

New Opportunities *UK/US* DVD Teaching Notes

The DVD provides a brief overview of the geography and some aspects of the history of the UK and US but the main focus of the video is on British and American young people talking about their lives.

The DVD is divided into six different topic areas:

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Friends
- 3 Lifestyles
- 4 Holidays
- 5 Special Days
- 6 Schools

Each section starts with an introduction from the studio presenters, James from the UK and Jessica from the US.

Learning value

New Opportunities UK/US DVD and Workbook can give your students a mind-expanding experience: it gives your students the chance to take a tour of the UK and US, and listen to young British and American people.

Language development

The video presenters and young people interviewed in the DVD are ordinary young people from different parts of the UK or US. Each one speaks with a slightly different regional accent.

Listening and understanding may be difficult for many of your students. We do not expect students to be able to understand every single word, but we encourage students to 'grab what they can understand' from what they hear.

The *video script* is printed in the back of the Workbook and in the last part of the lesson, students may review the video sequence while looking at the video script. This will help them to confirm their comprehension and perhaps clarify some things which they did not understand.

The guided comprehension exercises in the Workbook are designed to assist comprehension. They are not *tests*. The sequence of exercises helps students to *build* their comprehension of the video and language.

The ideas and information in the video are designed to stimulate the students to talk and write about what they learn. The learning value of video is as much from language production as it is from language comprehension.

Cultural development

The images, ideas and information contained in the DVD will broaden your students' life experience.

When we travel, we come across different ways of life, different values and new ideas and we naturally form opinions of these things. You can use this video experience of the UK and US to give your students the chance to express their opinions.

Our responsibility is to give students the language, skills and opportunities to express their opinions, rather than to influence their opinions.

Every journey starts from home

Learning about a different culture should encourage students to re-examine their own culture. The cultural development which derives from the DVD is equally the new experience of a foreign culture and the greater understanding of the home culture.

'Where do you come from?'

This is the first question we ask any foreigner we meet. The *New Opportunities UK/US* DVD and Workbook should help students to talk about their own country and culture as well as learning about the UK and US.

Language Focus and Culture Focus

There are two different approaches to using documentary videos of this type: *Language Focus* and *Culture Focus*.

You do not need to choose either *Culture Focus* or *Language Focus* but you can create your own balance between the two.

Your choice will depend partly on the priorities of your teaching aims and partly on the traditional use of L1 and English in your classroom.

Culture Focus

Discussion

If you want to maximise the students' cultural development, you will need to allow them to use their L1 when discussing cultural topics. With their limited command of English, they will not be able to discuss these cultural topics in much depth. Allowing the students to use their L1 will mean that students will be able to examine these cultural topics and compare them with their home culture.

Input

You may also think it is valuable to present some of the more detailed background material to the students in L1.

Output

If you allow students to present the output of their discussions and projects in L1, this will clearly improve the quality of that output. However, this will also reduce to almost zero the language learning benefit of the video.

Within the business community, it is perfectly normal for groups to have discussions and make plans and notes in their L1 for a presentation which will be delivered in English.

Language Focus

Discussion

If students discuss the video material in English, this will greatly benefit their language development. You will need to train them in discussion skills if the discussion is to get beyond the 'I like ...' / 'I don't like ...' stage.

They should learn phrases for:

- expressing agreement: *So, do I. Neither do I.*
- expressing polite disagreement: *I don't agree because ... I think the main problem is ...*
- asking for clarification: *What exactly do you mean?*
- asking for reasons: *Why do you say that?*
- asking for expansion: *Can you explain that in more detail?*
- summarising: *I think we all agree that ...*

This training, together with the language, vocabulary and ideas from the video and Workbook, will help your students to maximise the language development from the video.

Input

If you use English to present as much of the background information as you can, and you encourage students to use English language websites to get further input, they will develop their ability to comprehend written and spoken English.

Output

If students learn to present the output of their discussions and projects in English, this will clearly improve the quality of their productive output. Because of their limited command of the language and limited vocabulary, their output will be in simple, rather than complex sentences. But learning to express complex ideas in simple language is a great achievement.

Making a choice

You do not need to make a choice between the two different approaches. In the video you may choose to use a cultural focus approach in one topic section and a language focus approach in a different section.

Each approach has different benefits. When you make your choices, think about the benefits rather than the processes.

DVD Instructions

The DVD should play in any domestic DVD player or computer with a DVD drive. After inserting the DVD, the title sequence will play (on some computer systems you may be prompted to select your playback software first).

Once the main menu appears you can choose whether to watch the whole programme from start to finish (play all), or to watch an individual unit. If you choose to watch one of the units, you will be presented with another menu allowing you to choose between playing the whole unit (play all) and playing short sections from within the unit.

The DVD provides a motivating and entertaining mix of modern images and facts on screen and in voice-over.

New Opportunities UK/US Workbook

Although the DVD can be used alone, the Workbook provides a graded series of comprehension, viewing activities, discussion points and extension activities which greatly enrich the learning value of the DVD.

The Workbook includes a key to the activities and a full printed version of the *video script*.

