

This lesson is about school. The education system in Ireland, the subjects studied, parent teacher meetings and notes home that can be difficult to understand.

### **Exercise one**

This is a reading comprehension which will explain the Irish school system. Read and listen and answer the questions.

### **Schools in Ireland**

We will look at primary and secondary level. Education is free, unless you choose to send your child to a private school.

Children have to go to school from the ages of six to 16. Children do not have to attend school until the age of six but it is usual for children to begin school the September following their fourth birthday. Four-year-olds and five-year-olds start in the junior or senior infant classes.

### **Primary (first level) education- National School**

- Junior Infants
- Senior Infants
- First Class
- Second Class
- Third Class
- Fourth Class
- Fifth Class
  
- Sixth Class

### **The Curriculum**

The word **curriculum** means the subjects studied.  
In national school children study language,

mathematics, SESE ( social, environment and scientific education=geography history and science), art, music and drama,

physical education(PE), social personal and health education SPHE.

**Exercise one**

1. What age can you start school?
2. What age do you have to start school?
3. What subjects do you study at National School?

**Exercise Two**

Match the description of the subject with the subject, for example Irish (gaelic) ----- the original language of Ireland still used in some areas of Ireland.

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Art       | Science, history and geopgraphy                                   |
| Biology   | you learn a new language  |
| Maths     | you learn about the body  |
| History   | you learn about the world   |
| Geography | you learn about the past  |
| English   | you learn to write, read literature and poems and understand them |
| SPHE      | you learn about your social and physical health                   |
| SESE      | You learn about colour, painting,drawing                          |
|           | you learn about numbers   |

Listen to a child talking about their week and fill-in the timetable.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH

**Second level education Secondary School****Junior Cycle**

- First Year
- Second Year
- Third Year- The Junior Cert. examination is sat at the end of this year.

Students usually begin the junior cycle at the age of 12. The Junior Certificate Exam is taken after three years. There are a wider variety of subjects studied and pupils may have to choose what subjects they are interested in. for example pupils can study business studies, woodwork, metalwork ,technical drawing, technical graphics

**Senior Cycle**

Fourth Year - Transition Year follows the Junior Certificate examination. This year is free from exams and allows students to experience a wide range of educational inputs, including work experience.

Fifth year

Sixth year Leaving Certificate Examinations

- 4. What age do you start secondary school?**
- 5. What is the name of the exam that you take at the end of three years at secondary school?**
- 6. What do you do in transition year?**
- 7. What is the name of the exams you take in Sixth year of secondary school?**

**Exercise Three**

You are going to listen to a parent teacher meeting.

What questions do you think the mother/father will ask about the child? (does he have any problems? Does he listen? Is he a good boy?)

Listen carefully and answer the questions.

1. How does the conversation begin? Does she immediately ask about her son? Why?

2. What subjects does she ask about?
3. How can the parent help him with his English?
4. How much time should he spend on homework?
5. What does she say about Irish/gaelic?
6. What nice things does the teacher say about her son at the end of the conversation?
7. How so they say goodbye?

### Exercise four. Adjectives + Prepositions

<b>of</b>	<b>to</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>for</b>	<b>on</b>	<b>with</b>	<b>about</b>
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Complete these sentences.

When I was at school I was **good at**.....

I'm **terrible at**.....

I'm **excellent at** I find \_\_\_\_\_easy/difficult.

Do you know which adjectives follow these prepositions.

Agree \_\_\_\_\_(to have the same opinion as someone else)

Listen \_\_\_\_\_

Wait \_\_\_\_\_

Depend \_\_\_\_\_(to need someone )

Afraid \_\_\_\_\_

Interested-----

Worry \_\_\_\_\_

The child was waiting ----- the school bus for 30 minutes.

'Are you listening --- me?' the teacher asked.

The boy depended ---his mother to help his with his maths homework.

The children were afraid \_\_\_\_ the school principal.

The class were very interested \_\_\_\_ history.

I always agree \_\_\_\_ my wife.

My daughter always worries \_\_\_\_\_ the Friday spelling test.

**Exercise Four**

We are going to look at writing a note to your child's teacher-.Mrs Hockman  
Your child, Tomas, had a sore throat and a cough and has not been to school  
for three days.

Ballydown North  
Western Road  
Castlebar(1)  
15<sup>th</sup> October 2008(2)

Dear Mrs Hockman,(3)

Tomas(4) has been absent from school for three days this week, 15<sup>th</sup>  
October-17<sup>th</sup> October 2008, (5)because he had a sore throat and a cough.(6)

Yours sincerely(7)

Monicka Molloy(8)

Address (1)

Date (2)

Greeting (3)

Child's name (4)

Date of absence (5)

Reason for absence (6)

Closing (7)

Signature (8)

Write a note to your child's teacher using the numbers to help you.

