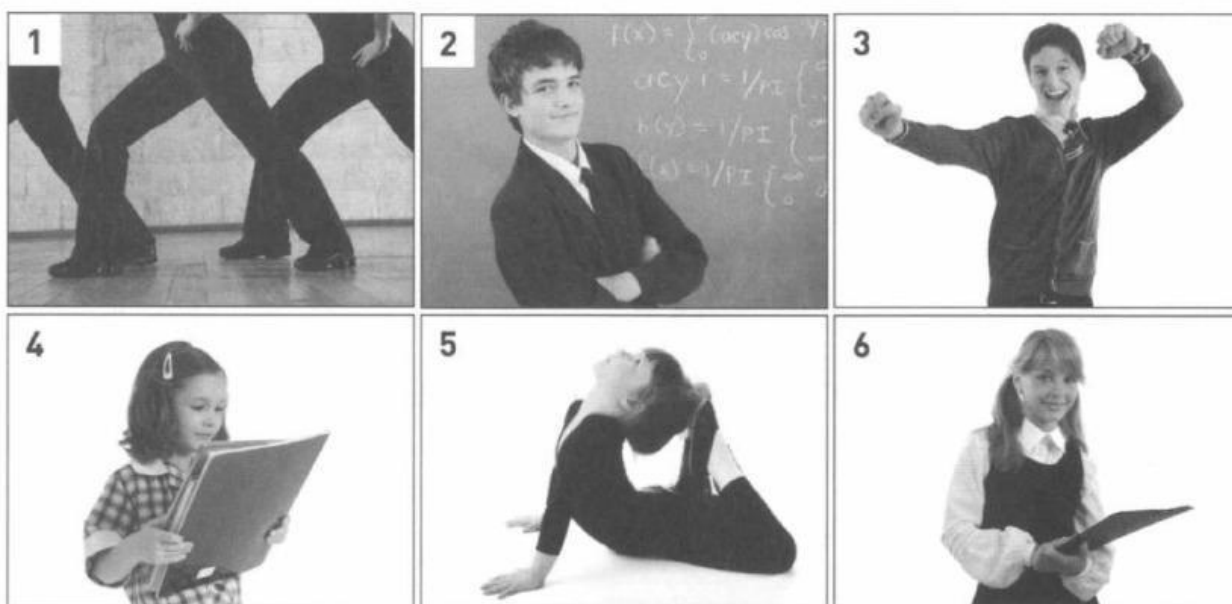


# 3 Getting an education

**Exam focus:** Answering short-answer questions

**Aims:** Working out meaning from context | Recognising key words in a sentence  
Finding and understanding specific information | Keeping to the word limit  
Taking notes

## Part 1: Vocabulary



- 1 The pictures above show items of school uniform that parents in Britain may have to buy for their children. Match the pictures 1–6 with the words a–f.
- |                   |                         |                          |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| a a blazer ____   | c a gingham dress ____  | e pumps ____             |
| b a cardigan ____ | d a pinafore dress ____ | f tracksuit bottoms ____ |

- 2 Match the words 1–7 to the definitions a–g.

|                     |                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 a compass ____    | a a flat, semi-circular piece of plastic or metal which is used for measuring angles                                |
| 2 a test tube ____  | b an area of land that contains the main buildings of a university or college                                       |
| 3 a protractor ____ | c a building with rooms or flats, usually built by universities or colleges, in which students live during the term |
| 4 a laboratory ____ | d a hinged V-shaped instrument that you use for drawing circles                                                     |

|                            |                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 a hall of residence ____ | e a small tube-shaped container made from glass, used in laboratories                                  |
| 6 a lectern ____           | f a room containing scientific equipment where students are taught science subjects such as chemistry  |
| 7 a campus ____            | g a high sloping desk on which someone puts their notes when they are standing up and giving a lecture |

**3 Underline at least five words or phrases related to the topic of education in the following text. Use your dictionary if necessary.**

If you send your child to a boarding school you can be looking at fees of almost £8,000 per term. Eton will charge £7,896 a term from September – a rise of 5.8% on last year's fees. Winchester's fees have gone up 5% from £7,457 to £7,833 a term. Day schools are cheaper, but even these are charging an average of £2,796 a term – £8,388 a year.

