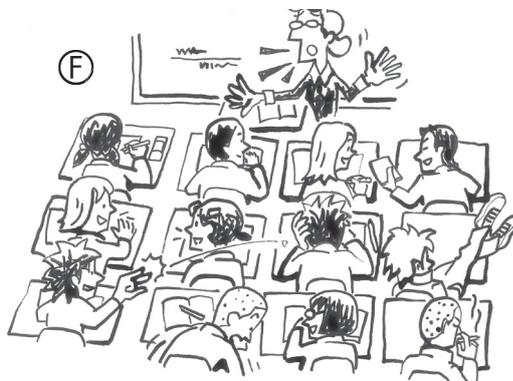
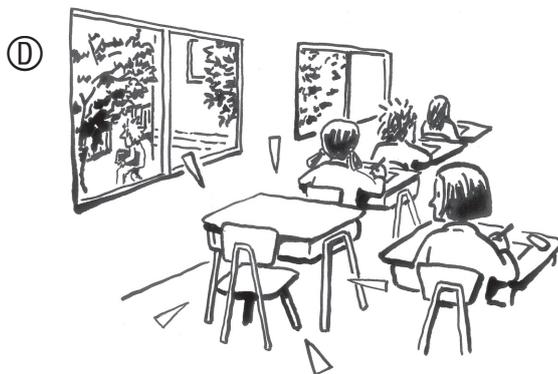
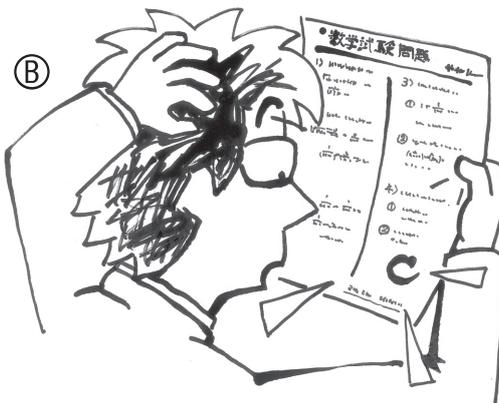


Education Today: How Good is Yours?

1a Write the letter of each picture with its matching word or phrase.



	class breakdown		students sleeping in class
	a class with too many students		bullying
	cutting class		a graded paper without corrections or comments

1b Discuss the pictures above with your partner(s).

Are there too many students in your classes?

Did you ever fall asleep during a high school or college class?

Are bullying and class breakdown common in many schools?

Do you ever cut classes?

Do you want teachers to write comments on your papers and explain your grades?

Are you a great, good, average, or poor student?

2a Scan the article for the words and phrases below. Underline them in the article even if the word forms differ.

bully	critical thinking	incompetent	self-discipline
class breakdown	curriculum	memorize	unmotivated student
creative thinking	educational reform	motivate	

2b Now, read the article and think about the content.

Japanese students were once respected around the world for their superior performance on academic tests. Currently however, local and international media are reporting serious problems with many Japanese schools, from elementary schools to universities.

Despite Japan's wealth, numerous universities, and high technology, only three Japanese universities were listed among the top 100 universities in "World University Rankings for 2006," a review of education worldwide. Tokyo University was ranked nineteenth.

The Ministry of Education and many schools are now planning major educational reforms.

Educational reformers attempt to solve various educational failings. Many teachers and administrators do not fail students who have not developed basic skills, such as reading or writing well. Some of these students are unmotivated. They are uninterested in school and sometimes do not attend classes. Unmotivated students, lacking control or self-discipline, occasionally act wildly, leading to "class breakdown," a situation in which a weak teacher cannot control a classroom. Moreover, media reports suggest that the number of bullies hurting other students is increasing.

There are serious students and lazy students; likewise, there are effective teachers and incompetent teachers. Incompetent teachers do not motivate students to study, give too many high grades, do not prepare for class, and sometimes waste school money. More supervision and better training is needed for these teachers.

Educational researchers often state that schools need to reform their curriculums. Educational experts want to create new classes and change the methods used to teach students. Students, they say, are being taught to only memorize facts. Students are not learning to think creatively or critically. Creative thinking leads to seeing the world from different perspectives and having new ideas. Critical thinking is important for understanding if information is correct or not.

