings. End of school for the day.

As we leave there is a fight at the school gates. ⁸ _____ "If anyone hits anyone, I'll call the police," says a teacher.



So has school gotten easier?

It's difficult to say if school has become harder or easier since I was a child because teaching methods have changed so much. All I can say is that during my working life I have had many tiring experiences. Being back at school for a week was as tiring as any of them. Being a student today is very, very hard work.