**8. School and study**

1. Educational systems (kinds of educational institutions, examinations, organization of the school year, marking/grading, holidays/days off)
2. Lessons (timetable/Schedule, subjects, recess, breaks, school food, what lessons look like)
3. Student life (free time, hobbies, after-school activities/extracurricular activities, part-time/seasonal jobs, friends, pocket money)
4. Learning a foreign language/Exchange stays abroad, educational stays, language courses, au-pair)
5. Student/teacher relationships

In Britain today, education [ˌedjʊˈkeɪšən - vzdelávanie] is compulsory ([kəmˈpʌlsərɪ] povinná) from the age of 5 to 16. School begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. there are five school days in a week, from Monday to Friday. School year (školský rok) begins after summer holidays and is divided into three “terms“ ([tɜːmz] trimestre). The intervals ([ˈɪntəvəl] medziobdobie) between terms are formed by Christmas and Easter holidays.

In Britain there are **state schools** (they are free of charge) and **public schools**. Public schools are in fact (v skutočnosti) **private boarding** [ˈbɔːdɪŋ] **schools** (súkromné internátne školy) in which students both live and study. These are peculiar [pɪˈkjuːlɪə - typický, príznačný] to Britain. They are for children aged 13-18 **accepted** ([əkˈseptɪd] prijatých) on the basis of the **entrance** [inˈtraːns] **exams** (prijímacie skúšky). Only 5 per cent of all children attend (navštevuje) public schools. Their **fees** (poplatky) are very high. The most exclusive ones, with a long tradition, are *Eton, Harrow* and *Winchester*.

State education is divided into two main stages: **Primary** [ˈpraɪmərɪ] **Education** from the age of 5 to 11. **Secondary Education** from the age of 11 to 16/18.

Secondary schools include: **Grammar schools** which prepare students for the studies at universities. **Secondary Modern Schools** which provide practical education in addition to general education in subjects like English, Maths, foreign languages. Technical schools prepare students mainly from technical subjects. **Comprehensive schools** ([ˌkɒmprɪˈhensɪv] stredné všeobecno-vzdelávacie školy) (11-16/18) and grammar schools are state schools, which offer general education. This ends at the age of 16, when most pupils take some form of public examination in about seven subjects. The most common subjects are English, history, geography, French, German, mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology. These *General Certificate of Secondary Education* (GCSE) exams are national and give pupils a qualification that is **accepted** across the whole country. Most pupils continue (pokračovať) their education after sixteen, for another two years, in the **sixth form** (šiesty ročník) (two extra years at school) or at **college** ([ˈkolɪdž] vysoká škola). After two years of their studies students take “A” levels (GCSE at Advanced level”) in two to four subjects. These examinations are very important for those who want to continue their studies. The best ones continue to study at universities. The most famous are Oxford and Cambridge universities.

**The educational system (vzdelávací system) in Slovakia** has been reformed for several times. In Slovakia, school attendance (školská dochádzka) is compulsory from the age of 6 to 16. The school year begins on 2nd of September and ends on 31st of June. In July and August pupils have summer holidays. The school year is divided into 2 terms. The first ends on the 31st of January. During the winter term pupils have several holidays such as autumn holiday at the end of October, Christmas holiday which usually lasts for 2 weeks. During the summer term pupils have spring holiday, usually at the end of February. In Slovakia, students do not go to school on **religious** (cirkevné) and national holidays (štátne sviatky). National and religious holidays are **days off** (dni pracovného pokoja, e.g. All Saints’ Day, May Day) in Slovakia. Students get **school reports** (vysvedčenia) at the end of January and June and **are assessed** (sú hodnotení) by marks from 1 to 5 (1 is the best, 5 is the worst). If a student gets a 5 in June from 1 or 2 subjects, he can take a **make-up exam** (reparát) to try once again to pass. At our school the lessons begin at 7.55 and last till 15.30. Each lesson lasts 45 minutes. There are five-minute breaks between the lessons and after the third lesson there is a 20-minute break and after the sixth lesson there is 50-minute break for lunch. Students either eat their **packed lunch** from home or have their lunch at **school canteen** at primary school nearby.