If you have a baby this year and plan to send him or her to a private day school for secondary education, it will set you back about £150,000, according to an independent adviser.

If your child is starting senior school this September, the school fees between 11 and 18 will total an average of £75,500, assuming the fees rise by 7% a year.

**4 Match the words 1–10 with the definitions a–j.**

|                                   |                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 a day school ____               | a a school for pupils between the ages of 11 or 12 and 17 or 18                                                           |
| 2 a special needs school ____     | b a school for children between the ages of 5 and 11                                                                      |
| 3 a boarding school ____          | c a school suitable for the majority of children                                                                          |
| 4 a mainstream school ____        | d a school in Britain for children aged between 11 and 18 who have a high academic ability                                |
| 5 a secondary/senior school ____  | e a state school in which children of all abilities are taught together                                                   |
| 6 a private school (Britain) ____ | f a school for children who need special help or care, for example because they are physically or mentally disabled       |
| 7 a college ____                  | g a school which is not supported financially by the government and which parents have to pay for their children to go to |
| 8 a primary school ____           | h a school where the students go home every evening and do not live at the school                                         |
| 9 a grammar school ____           | i an institution where students study after they have left school                                                         |
| 10 a comprehensive school ____    | j a school which some or all of the pupils live in during the school term                                                 |

5 Answer the questions 1–7. Use your dictionary if necessary.

- 1 If you cram for an examination, you are learning as much as possible in a short time just before you take the examination. Do you normally cram for an exam, or do you plan your revision carefully?
- 2 When you graduate from university, you have successfully completed a degree course. Do you know anyone who has recently graduated?
- 3 When you qualify, you pass the examinations that you need to be able to work in a particular profession. Do you know anyone who has recently qualified as a doctor or a lawyer?
- 4 In Britain, you can take GCSE exams when you are sixteen. Do you know what GCSE stands for?
- 5 If a pupil is expelled from school, they are officially told to leave because they have behaved badly. If a pupil is suspended, they are asked to leave for a certain period of time because they have behaved badly, but they can then come back. Can you give examples of bad behaviour in school that may lead to a student being suspended or expelled?
- 6 In Britain, a reception class is a class that children go into when they first start school at the age of four or five. How old are children when they start school in your country?
- 7 A truant is a pupil who stays away from school without permission. How were truants punished at your school?

6 Work out the meaning of the words and phrases in *italics* 1–6 by studying their context in the passage below.

A grandmother has set up her own school to cater for her autistic grandson. Joshua, 7, was unable to cope at the local school and his parents were struggling to get his needs met.

'I used to take Joshua to his mainstream school,' says his mother. 'He would literally (1) *howl* all the way down the very long drive. I used to feel like a monster.'

She took Joshua out of the school on the advice of his teachers, but (2) *hit a brick wall* with the local education authority, who wanted to place him in a school for 90 children with a huge range of learning difficulties — contrary to the modern expertise on (3) *autism*, which recommends specialist care in small units.

Now, Joshua is (4) *flourishing* in a small school for autistic youngsters. 'It is costing us £15,000 a year but it's worth it to see Joshua making progress. He is a different child.'

The special needs school recently passed its first inspection from the Office for Standards in Education with a (5) *glowing* report. Despite this, the education authority has refused to pay for Joshua's education there.

Receiving a diagnosis of a learning disability is a terrible blow to families, and the realisation that you face years of fighting to obtain the education that will help your child is (6) *devastating*. Many parents cannot face the struggle and many children are denied the chance to improve their quality of life.

**1 howl**

- a cry loudly to express pain or unhappiness
- b sing loudly
- c run quickly

**2 hit a brick wall**

- a have an accident
- b agree about most things
- c be unable to make progress

**3 autism**

- a a type of mental condition, present from early childhood
- b a type of cold or flu
- c a mental illness characterised by a refusal to eat

