

LESSON 6. PRIVATE, PUBLIC, INDEPENDENT

Communicative area: writing about your school

Active vocabulary: entrance exams, free of charge, scholarship

1. a) Talk to your partner and answer the question: What is the difference between a state and a private school? Think of at least 3 differences.

b) Read the conversation between Kiril and Jane and 1) check if it mentions the differences you spoke about; 2) explain what the words in bold mean.

Kiril: Jane, could you please help me clarify something? I read that there are state, independent and private schools in Great Britain. What is the difference?

Jane: Independent schools are private. So, there are two types only. The difference is that the state schools get money from the government. On the contrary, independent schools do not receive money from the government or local authorities. The parents pay for the education. A public school is an independent secondary school which is a charity. It means that private schools don't earn money.

The expression "public school" can be confusing: in many countries other than England a "public school" is a school which is run by the government. One of the examples is the United States. All public schools there are funded by the government. It is not the case with British schools. In England a private school is any school which is run to make a profit. Among the most famous public schools are Eton, Harrow and Winchester.

Kiril: They all pay and nobody studies there **free of charge**!





Jane: No, that is not true. The majority of students **pay fees** but some **scholarships** are available for the brightest pupils or for children from poorer families. The schools select pupils according to ability by using an **entrance exam**. Entrance exams are taken at the age of 13

and are known as Common Entrance exams.

Kiril: Where do the children study before they enter a public school?

Jane: Some public schools have their own prep schools as well as the senior schools, but students from other schools can apply to the senior schools.



Kiril: What is a prep?

Jane: A preparatory school is usually called a prep school. It prepares pupils to go to a public school. Boys often enter such schools at age 8 and girls at age 11.

Kiril: Do boys and girls study together?

Jane: Schools are often single-sex boys' schools or girls' schools but some of them are mixed. Besides, many boys' schools accept girls in the sixth form, from ages 16 to 18.

Kiril: And what about the state schools?

Jane: State schools are all mixed. But there is another important difference. The majority of state schools are day schools. The students go home after classes. Many of the independent schools are **boarding** schools. They may have full boarders who live in the school grounds during term-time, weekly boarders who return home only at weekends and dayboys/daygirls who return home each evening, but some are only for day pupils. There are several state boarding schools in the UK. The education is provided free, but parents must pay for the cost of boarding. Most of these schools are mixed sex, and they are usually for students from ages 11 to 18.

c) If you studied in Britain, where would you like to study? Why?

2. a) Work in three groups. Read one of the texts and fill in the table in your exercise-books. You will have only one third of the answers.

	Eaton	Harrow	Wycombe Abbey [ˈwɪkəm]
When was the school founded?			
Where is it located?			
Is it a boarding school? Where do the students live?			
What are the entrance exams?			
What uniform do the students wear?			
What subjects do they study?			
What sports do they practise?			
What famous people studied there?			

Eton College

Perhaps the most famous public school in the UK is Eton, founded in 1440. It is located near Windsor. Entrance to Eton is competitive, based on a test at the age of 11 and a Common Entrance exam at 13. The academic year starts at the end of September and has three terms. It finishes with the exams in

June. There are no girls at Eton. Boys leave the school at 18 – many go on to study at Oxford and Cambridge.

The boys still wear a formal school uniform: a black tailcoat and waistcoat and pinstriped trousers. Students at Eton are all boarders. They have their own small rooms with a bed and desk. The main team sports which are played are rugby and football in the winter and spring, and either cricket or rowing in the summer. Other popular activities include drama and music. Senior boys may take part in military training, or choose to do social service in the community.

Famous “Old Etonians” (people educated at Eton) include the Duke of Wellington, famous writers such as Shelley and George Orwell, and many British Prime Ministers. Both of Prince Charles’ sons, William and Harry, studied at Eton.

Harrow School

Harrow, founded in 1243, is an independent school for boys in north-west London.

Many famous people who are known as Old Harrovians, for example Lord Byron, seven former British Prime Ministers, including Winston Churchill, studied there.

Boys at Harrow have two uniforms. Everyday dress consists of a white shirt, a black silk tie, grey trousers, black shoes, a blue jumper (sweater), a dark blue jacket, the school blue and white scarf and a straw hat. Sunday dress consists of a morning suit; a black tailcoat, pinstriped trousers, a black waistcoat, a black tie and a white shirt.

During their first year, boys take English, French, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography, Latin, Religious Studies, Art, Music, Design Technology and Information Technology. Greek, Chinese, German or Spanish are offered to boys with good linguistic ability. Optional languages are Russian, Japanese, Portuguese and Italian.

During their second and third years boys work towards their GCSE examinations.

In the Sixth Forms all pupils are expected to take AS-level in at least four main subjects, going on to A-level in at least three. There are many to choose from. Harrow has been impressive in the development of a number of sports. Squash was

invented in Harrow around 1830. Football rules were developed there. An annual cricket match has taken place between Harrow and Eton College since 1805.

Wycombe Abbey

Wycombe Abbey, founded in 1896, is an independent girls' school. It is one of the top schools in the United Kingdom. There are about 540 girls aged 11 to 18. The curriculum for the first three years at Wycombe Abbey is: English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Latin, Geography, History, Religious Studies, Information Technology, Design Technology, Art, Music, Drama, Physical Education and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education). Cookery, Singing and Spanish form part of the eleven years olds' curriculum. The twelve-year-old girls either continue with Spanish or take up German or Classical Greek.

The girls who are working towards their GCSE examinations learn English, English Literature, Mathematics, a modern foreign language and the three Sciences – Physics, Chemistry and Biology – studied either as separate Sciences or as a combined course.

The subjects from which students select their GCSE options include Religious Studies, History, Geography, French, German, Spanish, Latin, Greek, ICT, Design Technology, Art, Drama, Music and Physical Education.

Every student, in addition, attends Physical Education lessons and a general course that covers a variety of areas, including careers education and citizenship.

Students in the Sixth Form select their A-level exams from a big variety of subjects.

All Sixth Formers pursue a sport, follow an IT course which enables them to take the European Computer Driving Licence. All are taught Critical Thinking.

Many girls who previously studied at Wycombe Abbey became famous lawyers, actresses, writers, and even Members of Parliament.

b) Work in groups of three (each student should have read a different text) and complete the rest of the table.

c) Talk to your partners and say which school you would like to study at if you lived in Britain.

3. Write about your school.



Independent schools. Video “Life at Harrow School”.

LESSON 7. MY SCHOOL YEARS

Communicative area: writing a composition

1. a) Read the composition and make an outline. Compare your outline with your partner's.

My School Years in Mill Valley (adapted)

My years growing up in Mill Valley and attending the schools there were full of fun and enlightenment. I started Kindergarten at Old Mill School. That was back in 1948. Mrs Eileen Schroeder was the teacher in Kindergarten. She was wonderful, playing the piano while we were dancing or cutting out parts of paper people so we could put them together.

What I was taught at home was also taught at school: the importance of property rights... what isn't yours, isn't yours; the importance of manners, including listening to those speaking about you without interrupting, and not being rude to the teacher; waiting in line to play a game or waiting for the school bus.

My experience at Old Mill (from Kindergarten to the 6th grade) was one that I look back upon with lots of satisfaction. I feel today that I received as much as I wanted to get from the wonderful and talented teachers that taught me there.

After Old Mill, I attended Alto School. We took the school bus over in the morning and rode back in the afternoon. Most of the time songs were being sung. Alto was very crowded, as