Our school system comprises of (skladá sa z) **4 main grades** (stupne), namely (menovite) the pre-school stage (stupeň), the elementary/primary (základný) grade, the secondary grade and higher education including the university. Pre-school stage includes **nursery** [ˈnɜːsrɪ] **schools** (jasle) for children from 3 months to 3 years and **kindergartens** (ˈkɪndəˌgɑːtən] škôlky) for children aged 3 to 6. At the age of 6 children begin to attend **primary school**. It takes 9 years and is divided into two stages, first and second. Basic education is compulsory for all children after the age of 6. At primary school they learn the three R’s (Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic) with subjects such as Slovak language, foreign language usually English or German, history, geography, maths, chemistry, biology, physics, PE (physical education -TV), art, civics (občianska náuka), music. At the age of 15 they take Monitor test and pass entrance exams to continue their studies at secondary school. The best students apply to study at a **grammar school** (or high school) called gymnasium. It takes four to eight years. It is popular because it prepares for university study. It is **highly selective** (vysoko výberový) and only the best applicants can be taken. There are also other types of secondary schools, which usually take 4 years: **secondary business schools** (SEŠ), technical schools, and medical schools (SZŠ). **Vocational** [vəʊˈkeɪʃənəl] **schools** (učňovky) prepare students for different kinds (druhy) of professions. The study usually lasts three years and at the end students gets their **skill certificate** ([skil səˈtɪfɪkɪt] výučný list) or five years which ends with **school-leaving exam** called maturita. School leaving exam from English consists of 4 parts: Reading, Writing, Listening, English in Use, and Speaking. This exam is very important because its **results** ([rɪˈzʌlts] výsledky) **are taken into account** (sa berú do úvahy) when students **apply** ([əˈplaɪ] hlásiť sa, žiadať o) **for** university study. Most of the students, however, have to pass the entrance exams to be accepted to most universities. In Bratislava, there are lots of universities and colleges, some of them are private and some public. The most **recognized** (najuznávanejšia) is The Comenius University. At university you can study for 3 years and get a **Bachelor’s degree** ([ˈbæčələz digri:] BA) and after another 2 years you get a **Master’s degree** ([ˈma:stəz digri:] MA).

Some young Slovaks decide (rozhodnúť sa) to study at a foreign university in **neighbouring** ([ˈneɪbəriŋ] susedných) countries especially in Prague, Vienna or Brno. During their studies many students **decide** [dɪˈsaɪd – rozhodnúť sa] to spend a term (semester) or a year at a foreign university. Many Slovaks students and **graduates** ([ˈgrædžʊəts] absolventi) work **abroad** ([əˈbrɔːd] v zahraničí) during the summer (as au-pairs, waiters or shop assistants) because it is an excellent **opportunity** ([ˌɒpəˈtjuːnɪtɪ] šanca, príležitosť) to earn some money, speak foreign language, get to know new cultures, make new friends and meet new people. They **improve** (zlepšia si) their foreign language skills, learn to live independently, which makes them more self-confident (sebavedomý, sebaistý).

**After-school/Extra-curricular activities** (mimoškolské activity) are very important. There are many different clubs and sport teams at schools which meet after lessons. Many schools publish their own student newspapers and some have their own radio station. In Slovakia many students attend language courses, evening courses or extra lessons to prepare themselves for the school-leaving exams. At our school students can also attend several courses, e.g. an English course, an Art course, etc. A lot of young Slovaks play a musical instrument in their free time and attend primary art schools; they are members of different dance clubs and folk groups, and sports teams.

The study at primary and secondary school is **quite demanding** (dosť náročné). The teachers and parents should **therefore** (preto) **be supportiv**e (byť nápomocný, podporujúci) and **motivating**. It is important to **encourage** (povzbudzovať) **students**, **develop their creativity** (rozvíjať ich kreativitu) and make them realise the importance of a good qualification to their future lives.

I am studying at Secondary Artistic School. Now I am in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th class. This school prepares students for different profession in the field of art. A lot of its graduates start to work in the theatre as make-up men/women (maskéri), scenographers (javiskoví výtvarníci), others in the film-making as cartoon-animators. When I graduate I would like to work in\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

1. How long does the compulsory education last in Britain? How long does it last in Slovakia?
2. What kind of education is offered by grammar schools in our country?
3. What are A-level exams in Britain?
4. Describe the difference between public and state schools in Britain.
5. Would you like to spend a semester at a foreign university? Why?
6. How can parents and teachers encourage children to study?
7. How do young people spend their free time? Are there any after-school activities at your school?
8. What do you do during school breaks?
9. Which subject do you like most? Why?
10. Which subject do you hate most? Why?
11. What are the four grades of educational system in Slovakia?
12. What kinds of secondary schools do you know?
13. What subjects are you studying this school year? What do you do in your practical classes?
14. Why do students at some schools wear a school uniform? Do you know anybody who has to wear it?
15. What should be a good teacher like? What qualities should he/she have?
16. What would you like to do in your English classes?
17. Who attends nursery schools and kindergartens?
18. What is a day off?
19. Have you ever experienced bullying (šikanovanie) at school? What is bullying? What should you do when you see someone bullying his/her classmates?