Managers of international companies often complain that Japanese workers do not communicate effectively. They hope Japanese education will develop intercultural communication skills.

Educational reform is extremely important. However, each student taking responsibility for his or her learning and self-discipline is just as necessary. What are you doing to improve your learning?

2c Match the word or phrase with its definition. The first is done for you.

Word or Phrase	Definition
<u> B </u> curriculum	A. a person who hurts those who are weaker; to hurt others
_____ educational reform	B. all of the classes or courses at a school
_____ unmotivated student	C. a person with no desire to learn or study
_____ self-discipline	D. a situation in which all or most of the students ignore the teacher and do whatever they like
_____ incompetent	E. to make another person want to do something
_____ class breakdown	F. having new ideas or original ways of seeing a situation
_____ bully	G. to learn something so you can remember it later
_____ creative thinking	H. to examine information and decide for oneself if it is true or not
_____ critical thinking	I. the ability to control oneself and act correctly
_____ motivate	J. a plan to change the way that people teach and learn in schools
_____ memorize	K. unable to do something correctly because of a lack of skill

2d

Discuss these questions with your partner(s).

Listen to each answer and ask at least one follow-up question.

- Are you usually motivated or unmotivated to study English?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- Have you ever studied with a teacher that you thought was incompetent?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- How would you change the curriculum at your school to improve it?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- What do you think causes class breakdown?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- Did your previous schools have bullies?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- Are you a self-disciplined student or not?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- What information would you like to be able to memorize better?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- Do you think that your school helps you to develop critical thinking?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- Do you think that your school helps you to develop creative thinking?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.
- Does your school need educational reform?
Listen. Ask a follow-up question.

If you have time, make your own questions and continue talking about this topic.

3a

What is Positive and Negative about Our School?

With a partner, write between five and ten positive and negative things about your school. Consider curriculum, teachers, schedule, buildings, classes, restaurants, computers, tuition, uniforms, field trips, etc. See the examples in the chart for some ideas.

Positive Points	Negative Points
<i>The library has many books.</i>	<i>Teachers do not write helpful comments on reports.</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3b

With new partners, discuss what you wrote in 3a. Read the example conversation for help.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

- A: *What do you think are positive points about our school?*
 B: *Well, some of the teachers stay late to help students, and it's close to the station.*
 A: *Yeah. That is convenient. I like the new lockers and that we can study abroad in Australia during the summer. What else do you like?*
 B: *I like that the computers are new, the cafeteria food is cheap, and the choice of classes in my department is great.
 What do you think needs to be improved?*
 A: *I want teachers to return reports with comments. I also want smaller classes. It's almost impossible for me to talk directly to my teachers.*
 B: *I know what you mean.*
 A: *I also wish that the tuition were lower.*
 B: *Me, too.*
 A: *The history teacher talks and talks all class long. He should teach with interesting pictures. It is hard to stay awake after lunch. What else do you think is negative or positive?*
 B: *I think...*

4

How Do You Compare to Other Students?

Stand in lines of six to eight students. Listen to your teacher ask a question, such as "Who studied the most last night?" Talk together and move in the line. The student who studied the most moves to the far right. The student who did not study moves to the far left. The other students stand between those students, according to how long they studied.

5a

Quickly write answers to the questions below.

What is a good way to memorize new words?

What is an effective method to improve listening skills?

What is an effective way to make reading enjoyable?

What is a fun way to study English?

How can I practice conversation without a native speaker?

5b

Ask the questions to five other students. If you hear a good idea, give it a try!

6a Reform Yourself as a Student

Write six educational goals for the month.	Write your plans to reach your goals.
Goals	Plans
<i>example: get a high score on a test, learn an English song</i>	<i>example: study every day for thirty minutes, repeatedly read and sing the lyrics of a fun song</i>
1 _____ _____	1 _____ _____
2 _____ _____	2 _____ _____
3 _____ _____	3 _____ _____
4 _____ _____	4 _____ _____
5 _____ _____	5 _____ _____
6 _____ _____ _____	6 _____ _____ _____

6b Read the example dialog below. Then discuss your goals with your partner.