(1)

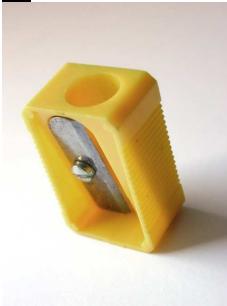
**Exercise Five**

**Can you label these things in the classroom.**

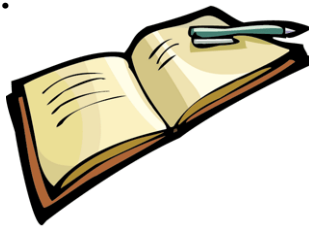
Ruler rubber/ eraser sharpener/parer whiteboard table chair  
schoolbag copy book hole punch file/folder stapler pencil  
case

**Pencil case**

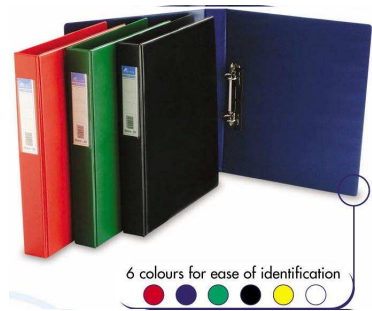
1.



2.



3.



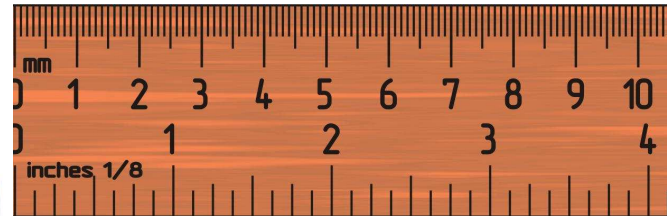
4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



**Look at these school rules.**

No bullying  
 School uniform must be worn  
 No jewellery  
 No high heeled shoes  
 Label your school clothes  
 No mobile phones allowed.

Which do you think is the most important and which are the least important?  
 Put them in order.

**Exercise Six****Which do you think is the best way to get children to do well at school.**

**Encourage** someone to do something –go on. You can do it.

Encourage=to try and persuade someone to do something that you believe would be good.

**Help** someone to do something-let me explain this to you

Help+ to give someone support or information so that they can do something more easily

**Persuade** someone to do something-I'll give you €10 if you study for your exam

To make someone agree to do something by giving them reasons why they should

To make someone believe that something is true

**Force** someone to do something- you have to do it. You have no choice.

To use physical strength, violence or energy.

To make someone do something that they do not want to do.

Notice

Verb + subject + infinitive

The teacher was tired so the students **helped** her *to* carry her bags up the stairs.

Can you **help** me find my car keys?

My sister **helps** me with my homework.

Mary was shy but Colm **persuaded** her to sing in the school karaoke competition.

His mother **encouraged him** to do some sports to help him lose weight.

The big boy forced the small boy to give him his packed lunch..

The principal persuaded the pupil to have his hair cut.

**Complete these sentences.**

1. The teacher encouraged the pupils to>>>>>>>>
2. The doctor persuaded the old lady >>>>>>>>
3. The gardai forced the man to>>>>>>>>
4. My friend helped .....

**Reading and Listening Exercise**

The Essential Guide to the Primary School Years  
by Brian Gilsean ((published by primary ABC.)

**Homework-How to Help.**

Every school will have its own policy in relation to homework. Similarly, every home should have one! The best policies are those that are worked at jointly, between all interested parties. The key is to establish a routine and stick to it, with no or few exceptions to the rule. If you have concerns about your child's progress, or if there is a consistent problem for your child in doing certain homework, you should always discuss it with the teacher.

**Some Helpful Hints**

The following tips might help:

Agree on a set time for homework with your child. Give them some element of choice e.g. homework is done between 5.30 and 7.30 each evening, but the children start

and finish at a time of their choosing, within that time frame.

When you've made decisions together stick to them until they need to be reviewed. This applies to everything, not just homework issues!

Make sure that they are sitting comfortably at a table.

Be consistent. Discuss, monitor, check and sign homework every night if possible, but at least very regularly. Better to spend 5 minutes every night than to leave it for three weeks and then spend two hours at it.

The child should be encouraged to complete the homework, working independently.

Try to avoid confrontation with children over homework. If you're getting impatient, it's best to stop and try to come back to it a little later.

Allow children to make mistakes. Rather than correct them all the time, encourage them to find and correct their own mistakes. Children must be able to learn that making mistakes is part of the learning process and it's important that they are willing to go back and try a different method or approach.

If your child is having genuine difficulty, try to help them but don't exceed the allotted time. Make contact with the teacher, explaining that your child honestly worked for the allotted time. If you can, point out the child's specific difficulties.

If you display undue anxiety about a child's school work or homework it creates tension within the child. Acknowledge and respect effort, honesty and enthusiasm. This way,

children will progress and develop at their own pace, in a safe and relaxed environment.

### The Benefits of Homework

Homework will tend to have a specific purpose and will be given consistently in small quantities. It is extremely useful for a number of reasons.

It acts as a form of communication between school and home.

It allows you to see how your child is progressing in different areas.

It helps to develop the child's self discipline.

It helps a child to become an independent learner.

It is helpful to revise or reinforce work that was begun in school.