

## Why do children go to school?

3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2016



What is school for? This may seem an easy question to answer, but a poll taken in the USA shows people have different opinions on why kids go to school. The poll is called the 'Public's

Attitudes Toward the Public Schools'. It is from a global association of education professionals called PDK International. PDK asked Americans to name the biggest purpose of school. Just 45 per cent of people who took part in the poll said the main goal of school was to prepare students to pass exams. Around a quarter of people said the main purpose was to get kids ready to join the workforce. Just over 26 per cent of Americans believed the biggest reason for school was to teach children about citizenship.

Joshua Starr, CEO of PDK, said the poll questioned whether today's schools were doing the right thing. He said: "One has to really question whether the direction we've been going is consistent with what the public wants." He quoted from author James Baldwin, who said in 1963 that the purpose of school is "to ask questions of the universe and learn to live with those questions." Students had different ideas about what school was for. Elena Brankov, 15, said school was to teach children to be creative, to share ideas with others and to use technology make the world a better place. Lyndon Bailey, also 15, said school, "is just to make poor kids into robots who work and make rich people richer".

Sources: *WashingtonPost.com / usaNews.com / edsources.org*

## Writing

School is the best way to educate children. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

easy question / school / association / education / quarter / workforce / citizenship / the right thing / direction / author / universe / ideas / creative / technology / rich

## True / False

- a) The article says it seems easy to say what school is for. T / F
- b) A poll was taken by an association of technology CEOs. T / F
- c) Half of people said kids getting a job was the main reason for schools. T / F
- d) A quarter of people said teaching citizenship is the purpose of schools. T / F
- e) The polling company CEO was sure schools were doing the right thing. T / F
- f) The CEO quoted a writer from the twentieth century. T / F
- g) The writer said school was to ask questions of the universe. T / F
- h) A 15-year-old said schools were to make poor kids richer. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>easy</b>      | a. writer         |
| 2. <b>opinions</b>  | b. participated   |
| 3. <b>global</b>    | c. proper         |
| 4. <b>took part</b> | d. views          |
| 5. <b>main</b>      | e. way            |
| 6. <b>right</b>     | f. imaginative    |
| 7. <b>direction</b> | g. simple         |
| 8. <b>author</b>    | h. most important |
| 9. <b>creative</b>  | i. wealthy        |
| 10. <b>rich</b>     | j. worldwide      |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What did you think of school?
- b) How could we make schools better?
- c) What are schools for?
- d) What will schools be like in 50 years from now?
- e) How difficult is it to be a teacher in a school?
- f) What's the best thing about school?
- g) What's your best memory of school?
- h) What is citizenship and how important is it to teach it?

# BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

## Phrase Match

1. This may seem an easy
  2. people have different
  3. It is from a global
  4. prepare students to pass
  5. to teach children
  6. schools were doing the right
  7. teach children to be
  8. share ideas with
  9. use technology to make the world
  10. make rich people
- a. a better place
  - b. exams
  - c. opinions on why
  - d. others
  - e. question to answer
  - f. richer
  - g. thing
  - h. association
  - i. about citizenship
  - j. creative

## Discussion – Student B

- a) Is the purpose of school "to ask questions about the universe"?
- b) What are the three most important subjects to study at school?
- c) Is school a place to share ideas?
- d) What's the worst thing about school?
- e) How important is school?
- f) Is there a better way than school of educating kids?
- g) Does school turn kids into robots?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a school teacher?

## Spelling

1. people have different poisnnio
2. from a global nsitcoaisao
3. eapepr students to pass exams
4. the main spuepor
5. ready to join the freakcrow
6. teach children about epizhcnsiit
7. ewherth today's schools were...
8. the edtocinri we've been going
9. He tqodue from author James Baldwin
10. ask questions of the ienvurse
11. teach children to be vetreiac
12. make poor kids into rstobo

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. h
6. c	7. e	8. a	9. f	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – English

You think English is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): I.T., art or citizenship.

### Role B – I.T.

You think I.T. is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): English, art or citizenship.

### Role C – Art

You think art is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): I.T., English or citizenship.

### Role D – Citizenship

You think citizenship is the most important school subject. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their subjects. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): I.T., art or English.

## Speaking – Subjects

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- English
- literature
- physics
- IT
- maths
- history
- art
- citizenship

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	a
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.