**4 flourishing**

- a flowering
- b developing rapidly and successfully
- c studying

**5 glowing**

- a satisfactory
- b expressing approval
- c with an intense colour and shine

**6 devastating**

- a difficult in the beginning
- b not pleasant
- c causing shock or distress

**7** Complete the table with words from the passages in Exercises 3 and 6.

| Verb        | Noun          | Adjective   |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 _____     | an assumption | —           |
| 2 _____     | a rise        | —           |
| —           | 3 _____       | expert      |
| —           | 4 _____       | young       |
| to progress | 5 _____       | progressive |
| to inspect  | 6 _____       | —           |
| to diagnose | 7 _____       | diagnostic  |
| to realise  | 8 _____       | —           |

## Part 2: Practice exercises



### Exam information: Short-answer questions

In this task type, you are asked about factual details. The task tests your ability to find and understand specific information in a text. Your answers will consist of no more than a certain number of words or numbers. Note:

- Numbers can be written as words (e.g. *eight*) or figures (e.g. *8*).
- Hyphenated words count as one word (e.g. *merry-go-round*).

The questions are normally in the same order as the information in the text. In other words, the answer to question 1 occurs in the text before the answer to question 2, and so on.

1 How many words are there in the sentences 1–4 below?

- 1 Describe the habitat of the orang-utan.
- 2 'The fact that two major designers have included blue-black jeans in their summer range does not make them fashion.' Discuss.
- 3 Outline the rights of old-age pensioners in society, especially the over-seventies.
- 4 Evaluate the availability of over-the-counter medicines.

2 Answer the questions 1–8 in no more than three words.

- 1 How did you use to travel to school?
- 2 Do you remember the name of your first school teacher?
- 3 Name your three favourite subjects in secondary school.
- 4 What is your favourite memory of your time at school?
- 5 Give an example of a negative experience you had in school.
- 6 Describe the type of food you used to eat at school.
- 7 Have you ever failed an exam or test?
- 8 What would you like to study at college or university?

**Exam tip:** If you cannot find an answer to a question, go to the next one. If you find the answer to that question, you will know that you need to go back in the text to find the answer to the previous one.

3 The questions 1–4 are about the text below. They should be in the same order as the information in the text but they have been mixed up. Put the questions in the right order. You do not have to answer them.

- 1 Money is only one consideration for politicians. Give evidence from the text to show this.
- 2 Illustrate how celebrities can influence politicians.
- 3 Give examples from the text of different types of policies.
- 4 Apart from celebrities, which other forces can influence politicians?

Policies can be influenced by many forces. For example, Jamie Oliver's TV programme, *Jamie's School Dinners*, attacking the quality of food in schools, eventually persuaded the Minister for Education to rethink policies about the eating habits of children, as well as budgets. Equally so, very large organisations with a global presence influence policy makers all around the world over concerns such as oil, arms, the environment and human rights.

- 4 Skim-read the passage and decide what type of information is in each paragraph. Make short notes about this information.

- 1 Plans to allow universities to charge unlimited tuition fees were today greeted with dismay from students and lecturers but welcomed by vice-chancellors at top-flight institutions. Fees of up to £6,000 a year would go directly to universities, but above that figure they would pay a levy that would increase for each additional £1,000, restricting the extra income, under proposals set out by a review of higher education funding. Graduates would also repay their loans later and over a longer period.
- 2 Lord Browne of Madingley proposed a new system under which one graduate in five in lower-paid jobs would repay less than today but higher-earning graduates would pay more. His proposals, following a review of higher education finance lasting almost a year, will form the basis of a new system for funding universities from autumn 2012. 'Under these plans universities can start to vary what they charge,' he said, 'but it will be up to students whether they choose the university. The money will follow the student, who will follow the quality. The student is no longer taken for granted, the student is in charge.'
- 3 Aaron Porter, president of the National Union of Students said: 'If adopted, Lord Browne's review would hand universities a blank cheque and force the next generation to pick up the tab for devastating cuts to higher education. The only thing students and their families would stand to gain from higher fees would be higher debts. A market in course prices between universities would increasingly put pressure on students to make decisions based on cost rather than academic ability or ambition.'
- 4 The review recommends:
  - Graduates would not start to repay student loans until they earn £21,000 a year. This threshold would rise in line with earnings to protect graduates with lower incomes. The current threshold is £15,000.
  - Repayments would stay at 9 per cent of income but graduates with higher earnings would pay a higher interest rate of 2.2 per cent above inflation, equal to the Government's cost of borrowing. Lower-paid graduates would continue to pay no real interest rate on loans.
  - Student loans would be paid over a maximum of 30 years, after which they would be written off. The current maximum is 25 years.
  - Student support should be simplified, with a flat living loan of £3,750 for all undergraduates and maintenance grants of up to £3,250. Full grants would go to students whose family income was £25,000 or less and partial grants to those with household income up to £60,000.
- 5 Professor Steve Smith, president of Universities UK, which represents vice-chancellors, said: 'We are extremely pleased that Lord Browne's proposals build on the fair and progressive elements of the current system. No parent or student would have to pay tuition fees upfront, only a graduate would pay when they are earning £21,000 per year. This will be crucial in supporting those from disadvantaged backgrounds through university.'
- 6 But union leaders and representatives of newer universities warned of the 'devastating' impact on families if the recommendations are implemented. Professor Les Ebdon, chair of million+, which represents new universities, said: 'There is a real risk that

