a) Read the short paragraph below and think about the questions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools around the world were forced to close, and millions of students had to study from home. Some parents discovered they preferred teaching their children themselves. This gave new attention to *homeschooling* — educating children outside of traditional schools.

Write briefly (3–5 sentences for each question):

1. **How was your or your country's experience with online schooling during the pandemic?**

2. **What might be some advantages and disadvantages of homeschooling?**

3. **Do you know anyone who tried it? How did it go?**

b) Learn the following words and expressions from the article. Match each **word/phrase** with its **definition**.

Word / Phrase	Definition
(to) advocate for oneself	g) lack of confidence or belief in someone or something
accommodations	e) a situation that makes people suddenly realize something important
(to) exacerbate sth	b) the subjects and content taught in a school or course

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affidavit	h) to make a problem, situation, or feeling worse
mistrust	c) special help, adjustments, or changes made to support someone's needs
inequality	a) a written statement confirmed by oath and used as official evidence
a wake-up call	f) to support or speak up for your own needs, rights, or interests
curriculum	d) unfair difference in treatment, opportunities, or resources between groups

Choose three of the words and use them in your own sentences related to education.

c) Read the article and complete the tasks below:

The pandemic pushed more families to home-school. Many are sticking with it

Before the pandemic, Karen Mozian had a clear vision of her son Elijah's **K-12 education**: he would attend public school, just as she had. However, when schools closed in March 2020, that plan quickly fell apart. Nine-year-old Elijah, who stutters and later was diagnosed with ADHD, struggled to participate in online classes. He spent long hours on Zoom but often appeared disengaged, daydreaming, or unable to get his words out. Even after returning to campus, his school provided accommodations such as extra testing time and help with incomplete assignments, but he was expected to **advocate for himself**, which made him uncomfortable. His grades dropped sharply, and the combination of academic struggles and the stressful environment of COVID-19 restrictions convinced Mozian that traditional schooling was failing her son.

Reluctantly, Mozian decided to **home-school** Elijah. "To say I'm home-schooling my kid are words I never thought I'd say," she said. She discovered, however, that learning could take many forms beyond the **brick-and-mortar school**, and that a more flexible, individualized approach suited her son's needs.

Across California and the U.S., families made similar decisions during the pandemic. Their reasons were diverse: some were frustrated by excessive or insufficient COVID-19 safety protocols, some disagreed with the debates over critical race theory, while others noticed that neurodivergent children struggled in virtual classes. Many families reported a general **mistrust** of public schools and wanted to regain control over their children's education at a time of widespread uncertainty.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the proportion of American families home-schooling at least one child increased from 5.4% in spring 2020 to 11.1% in fall 2021. Among Black families, the increase was even more dramatic, rising from 3.3% to 16.1%. In California alone, nearly 35,000 families filed an **affidavit** to open

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private home schools during the 2020–21 school year, more than double the number in 2018–19.

For many parents, the pandemic offered a first-hand view of how their children were being taught. Some were dissatisfied with both the methods and treatment they observed, a frustration that often predates COVID-19 but was **exacerbated** by the crisis. In particular, Black parents witnessed how systemic inequalities manifested in schools, confirming long-standing concerns about the **school-to-prison pipeline** and the limited representation of Black history in curricula. Many realized that their children were at risk of **falling through the cracks**, motivating them to seek alternative educational models.

Some parents, like Crista Maldonado-Dunn in El Segundo, created a **co-op**, where families took turns teaching lessons based on their own cultural histories. Children learned about their Apache, Samoan, African, Spanish, and Portuguese roots, practiced Spanish and jiujitsu, and engaged in group activities designed to strengthen identity and confidence. Maldonado-Dunn described their daily routine as "kind of like college for little people," emphasizing flexibility, exploration, and a strong sense of self.

Other families left public schools for political or health reasons. The debate over critical race theory — a **hot-button issue** in American politics — led some to withdraw their children, while upcoming vaccine mandates created anxiety for others. Karen Golden, director of an enrichment center, reported numerous calls from parents uncertain how to begin home-schooling yet determined to avoid mandates. Mental health concerns were also common, as children who had experienced a year of isolation were anxious, depressed, and underserved by traditional schools.

Experts note that while homeschooling has historically been driven by ideology, the pandemic drew in more middle-class, well-educated families frustrated by institutional failures. Still, many are expected to return to brick-and-mortar schools for social interaction, childcare, and extracurricular opportunities.

For Mozian, home-schooling has brought challenges but also rewards. She works part-time to accommodate the schedule, but the flexibility allows her son to learn through real-life experiences, such as observing tides at the beach and studying astronomy at Griffith Observatory. Elijah has commented that he no longer feels rushed or stressed, a statement that Mozian says "made my heart melt."

Abridged from:
https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-01-21/the-pandemic-pushed-more-families-to-homeschool-many-are-sticking-with-it

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d) **Put the events below in the order in which they appear in the article.**

☐ Families from different backgrounds turn to homeschooling during the pandemic.
☐ Karen Mozian decides to educate her son at home.
☐ Experts explain why some families may return to traditional schooling.
☐ Black parents describe long-standing concerns intensified by the pandemic.
☐ Parents create a cooperative model of learning based on culture and identity.
☐ Political and health-related debates influence educational choices.

g) Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. **Why did Karen Mozian decide to homeschool her son Elijah?**

2. **What challenges did Elijah face in regular school?**

3. **According to the article, how much did homeschooling grow in the U.S. during the pandemic?**

4. **What did Black parents observe during online learning that influenced their decisions?**

5. **How did Crista Maldonado-Dunn's co-op organize learning?**

6. **What were two political or health-related reasons some families left public schools?**

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7. **What are some reasons experts believe parents might eventually return to brick-and-mortar schools?**

8. **How has homeschooling changed family life for Mozian and her son?**

e) Look through the article once again and find the meanings of the American idioms and culturally specific expressions listed below.
Complete the table by:

- explaining the meaning of each expression in your own words,
- describing the American social, educational, or political context in which it is used,
- giving an original example related to education or society.

You may use reliable dictionaries or academic sources.

American idiom / phrase	**Meaning (to be found by the student)**	**Sociocultural context in the U.S.**	**Your example**
K-12 education			
school-to-prison pipeline			
a brick-and-mortar school			
a co-op			
(to) fall through the cracks			
a hot-button issue			

f) **Imagine you are commenting on a newspaper website below the article.**
Write a **150–180 word response** addressing the points below:

· What is your opinion on the rise of homeschooling during the pandemic?

· Would homeschooling be a viable alternative in your country's education system? Why or why not?

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- How did students in your country cope with online or home-based learning during COVID-19?

Refer to **at least one idea or example from the article** and use **at least one culturally specific expression** from the table above.

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