



Dictation, Listening and Reading

Reading

3 Complete gaps 1–5 with sentences A–F. There is one extra sentence.

LEARNING FROM HOW OTHERS LEARN

If we want to give our children the best education possible, it is sensible to look at the most successful education systems in the world for ideas. Different countries have different ideas about how to ensure that their children maximise their potential. It's clear that no education system is perfect. **(1)** ____ So, what, if anything, can we learn from them and are there any similarities between them at all?

The two countries are South Korea and Finland. Korea has a one hundred percent literacy rate. Its students achieve outstanding grades in all kinds of tests compared to those in other countries. How do they do it? **(2)** ____ Many are taught by private tutors after their normal lessons. Despite large class sizes, there are no problems with discipline. Teachers are respected and teach in a traditional manner with the children paying attention and obeying instructions unquestioningly.

Finnish children also do very well in comparison with school students in other countries. However, in Finland, schools combine a short school day and extra after-school activities to develop individual interests and motivate the children. **(3)** ____ There is much less stress in Finnish schools than in Korean schools but that doesn't mean that the teaching is unprofessional. Finnish teachers spend less time teaching but more time in professional development. They are highly educated and teaching is a well-respected and well-paid profession.

So, what can we learn from this brief look at two countries who are able to educate their children more effectively than we can? Firstly, children need a reason to learn. That may be pressure from parents, peers and society as a whole to succeed. **(4)** ____ Too often in our schools, we find children who are uninterested in the lessons and parents who are uninterested in their progress. Politicians and journalists would rather criticise teachers than praise them and, as a result, members of the teaching profession lack the respect they receive in other countries. **(5)** ____ The opposite should be true.

As we can see, Finland and South Korea do share one great similarity. In both societies, people look up to teachers and recognise the importance of the job they are doing. So, let's have more respect for teachers, students and education in general and, maybe, our children can be challenging those from South Korea and Finland in the future.

- A** The answer appears to be by sheer hard work. Students are under immense pressure to achieve their goals.
- B** These comparisons can hide faults and ignore positive aspects of poorly performing students but, generally, they give us a good idea of which education systems work best.
- C** Alternatively, it could be an interest in what they are learning and a thirst for even more knowledge.
- D** However, in most studies, two countries have a higher standard of education than others, even though the way they educate their children seems to be completely different.
- E** The idea is that they will work hard because they want to rather than because they are forced to.
- F** The public are more aware of the length of teachers' holidays than the enormous pressure they are under in the classroom.

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