- A: *What is your first goal?*
 B: *I want to get a very high score on the next English test.*
 A: *Good luck. How are you going to do that?*
 B: *I will study every day instead of just the night before a test. What about you?*
 A: *My first English is to read an English short story.*
 B: *Good for you! What are you going to read?*
 A: *I have to look in the library for a story that is not too difficult.*
 B: *You should ask your English teacher for help.*
 A: *What is another one of your goals?*
 B: *I am going to...*

6c Write a note in your schedule book to look at this page one month from today.

I hope that you will reach all of your goals.

A Story about Bullying

Student A is a lonely student. She is very unhappy because many other students bully her. One day, at lunch-time she tries to chat with Student B who has never bullied her. Student B answers her questions politely, but quickly leaves. Student C, in a loud voice, says that student A is a fool. Student D walks by Student A and pushes her hard. Student A drops her books on the floor and cries. Student E, who was Student A's friend before high school, ignores Student A and walks away. A teacher, who was watching, smiles at student A and helps her pick up her books. The teacher tells Student A not to worry, but the teacher does not do anything or say anything to the other students.

7a Read the story and then circle the adjective that you feel best describes each character.

Student A is *mean / unpopular / weak* .

Student D is *cowardly / aggressive / unhappy* .

Student B is *busy / aggressive / indifferent* .

Student E is *lazy / popular / unkind* .

Student C is *cruel / insensitive / happy* .

The teacher is *effective / incompetent / violent* .

7b Rank the six characters from one to six. One is the character that you dislike the most.

1. _____

3. _____

5. _____

2. _____

4. _____

6. _____

7c Discuss these questions with your partner(s).

Which character do you think is the worst? Why?

Why did Student E behave like that?

Have you ever met anyone like Student D?

Were there bullies in your high school?

What do you think of Student A? Why?

What should high schools do about bullies?

7d Role Plays



1 One of you is Student A in the story. One of you is her twenty-year-old sister, Mariko. Student A explains what happened at school and asks Mariko for advice. Mariko gives advice to her sister.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Student A: Mariko can I talk to you now?

Mariko: Sure. What's up?... (Continue the conversation.)

2 One of you is Mrs. Kimura, the mother of Student A. One of you is the principal of the high school. Mrs. Kimura explains the problem to the principal, Ms. Someya.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Ms. Someya: Hello Kimura San. What can I do for you?

Mrs. Kimura: I would like to talk to you about... (Continue the conversation.)

3 One of you is a student, Kenji, who was caught by a principal for bullying another student. The other student is the bully. The principal will talk to the student about bullying.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Principal: Why were you bullying another student?

Kenji: What did I do wrong?... (Continue the conversation.)

8a

Which teacher expressed which problem? Listen to the interview and in the name column, write Gary Jones, Sophie Lawrence, Prof. Ramirez, Irino Sensei, or Kondo Sensei.



Name	This Person Said...
	Students are weak regarding social skills.
	Graduating is too easy. Students won't study unless a class is like a game.
	Japanese students can only answer when, where, and what questions.
	Everyone must study English, so teachers cannot help serious students.
	There are too many teachers who are not teaching well.

8b

Which teacher expressed which solution? Write a name on each line.

Name	This Person Said...
	Students should study how to express their ideas.
	Teachers should design classes that allow students to be outdoors together.
	Students who do not study should not be allowed to graduate.
	Only people who have taken education classes can be teachers.
	Schools should not require every student to study English

8c

Circle phrases to show your reactions to the opinions and suggested solutions.

Name	My Reactions
Sophie	I strongly agree I somewhat agree I am not sure I somewhat disagree I strongly disagree
Irino Sensei	I strongly agree I somewhat agree I am not sure I somewhat disagree I strongly disagree
Kondo Sensei	I strongly agree I somewhat agree I am not sure I somewhat disagree I strongly disagree
Gary	I strongly agree I somewhat agree I am not sure I somewhat disagree I strongly disagree
Prof. Ramirez	I strongly agree I somewhat agree I am not sure I somewhat disagree I strongly disagree

8d

Discuss these questions with your partner(s).

What do you think of Sophie's opinion and solution?

Were any of those opinions correct about your high school?

Are any of those opinions correct about your school now?

What do most students that you know need to improve?

What do most teachers that you know need to improve?