

**Read the article. Choose from the sentences the one which fits each gap. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.**

### **The Oak Tree**

It's ten o'clock in the morning and a group of six- and seven-year olds are searching for firewood. They skilfully choose the driest pieces and take them back to the site where they're building a small fire. This is the first 'lesson' of the day at The Oak Tree school. Unlike the majority of schools, The Oak Tree is a forest school, which means that much of the school day is spent outdoors. The school itself is a beautiful wooden building, constructed on the edge of a wood in the Welsh countryside.

[ ] In the morning they discuss their learning objectives for the day and at lunch they share the experiences they've had that morning. Unless the weather is too bad to go out, they will be outside for the rest of the time.

The teaching style at The Oak Tree is also different from some of the more traditional schools. Teachers here believe that children should be allowed to develop their natural curiosity about the world. This means that only around half of the activities are led by a teacher. The rest of the time, the children themselves decide what to do.

[ ] Others invent their own games or just sit quietly and enjoy their surroundings.

Although the children are in charge at these times, safety is a priority. As a result, the teachers are never far away and they check the area beforehand to make sure there are no hidden dangers. [ ] However,

their teachers will be waiting somewhere nearby with plasters and sympathy. Any accidents are rarely serious and the children are soon keen to get back to their friends.

When the children aren't involved in free play, the teachers organise different activities designed to help the children develop in different ways. For example, there is a strong focus on personal skills like teamwork and communication.

[ ] Building fires is a big hit, but another popular activity is one where the children have to build a shelter. They design it themselves and decide what job each of them has to do. It's amazing how well they organise themselves while the teacher just sits back and watches.

At the same time, academic skills, like maths, reading and writing, aren't forgotten.

[ ] Sometimes they use them for working out maths problems, like how many trees there are in a certain part of the wood. They are also used for writing poems and stories about the woods or making drawings of the insects and leaves they come across. By the end of the morning, the children have usually filled several pages with their notes and calculations.

[ ] When there are disagreements, the children are expected to talk to each other and find a solution to the problem. 'While a lot of teachers worry about their students learning facts and figures, we're more worried about our pupils' emotional development,' says Freddie Stewart, the

head teacher. 'We strongly believe that children should leave school with the confidence to deal with all the problems life can throw at them. This means resolving conflicts and actively working with others to achieve our goals. Children who leave The Oak Tree are much more capable of doing those things.'

Currently, there are a number of schools that offer a similar type of education to The Oak Tree. Interest is also growing as parents begin to ask whether a traditional education is relevant in the modern world. However, there are hardly any schools offering this type of outdoor education to teenagers. This is a pity because the skills learnt in schools like The Oak Tree are probably just as important for teenagers as they are for younger children.

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Some take the opportunity to explore the woods around them, collecting rocks and leaves.

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However, a few of the children have complained that the activities are boring and that they would prefer to be in a classroom.



The children at The Oak Tree seem to be happy and there aren't many conflicts between them.



Although the children never have to work at a desk, they have a note book and pencil with them at all times.



In order to encourage development in these areas, the teachers create special outdoor challenges.



Of course, some accidents can't be avoided; the children are constantly falling over branches and out of trees.



However, there are no classrooms to speak of, just several large rooms, where the children gather at the beginning and at the end of the day.