

# What Makes A School Good?

***Read this article about what makes a school good. Choose from the sentences A-F which fits each gap (1-5). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.***

***A*** *Maybe everybody should go to school in Finland.*

***B*** *Every teacher studies for five years before they can teach.*

***C*** *The aim of the schools is not only to focus on 'good' students but also to provide extra help to students that need it.*

***D*** *The answer is no, they aren't.*

***E*** *Fay, one of the best students in her year, said she didn't think British students would benefit from a school that was too easy-going.*

***F*** *What factors should we be looking at to judge how 'good' schools are or aren't?*

Everyone is concerned about the quality of education a school offers, but how is quality measured? We often hear that schools in some countries are excellent, while schools in other countries are filled with problems. (1) _____. I decided to do some research on the topic to see if I could come up with some answers. One way of deciding if a school is good is by looking at how many students go on to university when they leave. If you look at all the schools in the world, the country which sends the highest numbers of its students to university is Finland. So, I looked at conditions in Finnish schools to see what made them so successful.

Often you will hear people say that the best schools are those that are strict. So, are the schools in Finland very strict? (2) ____. They are usually very informal places with teachers and students sharing ideas. In fact, Finnish schools have a unique way of dealing with students and this could be the reason why they are so successful. While students in many countries spend long hours in school studying boring subjects, lucky students in Finland have short school days and ten weeks of summer holidays. Added to that, lunch is free and there are lots of lessons in sport, music and art.

Also, Finnish schools seem to have a different philosophy. They believe in equality and making school seem like a home away from home, so students feel comfortable and enjoy going there. (3) ____.The result of this is that less able students do much better in Finland than they would in other countries.

Another reason the schools may be so successful is the teachers. Teachers in Finland are seen as very important. They are well respected and the field of education is considered to be a science, with its own methodology, theory and principles. (4) ____.This is in contrast with the status of education in many other countries where three years are enough. Perhaps this explains why it's actually rather difficult to get a job as a teacher in Finland, as well as the reason that it's such a popular job.

In order to get students' opinions about what makes a school 'good', I visited my local school playground to do a little informal research. The thirteen-year-olds I spoke to were interested to hear about the Finnish schools. I asked them if they thought British schools were too strict and whether they thought more students would go to university if things were changed. (5) ____. She felt her teachers weren't strict enough, and that was why few students in her school went on to higher education. So it seems that the Finnish education system has come up with a 'formula' that works successfully in that country. Their example can serve as a model for other countries, but each country will have to work hard to put together an education system that will meet the needs of its people.