some students who would have gone to university will decide not to go and that opportunity and social mobility will be fatally undermined.'

- 7 Lord Browne, the former group chief executive of BP, said that despite higher fees the number of people going to university should expand. His plans allow for a 10 per cent increase in the number of student places over the next four years. Part-time students would also have access to student loans to cover the cost of their tuition fees, giving more people a second chance to study for a degree later in life, he said. His plans would create a market in higher education, with many research universities likely to charge £6,000 or £7,000 a year, a handful of top universities charging higher fees, but many newer universities that focus on teaching charging less.

Paragraph 1: Introduction of the plans

Paragraph 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 7: \_\_\_\_\_

- 5 Look at the following question about the passage in Exercise 4 above.

From the point of view of students, what would be the negative consequences of higher tuition fees?

Which of the strategies 1–6 do you think would be useful to find the answer?

- 1 underlining the important information in the text
- 2 underlining the key words in the questions
- 3 reading the text before reading the questions
- 4 reading the questions slowly before reading the text
- 5 numbering the paragraphs in the text
- 6 scanning the text (moving your eyes down over the text to find the information you are looking for, without reading the text word for word)

**Exam tip:** In order to find the correct answer in a text, focus on what you are looking for. One way to do that is to think about the key words in the questions.

*Example: What is your favourite memory of your time in school?*

The question word ('What') is important. The nouns ('memory' and 'school') also carry a lot of information. Words like 'your' and 'of' are not necessary to understand the question. Note that 'time' is not a key word: the question asks about memories, not time.

**6 Underline the key words or phrases in the questions 1–10.**

- 1 Who is against the proposed changes to student tuition fees?
- 2 How could a future loan repayment schedule be described in comparison to today's?
- 3 According to the official statement from the National Union of Students, who will suffer financially?
- 4 From the point of view of students, what would be the negative consequences of higher tuition fees?
- 5 In the future, what may become the deciding factor for students choosing a university?
- 6 What will happen to the maximum period of repayment?
- 7 What will students whose parents earn a total of £55,000 receive?
- 8 According to Universities UK, who would especially benefit from the new system?
- 9 According to newer universities, what might happen to the number of people who are able to move up in society?
- 10 Who may ask for fees of over £7,000?

**7 As quickly as you can, find the answers to the questions 1–10 in Exercise 6 by referring to the text on pages 29 and 30. Then answer the questions in no more than three words.**

**8 Read the questions 1–10 and the answers one student found in a passage. In order for her answers to be valid, the answers must be expressed in no more than three words. Rewrite the answers. The first one has been done for you.**

| Questions                                                                    | Student's answers                                                                     | Short answers          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 How much do they need to pay?                                              | <i>They need to pay £6,000 per year.</i>                                              | <i>£6,000 annually</i> |
| 2 How will students finance their education?                                 | <i>With a combination of loans and salaries from part-time jobs.</i>                  |                        |
| 3 How did the university react to the news?                                  | <i>They immediately released a statement to the press.</i>                            |                        |
| 4 What are the disadvantages of cramming?                                    | <i>There is a possibility that students will become too tired.</i>                    |                        |
| 5 Give one reason why students might want to choose accommodation on campus? | <i>It is closer to their place of study.</i>                                          |                        |
| 6 What do students need to do before they can qualify as a lawyer?           | <i>They need to complete a course that lasts for four years.</i>                      |                        |
| 7 What do parents consider when they choose a school?                        | <i>They look at a number of different factors: location, cost and school results.</i> |                        |

|                                                             |                                                                                                        |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 8 What are the advantages of home schooling?                | The lessons are planned with individual students in mind and the teachers know the students very well. |  |
| 9 Why is it a good idea to send children to nursery school? | The children develop their ability to be social.                                                       |  |
| 10 Give a reason why some students have been punished.      | They had a mobile phone on them.                                                                       |  |

