



## Reading 57

### TASK 1

Read the text "Education: A Reflection of Society". Then read the following sentences and figure out the meanings of the underlined words from the context and write their synonyms (at least ONE), or a short explanation. See the example.

### Education: A Reflection of Society

**A** Visit schools anywhere in the world, and you will probably notice a number of similarities. There are students, teachers, books, blackboards, and exams everywhere. However, a school system in one country is not identical to the system in any other country. It cannot be exactly the same because each culture is different. The educational system is a mirror that reflects the culture. Look at the school system, and you will see the social structure and the values of its culture.

### Mexico

**B** In Mexico, the educational system reflects some of the country's many contrasts. **On the one hand**, it is believed that the nation can achieve equality of rights for everyone *through education*. The basis of the Mexican educational system is the country's constitution, which was written in 1917. It requires education to be free, compulsory, and universal. It also states that education should support national unity and lead to social, economic, and cultural improvement of the people. At lower levels, this means that there is emphasis on the country's rich cultural history. Children write historical essays, participate in activities for national holidays, and read about national heroes—especially native people (Indians). However, it is often difficult to provide education in **rural** areas, where many of the indigenous people live. People in these areas are poor and isolated geographically. There aren't enough schools, and rural teachers must be able to teach all six grades of primary school. Also, traditions among some indigenous people do not typically include school attendance.

### Japan

**C** The Japanese value education highly. One statistic reflects this: the Japanese place such importance on education that 88 percent of all students complete not only **primary** school but also high school. Public schools are all both free and egalitarian; all students are considered equal and learn the same material.

For social reasons, it's important for a student to receive a university degree - and a

degree from “the right university.” To reach **this**, students have to go through “examination hell.” There are difficult exams for entrance to all universities, to many of the better primary and secondary schools, and even to some *kindergartens*! Japanese students need great **discipline**; in order to make time for their studies, they need the self-control to give up hobbies, sports, and social life. Results of these exams affect the **entire** family because there is high status, or social position, for the whole family when the children have high test scores.

### **Britain**

**D** In the United Kingdom (Britain), the educational system reflects the class system. All state schools—primary, secondary, and university - are free, and the first nine years are **egalitarian**; all students learn the same material. At age eleven, students take an important national exam. After this, they attend one of three possible secondary schools: college preparatory, vocational (for job training), or comprehensive (with both groups of students). However, 6 percent of British students attend expensive private schools. These are students from upper-class families. Half of the students at Oxford and Cambridge universities come from such expensive secondary schools. It might seem that anyone can afford to go to a university because all universities are free, but only 1 percent of the lower class goes to university. Because graduates from good universities get the best jobs, it is clear that success is largely a result of one's social class.

### **The United States**

**E** Education in the United States is available to everyone, but not all schools are equal. Public primary and secondary schools are free for everyone; there is no tuition. Almost 80 percent of all Americans are high school graduates. Students themselves decide if they want college-preparatory or vocational classes in high school; no national exam **determines** this. Higher education is not free, but it is available to almost anyone, and about 60 percent of all high school graduates attend college or university. Older people have the opportunity to attend college, too, because Americans believe that “you're never too old to learn.” On the other hand, there are also problems in U.S. schools. In many secondary schools, there are problems with lack of discipline and with drugs and crime. In addition, public schools receive their money from local taxes, so schools in poor areas receive less money. As a result, they don't have enough good teachers or laboratory equipment, and the buildings are often not in good condition. Clearly, U.S education reflects both the best and the worst of the society.

### **Conclusion**

**F** It is clear that each educational system is a reflection of the larger culture - both positive and negative aspects of its economy, values, and social structure. Look at a country's schools, and you will learn about the society in which they exist.

*Ex. 0...the Japanese place such importance on education that 88 percent of all students complete not only primary school but also high school.  
Primary (school)= elementary (school)*

1. There are many more schools in cities than in rural areas.
2. Public schools are all both free and egalitarian ... .
3. Results on these exams affect the entire family ... .
4. On the one hand, there are many advantages to the system.
5. College students need great discipline ... .

## **TASK 2**

*Read Paragraph A of the text "Education: A Reflection of Society". Find the sentence expressing the main idea in Paragraph A. Then find another sentence in Paragraph F that seems to mean about the same. Write the main ideas from A and F in your own words as far as possible in the Answer Form.*

## **TASK 3**

*Look again at the text "Education: A Reflection of Society". Answer the following questions choosing ONE of the options (a, b, c or d).*

1. According to paragraph B, what happened in 1917?
  - a. Mexico's constitution was written.
  - b. Mexico achieved equality of rights for everyone.
  - c. Mexico made education free.
  - d. Education in Mexico supported national unity.
2. Which of the following is closest in meaning to *determines*, as it is used in Paragraph E?
  - a. limits
  - b. finishes
  - c. enables
  - d. provides
3. What can be inferred (guessed) about Japanese universities from paragraph C?
  - a. They are free and egalitarian.
  - b. They offer degrees in many disciplines.
  - c. Students there take too many examinations.
  - d. Some universities have better reputations than others do.

4. What does *this* mean in the sentence “*To reach this, students have to go through “examination hell”*”  
from paragraph C?
- a. university
  - b. exam
  - c. reason
  - d. degree

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# Reading 57 — Keys

## TASK 1

There can be other possibilities.

Rural = in the country;

Egalitarian = on equal terms;

Entire = whole;

On the one hand = from one point of view

Discipline = self-control

## TASK 2

Paragraph A: The educational system is a mirror that reflects the culture.

Paragraph F: It is clear that educational system is a reflection of a larger culture.

## TASK 3

1 a; 2 d; 3 d; 4 d