

France: Students take to the streets

ESL Worksheet | education | speaking & listening A2+ | time: 60-75 min



Warm-up: Your school experience

1. What do you remember most about your school?
2. What did you like about school? What didn't you like?
3. What was your favourite subject? Why?
4. Was there a teacher you particularly liked or disliked? Why?
5. What would you change about your school if you could?
6. What do students usually complain about at school?

Warm-up: ranking

Which three things cause students the most stress? Why?

- exams
- homework
- teachers
- classmates
- grades
- school rules
- long school days
- too many subjects
- parents' expectations
- choosing what to do after school

Warm-up: What makes a good school?

Aspect of school	What was it like at your school?	What would your dream school be like?
Classroom equipment		
Textbooks and learning materials		
Teachers		
Extra-curricular activities		
Number of students in a class		
School timetable		
Homework and exams		

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Follow-up questions

- Which of these things was the biggest problem at your school?
- Which one was the least important?
- Which one would you improve first?

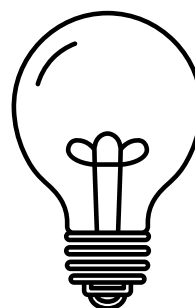
Vocabulary 1

Are these definitions correct?

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. overcrowded | A place without people . |
| 2. timetable | A plan showing when lessons or activities happen. |
| 3. demonstration | A private event where people show that they support or oppose something. |
| 4. blockade | A situation where people prevent others from entering a place. |
| 5. trade union | An organisation that represents employers. |
| 6. clash | To have a peaceful conversation with someone who has a different opinion. |
| 7. resources | The money, equipment, people or materials available to do something. |
| 8. injured | Physically hurt. |
| 9. concrete action | A clear and practical step taken to deal with a problem. |
| 10. influence | The ability to stay at home and work on your behaviour. |

Vocabulary 2

Use the words above and the picture below to create a story.



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Listening

Listen and fill in the gaps.

Students take to the streets in France

Something unusual is happening in France. Thousands of high school students have been protesting about their (1) _____. The protests started in the Paris area in September and have now (2) _____ to many parts of the country.

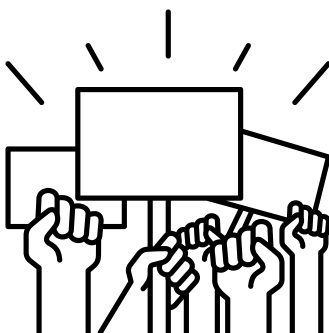
The students say that there are several problems with the (3) _____ system. Some schools do not have enough teachers, so students sometimes have lessons without their normal teacher. Many students also complain about (4) _____ classrooms and old or uncomfortable school buildings. Some schools can become extremely hot, and students say that school days and (5) _____ can be too long and stressful.

The protests began with students blocking the (6) _____ to some schools. Soon, more students joined them. Teachers, parents and trade unions have also taken part in some (7) _____ because they have their own concerns about the education system.

However, the protests have not always been peaceful. In some places, students have built blockades, started fires or (8) _____ with police. Thousands of people have been arrested, many of them teenagers. Some students and police officers have also been (9) _____.

The French government says it wants to find (10) _____. Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu has promised concrete action, including better resources for schools. However, many students say that promises are not enough. They want to see real changes in their schools.

So the protests are not simply about missing teachers or uncomfortable classrooms. They have started a much bigger conversation: What should a good education system look like, and how much should young people be able to (11) _____ it?



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Comprehension

1. When and where did the protests start?
2. What problems with schools are the students complaining about? Give at least three examples.
3. Who, apart from students, has joined some of the demonstrations?
4. Why have some of the protests become controversial?
5. What does the government say it wants to do?

Speaking: debates

Look at the statements below. What are the arguments for and against? What is your opinion?

1. Students should have the right to complain when their education is poor.
2. Damaging buildings doesn't solve educational problems.
3. Boarding schools are better than ordinary schools.
4. Students should choose most of their subjects themselves.
5. Schools should have no homework.
6. Exams are not the best way to measure intelligence.
7. Students should be allowed to use their phones during lessons.
8. The school day should be shorter.
9. Schools should teach more practical things and fewer traditional subjects.
10. Students should be able to evaluate their teachers.
11. Every student should wear a school uniform.

Final discussion

1. Why is education important? Is it mainly about getting a good job, or does it have other purposes?
2. What makes a school a good school? Is it good teachers, good facilities, good results, happy students — or something else?
3. Do you think students should have more influence over their education? Why/why not?
4. When is protesting justified? Is being unhappy about something enough, or does there need to be a serious problem?
5. What do you think about the protests in France? Do the students have good reasons to protest?
6. Is it possible to protest without making life difficult for other people? What would a "good" protest look like?
7. If you could change ONE thing about education in your country, what would it be and why?

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Transcript

Students Take to the Streets in France

Something unusual is happening in France. Thousands of high school students have been protesting about their **(1) schools**. The protests started in the Paris area in September and have now **(2) spread** to many parts of the country.

The students say that there are several problems with the **(3) education** system. Some schools do not have enough teachers, so students sometimes have lessons without their normal teacher. Many students also complain about **(4) overcrowded** classrooms and old or uncomfortable school buildings. Some schools can become extremely hot, and students say that school days and **(5) timetables** can be too long and stressful.

The protests began with students blocking the **(6) entrances** to some schools. Soon, more students joined them. Teachers, parents and trade unions have also taken part in some **(7) demonstrations** because they have their own concerns about the education system.

However, the protests have not always been peaceful. In some places, students have built blockades, started fires or **(8) clashed** with police. Thousands of people have been arrested, many of them teenagers. Some students and police officers have also been **(9) injured**.

The French government says it wants to find **(10) solutions**. Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu has promised concrete action, including better resources for schools. However, many students say that promises are not enough. They want to see real changes in their schools.

So the protests are not simply about missing teachers or uncomfortable classrooms. They have started a much bigger conversation: What should a good education system look like, and how much should young people be able to **(11) influence** it?

Answer key

	Word	Answer	Correct definition (if false)
1	overcrowded	F	A place with too many people in it.
2	timetable	T	A plan showing when lessons or activities happen.
3	demonstration	F	A public event where people show that they support or oppose something.
4	blockade	T	A situation where people prevent others from entering or passing through a place.
5	trade union	F	An organisation that represents workers and protects their interests.
6	clash	F	To fight or come into conflict with someone, often because of different opinions.
7	resources	T	The money, equipment, people or materials available to do something.
8	injured	T	Physically hurt.
9	concrete action	T	A clear and practical step taken to deal with a problem.
10	influence	F	The ability to affect or change someone's decisions, behaviour or opinions.