**NAVARRA 2023**

**THE SUCCESSFUL FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM**

In recent years, the Finnish education model has attained universal recognition for its quality and standards. From newspaper comment pieces to political podcasts, people across the globe have been investigating just what makes the Finnish education model one of the best in the world, according to the excellent results in PISA tests. Finland might be a country of just under 5.5 million, and a per-pupil budget that falls below the UK and the US. Yet, it also happens to produce the smartest, most well-rounded students. Perhaps the key reason is that education focuses on the promotion of teaching autonomy, creative learning, and equal ability classes.

Although preschool is free for everyone -with 97% of kids attending – compulsory schooling doesn’t take place until the age of 7. Early years are focused on natural play, rather than academic learning, thus fostering interaction with other children. Play doesn’t stop at the age of seven either, it is encouraged all the way through schooling. This is, after all, where the bulk of our creativity develops. In other countries in the world, from the age of six, students are tested to assess their academic capabilities, thus, it is easy for children who underachieve early in life to be written off and placed in lower sets, which in turn discriminates against their chances. Not in Finland, where there are no standardized tests, so there is a lack of competition that runs throughout a child’s schooling. The difference between the strongest and the weakest students is the smallest on earth. 93% of students graduate from secondary education and 66% of pupils attend university. This is evidently an education system that works.

As for teachers, in Finland they have more respect within their society. They work in a confident atmosphere, built on a mutual trust between teachers, students and parents. Parents especially know that their kids are being taught by the brightest people in society. So they back whatever happens when their children are in the school environment. Moreover, teachers are trusted to do what they do best -- teach --, having complete freedom as to how they teach what is on the curriculum and without the pressure of league tables or inspections. About school assignments, Finland issues a lot less homework to students than most countries on earth. Most of the education happens in the classroom, which is, after all, where you would expect it to happen. Home time is there to develop soft skills, gain life experience and foster close family bonds.

**1. Read the following statements, decide whether they are true or false and justify your answer by quoting evidence from the text.**

**a.** Finland spends less money on each student than the UK or US.

**b.** A six-year-old kid doesn’t have to attend school in Finland.

**2. Find in the text the word or group of words which match these definitions**

**a.** Concentrates on   
**b.** Promoting, encouraging   
**c.** Do less than expected, especially in schoolwork

**d.** Support

**3. Rephrasing:**

1. She started drinking too much alcohol two years ago.

She has.....

1. Although she had been vaccinated, she caught the flu

Despite…..

1. I love German. Unfortunately, I can’t speak it fluently.

I wish……..

1. As he hadn’t behaved himself, his parents got angry with him.

His parents .......

1. Everybody must read the instructions first.

The instructions....

1. This is the man. His job is very dangerous.

This is.....

1. The engineer has repaired my television.

I....

1. She gave up going to French lessons.

She stopped ......

1. I regretted having hit the dog on the head.

I wish......

1. “What time do the banks close today?

Tim asked me.....

**4. Circle the word with a different sound:**

1. B**u**dget, b**u**lk, press**u**re th**u**s
2. Piec**es**, result**s**, focus**es**, class**es**
3. L**ear**n, w**or**ld, t**ur**n, **ear**th, ass**e**ss
4. Focus**ed**, attain**ed**, encourag**ed**

**5. Write a composition of around 150-200 words on ONE of the following topics**

**a.** There is a teacher job available in a school in Helsinki (Finland). Write a formal application letter to the school head teacher showing your interest for the job*. Remember to include your abilities, skills and all the suitable information you may provide in order to get the job.*

**b.** Do exams provide a good way to measure students’ knowledge? Give your opinion about this topic. You can present other alternatives you may consider appropriate to assess students.