

Students: Read aloud the paragraphs. Then answer the questions with your group. Make sure everyone has a chance to answer.

1. In the U.S. children start kindergarden at age 5. Kindergarden students learn their letters. They learn to count to 100. They may learn to read some simple words and to do simple math.

How does this compare with kindergarden in your country?

2. Students in the U.S. go to high school for four years. They take English, Math, Science, History, Art, Music, Foreign Language and Physical Education. English classes teach writing, grammar and literature. Students mainly read American and British literature. Math courses include two years of Algebra, one year of Geometry and sometimes Calculus. In 9th grade, students take World History. In 10th and 11th, they study American History. In 12th grade, they study American government and economics. Science subjects include biology, chemistry and physics. Many American high schools are quite large with 2,000 or more students. In smaller towns, the high schools will be much smaller.

How does this compare with high school in your country?

3. American students usually graduate from high school at age 18. Those who intend to go to college apply to many colleges their senior year. They must take standardized tests like the SAT and ACT. They must fill out applications and write essays. By spring, most students know which college they will attend. Some students apply for scholarships or financial aid. Some students have to take out loans to pay for college.

Describe the college application process in your country. Is it easy to get into college in your country? Is it expensive? Does the government provide help? Is it common for students to borrow money to finance their education?

4. Americans look upon college as a time for students to become independent. If they can afford it, parents encourage their students to live away from home. Parents also allow their students to choose their own career path. Most parents follow a hands off approach to their college age children.

Do parents in your country have a lot of influence over their college age children? Do they attempt to influence their career decisions? Do you think parents should have a say in what courses their college age kids sign up for?

5. College is a time when many people make their life long friends. It is a time to meet new people from around the state, country or world. Partying is frequently a common feature of college life in America. Many parents believe that, though academics is the most important, developing a social life is also an important part of being in college.

How does this compare with your college experience? Did you do much partying? In the U.S., Asian students have a reputation for studying all the time. Do you think this is true? What was your college major and why did you choose it? Are you using your college education today? Do you still keep up with your college friends?

6. Most Americans do not pursue degrees in other countries. It is common for American college students to study abroad for one semester. But they then return to the U.S. to finish their degree.

How does this compare with your country?

7. Many college professors expect students to be actively engaged in class discussions. Students are expected to express their opinions and provide support for their arguments. Professors generally encourage creative thinking rather than rote memorization.

How does this compare with your country? Do you find it awkward to participate in class discussions in American university classes?

Discuss these statements in your group. Tell whether you agree or disagree and explain why.

1. Education should be free for all students. The government should pay for college for all.
2. The more money spent on education, the better the quality of education.
3. College graduates always make more money than those that don't attend college.
4. Students who are caught cheating should be expelled.
5. It is good for students to take a year off before attending college. This gap year provides time for travel or volunteer opportunities.
6. Religious education should not be part of the public school system.
7. Studying abroad is not a good idea. It is better to study in your home country.
8. Teachers are paid too much.
9. American students don't do enough homework.
10. American education is inferior to education in my country.
11. All students should be forced to learn English.
12. All students should be required to wear uniforms at school.

Read the sentences and tell what the words in bold mean.

1. Nancy is a **straight A student**.
2. If you don't understand a word, check the **glossary** in the back of the book.
3. **Highlight** all the words you don't know.
4. The teacher will **quiz** the students on the vocabulary words.
5. Sara is taking three **advanced placement** courses this semester.
6. Jan will attend **boarding school** next year.
7. Jim will live in a **dormitory** on **campus**.
8. I'm worried about Jeff's **cognitive abilities**.
9. There is a lot of **gender bias** in higher education.
10. The **curriculum** for high school students is **mandated** by the state.
11. We have an **exchange student** from Korea living with us this year.
12. Nan improved her grade by doing a lot of **extra credit** work.
13. **Homeschooling** has become very popular in the U.S.
14. John plans to attend a small **liberal arts college** rather than a large university.