

**Before you watch****1 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Answer the questions.

- 1 How many students are there at your school?
- 2 At what ages do students in your country start and finish school?
- 3 What subjects do you study? Do you have to study all these subjects or did you choose to study some of them?

**Comprehension check****2**  Watch the DVD clip. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 How old are the students when they start at West Milford School?  
a twelve    b fourteen    c fifteen
- 2 What type of school is West Milford?  
a a public high school  
b a private high school  
c a public art school
- 3 What is an elective subject?  
a a subject you choose to study  
b a subject you have to study  
c a subject you study after school

**3**  Watch again. Number the lessons (A–G) in the order that you first see them.

- A \_\_\_ woodwork  
B \_\_\_ English  
C \_\_\_ music  
D \_\_\_ physical education  
E \_\_\_ art  
F \_\_\_ film photography  
G \_\_\_ mechanics

**4**  Watch again. Are the sentences true or false?

- 1 It doesn't cost students any money to go to West Milford School. **true / false**
- 2 Each lesson is an hour long. **true / false**
- 3 Students must wear the same clothes to school every day. **true / false**
- 4 Physical education is an elective subject. **true / false**
- 5 Students don't have to use their own cameras in the photography class. **true / false**
- 6 Lots of students choose to study art. **true / false**
- 7 Students who study music must already play their own instrument. **true / false**
- 8 West Milford is a normal American high school. **true / false**

**Round up****5 SPEAKING** Work in groups. Answer the question.

Would you like to go to school in the USA? Why? / Why not?

## Vocabulary

**6 RECYCLE** Complete the sentences with the correct adjective form of the nouns below.

ambition creativity flexibility intelligence maturity punctuality self-confidence

- 1 Matthew would like to own his own company one day. He's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Armita is very smart and is good at solving problems quickly. She's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Robert is fourteen, but he behaves like an adult. He's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Amanda writes beautiful stories and poems. She's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Abdul isn't shy and believes in his abilities. He's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 Sophie is always on time. She's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 Fiona is happy to change her plans to suit other people. She's really \_\_\_\_\_.

**7** Complete the text with the words below.

curriculum fees periods uniform

## THE BRIT SCHOOL

The Brit School in south London is one of the most unusual schools in the country. As well as teaching the core national <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ of English, maths, science, computing and citizenship, the school specialises in music, theatre, dance and TV production. Lessons are usually taught in 50-minute <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, and take place in one of the classrooms or in the recording studios, two theatres, or three dance studios that are at the school. Students don't need to pay <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to attend the Brit School, and because the school encourages students' creativity, they don't have to wear a <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. But the school isn't for everyone, and only young people with special talents can go there.

### Extension

**8** Work in groups. Make a presentation to give to a group of students from the USA about the school system in your country. Include the following:

- the different types of schools and the ages of the students that go there
- the curriculum that students follow
- the fees that students need to pay
- the exams that students must do and when they must do them

**9** Give your presentation to the class and answer any questions. Then ask questions about the other presentations. Use the key phrases for asking for information.

#### Asking for information

Could you tell me ...

I was wondering ...

I'd like to know ...

May I ask ...

Another thing I wanted to know is ...

## DVD clip summary

The DVD clip is about a typical American high school and the subjects that students study there.

## Background

Compulsory education in the USA starts at five years old, when children begin elementary school. They stay at this school until they are ten to twelve years old, at which point they go to junior high school or middle school. When they are fourteen or fifteen years old, students go on to high school or senior high school. Compulsory education finishes at the age of eighteen.

When students reach high school, they are usually given more freedom and can choose some of the subjects that they wish to study. These are called electives. There are also a number of subjects that students have to study. The number of years that students must study these subjects varies from state to state, but usually includes two to four years of English, maths, science, social sciences and physical education.

