Reading

The Homeschool Option

Educating children at home as an alternative to formal education is an option chosen by families in many parts of the world. The homeschooling movement is popular in the United States, where close to one million children are educated at home. In Canada, 1 percent[1] of school-age children are homeschooled, and the idea also enjoys growing popularity in Australia, where 20,000 families homeschool their children. The movement is not limited to these countries. Homeschooling families can be found all over the world, from Japan to Taiwan to Argentina to South Africa.

Homeschooling is not a novel idea. In fact, the idea of sending children to spend most of their day away from home at a formal school is a relatively new custom. In the United States, for example, it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that state governments began making school attendance compulsory. Before that, the concept of a formal education was not so widespread. Children learned the skills they would need for adult life at home from tutors or their parents, through formal instruction or by working side by side with the adults of the family.

In the modern developed world, where the vast majority of children attend school, families choose homeschooling for a variety of reasons. For people who live in remote areas, such as the Australian outback or the Alaskan wilderness, homeschooling may be their only option. Children who have exceptional talents in the arts or other areas may be homeschooled so that they have more time to devote to their special interests. Much of the homeschooling movement is made up of families who, for various reasons, are dissatisfied with the schools available to them. They may have a differing educational philosophy, they may be concerned about the safety of the school environment, or they may feel that the local schools cannot adequately address their children's educational needs.

The legal environment surrounding homeschooling varies. In some places, a government-approved course of study is mandated, whereas in others, homeschoolers may be required only to follow general guidelines, or even none at all. Sometimes periodic progress reports, tests, or professional evaluations are obligatory. There are different approaches to homeschooling that individual families can take. Some follow a particular educational philosophy, such as the Montessori method or Waldorf education. Others use a mixed approach, borrowing from a variety of methods and materials. A large selection of prepared educational prod-

[1]BrE: per cent

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ucts is available to specifically address the needs of homeschooling families, and correspondence courses can also be purchased. In addition, homeschooling magazines and websites give families the opportunity to read about others' experiences and get ideas for different kinds of educational activities to try. As the homeschooling movement grows around the world, so, too, do the opportunities for homeschooling families to share experiences and ideas at conferences and on the Internet. Although most families continue to choose a traditional classroom education for their children, homeschooling as an alternative educational option is becoming more popular.

Answer the questions about **The Homeschool Option.**

Questions 1–3

Which of the following reasons that families choose homeschooling are mentioned in the passage?
*Choose **three** answers from the list below.*

A The large size of local schools

B The exceptional talents of their children

C The lack of variety of instruction in the majority of schools

D Disagreement with the educational philosophy of local schools

E Belief that local schools cannot adequately meet their children's needs

F Opposition to the periodic testing of their children

Questions 4–8

Do the following statements agree with the information in the reading passage?
Write

TRUE *if the statement agrees with the information.*
FALSE *if the statement contradicts the information.*
NOT GIVEN *if there is no information on this in the passage.*

_____ 4. School attendance was mandated in the United States near the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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_____ 5. Before modern times, the majority of children did not attend school.

_____ 6. Many nineteenth-century tutors were not adequately trained for the job.

_____ 7. The majority of homeschooling families follow a similar educational philosophy.

_____ 8. Although there is growing interest in homeschooling, relatively few families practice[1] it.

My Words

Write the words that are new to you. Look them up in the dictionary and write their definitions.

Words	Definitions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

[1]BrE: practise

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Word Families

noun	alternative	Some families choose private school as an alternative to public school.
noun	alternate	Because our first choice for the class trip was too expensive, we went with our alternate instead.
adjective	alternative	Some homeschooling families follow an educational program similar to that found in formal schools, whereas others choose alternative methods.
adjective	alternate	We made alternate arrangements for the class trip.
adverb	alternatively	Parents can choose to teach their children themselves; alternatively, they can join homeschooling groups and share teaching responsibilities with other families.

noun	concern	The safety of the school environment is a concern for many modern parents.
verb	concern	The quality of public schools concerns a growing number of families.
adjective	concerned	Parents feel concerned when their children don't do well in school.

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noun	instruction	Parents want their children to get the best instruction.
noun	instructor	Some people feel that parents are the best instructors for their children.
verb	instruct	Some homeschooling parents instruct their children for a set number of hours every day, whereas others follow a less structured schedule.
adjective	instructive	Homeschooling parents try to provide their children with a variety of instructive experiences.
adjective	instructional	Homeschooling parents try to provide their children with good instructional materials.
adverb	instructionally	Materials used for homeschooling must be instructionally sound.

noun	obligation	Parents have the obligation to protect their children and provide for their needs.
verb	obligate	A teacher might obligate his students to spend several hours a day doing homework.
adjective	obligatory	School is obligatory for young children in most parts of the world.

noun	period	Children should be given several rest periods during the school day.
adjective	periodic	In some places, homeschooling families are required to receive periodic visits from professional educators.
adverb	periodically	Teachers give their students tests periodically.

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Word Family Practice

Choose the correct word family member from the list below to complete each blank.

Many families are interested in **1**..... forms of education. Some send their children to private schools that follow certain educational methods, and others choose to **2**..... their children themselves at home. Providing children with a thorough education in all subject areas can be a **3**..... for homeschooling families. However, there are many places they can turn to for support. There are several homeschooling organizations[1] that can give them guidance with this. Communicating with other homeschooling families **4**..... to exchange ideas and discuss problems is an important source of support for many homeschoolers. Whether they choose formal schooling or homeschooling, parents have the **5**..... to make sure that their children get a good education.

1.	alternative	alternatives	alternatively
2.	instructor	instruct	instruction
3.	concern	concerns	concerned
4.	period	periodic	periodically
5.	obligation	obligate	obligatory

[1]BrE: organisations

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Word Skill

Prefix *dis–*

The prefix *dis–* makes the meaning of the word negative.

Read the sentences. Write a definition for each underlined word.

1. Many families are satisfied with the results they get from homeschooling and would never send their children back to a traditional school.

   satisfied: _____

2. Parents who are dissatisfied with traditional education look for alternative schools for their children.

   dissatisfied: _____

Listening

CD 1 Track 27

*Listen to the talk. Choose **FOUR** letters, **A–G**.*

Which **FOUR** of the following are compulsory for parents who homeschool their children in the speaker's city?

A Informing the city of their plans to homeschool

B Hiring professional tutors

C Having prior experience teaching

D Addressing all subjects taught in the local school

E Using books provided by the city

F Giving periodic tests

G Submitting a yearly report

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