The video activities offer a wide range of discussion opportunities to encourage students to reflect on what they see, calling on their own knowledge of the world and inviting them to make comparisons.

Each unit begins with a short Introduction which is followed by clearly labelled sections. These sections make the video both easy to follow for students and easy to use for the teacher.

The units in the Workbook are divided into three sections:

Preview: A warm up activity such as a quiz to stimulate the students' interest and to introduce them to the topic.

Video Activities: Step-by-step activities which are linked to the video sequences.

Follow-up: A reading section based on texts such as guide books, brochures, magazine articles and student handbooks, and which looks at a related topic. This section includes a guided writing activity.

How to use the DVD in the classroom

Each topic area can be taught over two or three lessons of concentrated study. However, the learning value is greatly increased with repeated viewing for specific tasks over a longer period.

New Opportunities UK/US is extremely rich in both visual and linguistic information. This information and the cultural ideas will develop your students' cultural horizons and encourage them to think about the world beyond the town or city where they live.

Since students are following a graded learning syllabus, if they re-view the first section of the DVD a few months after they first viewed it, they will be able to understand more and will be able to talk, read and write more about the topic.

This will maximise the learning value to be gained from the DVD and Workbook.

A possible plan might be:

Week	Activity
1	View <i>Introduction</i> and do the preview and some of the Video activities.
2	Review the <i>Introduction</i> and complete the Video activities.
3	Review the <i>Introduction</i> and complete the Extension and Follow-up activities.
4	View <i>Friends</i> and do the preview and some of the Video activities.
5	Review <i>Friends</i> and complete the Video activities.
6	Review <i>Friends</i> and complete the Extension and Follow-up activities.
7	Review the <i>Introduction</i> and <i>Friends</i> and do any further activities.

This gradual progress through the material on the DVD and in the Workbook will mean that video is a regular part of lessons and the DVD and Workbook will be fully exploited throughout the academic year.

Think now about the duration of your academic year. Make a diary for video activities. Remember to build regular reviews of earlier sections of the DVD through the year.

Planning a video lesson

Make sure that you have watched the video unit before taking it into the classroom.

All classes are different and you may need to do some extra background work with the students before you watch it. There is some extra background information in these notes.

Check that all the students can see and hear the video, and that you are in a position to use the remote control easily.

The activities invite the students to discuss the issues and topics both before and after watching. In many cases they are exchanging personal opinions, and preparation is not needed. In cases where they are required to compare their culture with the UK, you may need to prepare the discussion by providing information about your country or eliciting ideas from the students.

Preview

These activities can be done in advance of watching the video or as part of the video lesson. Get the students to work in pairs. Use the material to discuss with the students what they think the unit is going to contain.

Video Activities

Before you watch

These activities get your students to think about what they are about to see. They also pre-teach vocabulary where necessary. If students are well-prepared, they will feel more confident when they watch the video, and will enjoy it much more.

Activities include:

- pair and group discussion
- brainstorming
- guessing
- vocabulary exercises
- predicting and matching exercises

Get the students to do the exercises just before watching the video section.

While you watch

These are activities which students do while they are watching the video. They not only focus on the information in the voice-over, but also on what the students see.

Activities include:

- checking answers to *Before you watch* questions
- ticking things students saw in the video
- answering open questions
- completing sentences
- matching information
- completing tables
- deciding if sentences are true or false
- multiple choice (watching without the sound)
- circling the correct answers
- remembering what students saw
- identifying pictures

Read the instructions with your students before you play the video and check they understand what they have to do. Ask them to watch the video once without writing. Then play it again while they write their answers. Before you play the video again you can get students to check answers in pairs, or you can elicit answers from a few students, and indicate if they need to watch more carefully.

After watching a second time, go through the answers with the students and watch again if necessary to confirm.

EXTENSION

These are optional exercises which usually ask the students to compare themselves and their own culture with that of the UK. They do not require students to watch the video again. They often consist of a discussion or writing task. Activities include:

- group work and pair work: brainstorming and discussions
- writing tasks

Stronger students will be able to explore these questions in more depth.

Follow-up

You can get the students to do this reading task for homework or in class. It does not require students to watch the video again. It concludes with a writing project that the students can add to their portfolio.

1 Introduction

In this first section of the video, we meet the two presenters, James from the UK and Jessica from the US. We learn a little about the location, dimensions and populations of the UK and US.

James and Jessica discuss their differences and similarities.

They introduce some of the topics such as lifestyles, sports, education, holidays and special days which are presented in more detail later in the DVD.

Background information

At this stage, the main point to make is that the US is very big and the UK is very small. They are both multicultural communities which use English as their major language.

English as the main language

At the time of the formation of the United States, some areas had been occupied by English-speaking settlers and other areas by French-speaking settlers. In other areas there were smaller communities who used other languages, such as Dutch, Spanish and Norwegian. There was also a large community of Native Americans who used several different tribal languages.

The founders decided that English should be their primary language even though they were fighting against the British for independence.