**Exam tip:** It can be difficult to limit your answers to three words. Sometimes it can help to change a verb to a noun, or to use nouns as adjectives.

**9 Rewrite the answers 1–9 in no more than three words. Do not use any verbs in your answers.**

**Example:** Question: What sort of technical difficulties has the school been having?

Answer: There have been problems with the systems that are currently used by the computers.

computer system problems

**1 Q:** What idea has the Head Teacher come up with?

A: Her idea is to adapt the way the college communicates.

**2 Q:** What action do they need to take first?

A: They need to correct the information in the timetables.

**3 Q:** What is even more urgent than improving communications?

A: They need to find methods to help them save time.

**4 Q:** Name one of the aims that are mentioned on the final list.

A: The school library wants to increase the number of books it lends out.

**5 Q:** What is the main priority in terms of after-school activities?

A: They would like to put on plays during term time only.

**6 Q:** What else would they like to increase?

A: They also aim to do more sports activities after school.

**7 Q:** What is the school satisfied with?

A: They are happy with the way they keep control of their resources.

**8 Q:** What aspect of the school's performance still needs to be determined?

A: They need to assess how satisfied the students are.

## Part 3: Exam practice

Using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each, answer the following questions.

- 1 Why do private providers feel they need to pay as much as children's centres?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 What is the most a senior nursery nurse could earn?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Out of all children, how many take up places in private nurseries?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 What types of nurseries do fathers and mothers prefer?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parents face a sharp increase in nursery fees from January as new government-subsidised children's centres drive up staff costs for private daycare.

Children's centres are offering up to £7,000 a year more for managers and nursery nurses to staff their premises, forcing private providers to match the pay offer or risk losing their best employees. Fees are private nurseries' only source of income so they have no option but to pass on the 12–15 per cent salary increases to parents. Salaries account for 80 per cent of running costs and fees are an average of £140 a week.

The annual pay survey for *Nursery World* magazine found that the salary of a nursery manager in the private sector had risen by an average of 12.3 per cent this year, to £21,547, as owners attempted to hang on to their staff. Despite the increase, children's centres are offering about £27,000 for a manager. Senior nursery nurses have had an average 17 per cent increase this year, with salaries of about £14,000, but could still earn up to £17,000 if they switched to a children's centre.

'Children's centres are heavily subsidised and are offering much bigger salaries than anywhere else in the sector,' said Claire Schofield, head of membership at the National Day Nurseries Association. 'Shouldn't the subsidy be available across the board?' Private providers currently account for 78 per cent of all nursery places. The Government plans to open 3,500 children's centres by 2010 — five in each parliamentary constituency. Each centre will offer daycare and other services for children and parents. The Department for Education and Skills estimates that the cost of each place will be about £250 a week, well above private sector fees. But a generous subsidy administered by local authorities brings the fees down to about £137 a week.

Liz Roberts, editor of *Nursery World*, predicted that many nurseries would face financial difficulties as a result. 'Nurseries will put up their fees a bit, but there is a limit to what parents can afford so it is becoming terribly difficult. Some nursery owners barely pay themselves as it is, so may just decide to close,' she said.

A Department for Education and Skills study found that only 25 per cent of private nurseries made a profit, with 31 per cent breaking even. While children's centres will offer parents value for money at first, there is no guarantee that the Government will continue to pay the subsidy. If the funding is reduced, parents will have no choice but to pay more for their nursery places, especially if local private nurseries have been driven out of business.

Parents have also made clear during public consultations that they like private and voluntary sector nurseries, which are often smaller and more intimate than local authority providers, and the Government has said that it is committed to diversity of supply.