## Before you watch

### Exercise 1

- Read the questions with the class and elicit answers from individual students. Encourage the students to guess the answers they do not already know and use their suggestions to start a class discussion.
- **Answers:** Students' own answers

## Comprehension check

### Exercise 2

- **Pre-watching:** Go through the questions with the students.
-  Play the whole DVD clip. The students choose the correct answers. Check their answers.
- **Answers:** 1 b 2 a 3 a

### Exercise 3

- **Pre-watching:** Ask the students to read the list and to try and remember the order that they first saw the lessons in the DVD clip.
-  Play the DVD clip to check the answers.
- **Answers:** 1 E 2 B 3 D 4 C 5 A 6 F 7 G

### Exercise 4

- **Pre-watching:** Ask the students to try and answer the questions before they watch the DVD clip again.
- **Weaker classes:** Play the DVD clip and pause after each answer.
-  Play the DVD clip to check the answers.
- **Answers:** 1 true 2 false 3 false 4 false 5 true 6 true 7 false 8 true

## Round up

### Exercise 5

- Put the students in groups. Give them a few minutes to discuss the question.
- **Answers:** Students' own answers

## Vocabulary

### Exercise 6

- Ask the students to read the sentences and the nouns first and then choose the correct noun for each sentence before changing the form.
- **Weaker classes:** Help the students change the nouns into adjectives first.
- **Answers:** 1 ambitious 2 intelligent 3 mature 4 creative 5 self-confident 6 punctual 7 flexible

### Exercise 7

- Ask the students to read through the text first, then complete the sentences. With a **weaker class**, you could elicit the meanings of the words first.
- **Answers:** 1 curriculum 2 periods 3 fees 4 uniform

## Extension

### Exercises 8 and 9

- **Materials needed:** None
- **Preparation:** Put the students in groups of three. Tell them that a group of students from the USA are going to visit your school and that they want to know about your education system.
- **Language:** Elicit polite ways to ask for information. Then focus on the key phrases.
- **Activity:** Ask the students to nominate one presenter. Then give the students 5–8 minutes to talk about everything they know about their education system. They should use the points to help them. Finally, give them another 3–4 minutes to prepare their presentation, making sure they include all the information in the task. Then ask them to present to the class. Encourage the class to ask for more information.
- **Extension:** After all the groups have presented, ask the students to compare the education systems in your country and the USA. For homework, you could ask them to write about the pros and cons of each system.

## American high schools

This is West Milford High School in New Jersey in the USA. The school has around 1,200 students between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. These students start in ninth grade, when they are fourteen or fifteen, and graduate in twelfth grade, when they are seventeen or eighteen.

Like most American high schools, West Milford is a public school, which, in the USA, means it is paid for by the government. The school is open to everyone and students don't have to pay fees. They start school at twenty past seven, finish at around 2 o'clock, and have eight 46-minute lessons – or periods, as they call them in the USA – every day. Punctuality is important and students have to be on time to every lesson.

In American public schools, students have quite a lot of flexibility. They don't have to wear uniforms so they can wear their own clothes to school. And once they get to high school, they are able to choose certain subjects to study, called electives. Students study these elective subjects alongside a core curriculum of subjects that they have to do – such as English, maths, and physical education or 'phys ed'.

At West Milford High School, students can choose from a wide range of new subjects, and they have several of these elective classes, like music or woodwork, each day.

For tenth graders, today's first period is art. The students at Milford are encouraged to be creative and each class focuses on a different art form. This class is working with materials to create collages.

This class, on the other hand, is studying film photography. The school provides the students with cameras, storage and even a dark room, where they can develop images from film.

Art is very popular at West Milford, but there are lots of other electives. This is an eleventh grade woodwork class, where students learn basic carpentry and how to operate heavy machinery.

This is a ninth grade music class. The students who choose music usually play an instrument already, but here they can improve their skills. They learn how to read music and how to play with other musicians.

This is a twelfth grade mechanics class, where students learn about engines and electronics. Today they are studying auto engineering, where they learn how a car works and how to repair it.

Of course, students at West Milford spend a lot of time on their core subjects too. This afternoon, for example, the eleventh graders have a double English class, while the twelfth graders have physical education or 'phys ed'.

But elective subjects are an important part of life for American high school students. This is because different students have different types of intelligence – some are very precise, some are very creative and some are very practical. When students choose their electives, they have to know what they like and what they're good at, and this shows a level of maturity above that required at junior high school.

West Milford is only one of around 98,300 public schools in the United States, and these students are only a handful of the almost 50 million public school students in the country. But it is a typical example of an American high school. Its system of core subjects and electives builds students' ambition and self-confidence, helping them to become the artists, engineers and carpenters of the future.