Influences on the English language

In Britain, English had developed from the languages of Saxon tribes from Germany. English had been influenced by occupations of Vikings (from Denmark), Romans (from Italy) and Norman French (from the north of France). These invasions had pushed the indigenous populations of Celts to the edges of the British Isles. They formed communities in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Cornwall (in the south west).

American English developed from its roots in British English and was influenced by the languages of the people from many different countries who settled in the US. So we find *cookie* which comes from Dutch, *lasso*, *rodeo* and *corral* which come from Spanish. Have you ever wondered why Chicago begins with a 'sh' rather than a 'ch' sound? It's because it was named by French-speaking settlers.

Size and weather

The US covers an enormous land mass extending from the Polar North to the Gulf of Mexico so Americans experience a very wide range of different weather patterns, from extremely hot to extremely cold, from extremely wet to extremely dry.

The UK occupies a group of small islands on the northwest coast of continental Europe. Because these islands are small and surrounded by the sea, Britain does not experience the same extreme weather patterns as the US. In Britain the weather is usually mild. It is green and wet because of the rain-filled winds which come from the Atlantic Ocean.

The US is divided into 48 contiguous states on the mainland and two non-contiguous states, Alaska in the far north, which was purchased from Russia and Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean, which was occupied during the 19th and 20th centuries. Hawaii is the newest state. It became the 50th state in 1959.

The people and history

People in the 50 different states of the US live very different lives. They work in different industries, have different landscapes and natural resources. The founders of the United States realised that it would be impossible to govern such a large area from Washington, so each state was given its own government. Each state elects Senators and Congressmen who represent the interests of each state in the government in Washington.

The UK has a much older history. A thousand years ago, different parts of the UK were ruled by different Kings. Today the UK is divided into four different countries: Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland. They are all ruled by the Queen of England and by the government in London. Recently, the London-based government has devolved a degree of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Follow up activities

Talk to your friends and your teacher about:

- ☐ something new which you learnt from the video
- ☐ something which you liked from the video
- ☐ something which you didn't like from the video

Make a list of five things you want to remember from this part of the video.

Discussion Activities

Is your home language only used in your country or is it also used in other countries?

Do they use the language in exactly the same way or do they use some different words?

Is your country a multicultural country or does everyone have the same basic origins?

Your country has an official national language, but does everyone use that language all the time or do they use different languages?

Is your country very big like the US or very small like the UK?

Even a small country like the UK is divided into different regions. Is your country divided into different regions? How are they different?

- ☐ language
- ☐ weather
- ☐ history
- ☐ lifestyle
- ☐ industries
- ☐ wealth (money)

How are the different regions represented in your government?

2 Friends

This section of the video looks at the everyday lives of young people in the UK and US.

Background

There is no essential background information to give.

Before you show the video, encourage the students to talk about their own spare-time activities in the evenings and at weekends.

Invite them to think about how far they travel and which means of transport they use.

Invite them to speculate about how young people of the same age spend their free time in the UK and US.

Follow up activities

Talk to your friends and teacher about:

- ☐ something new which you learnt from the video
- ☐ something which you liked from the video
- ☐ something which you didn't like from the video

Make a list of five things you want to remember from this part of the video.

Discussion Activities

- ☐ How much time do you spend on the internet? What do you use it for?
- ☐ How much time do you spend watching TV? What do you enjoy watching?
- ☐ Do you have any hobbies such as collecting or making things?
- ☐ Do you play a musical instrument or sing in a choir?
- ☐ Do you regularly play any sports?
- ☐ How often do you travel outside your home? How do you travel? How far do you travel?
- ☐ Have you got a driving licence? Have you got a car of your own or one which you can use?
- ☐ What kind of car would you like to have?
- ☐ How much time do you spend helping your family at home?
- ☐ Which jobs do you do?

Survey

Why not do a survey in your class to find out about popular spare-time activities?

You can find out:

- ☐ What is the most popular TV programme?
- ☐ What is the favourite internet website?
- ☐ What is the most popular hobby?
- ☐ What is the most unusual hobby?
- ☐ What is the most popular way to travel to school?
- ☐ What is the best way to travel? Why?

What is the worst way to travel? Why?

3 Lifestyles

This section of the video looks at the everyday lives of young people in the UK and US, particularly sports and keeping fit. Another topic is food, the popularity of fast food, foreign food and both vegetarian and organic diets.

Before you show the video, encourage the students to talk about their own sporting activities both as participants and spectators.

Invite them to make a *diet diary* describing all the food and drink they have during a week. Invite them to talk about the different foreign foods they have tried, the ones they liked and the ones they didn't like.

Background

British and American young people eat too much unhealthy food and drink too many sugary drinks. Many people, even young people, are over-weight.

However, organised sports are very popular in both the UK and US. Many people train and play in school or local teams.

In both the UK and US, the landscape offers possibilities for individual sports like rock-climbing, surfing, hang gliding, mountain-bike racing and skiing.

Being multicultural communities, there are many opportunities to try foreign foods. Indian and Chinese food is very popular in Britain. Hamburgers (from Germany) and pizzas (from Italy) are the most popular fast foods for young people.

Follow up activities

Talk to your friends and teacher about:

- ☐ something new which you learnt from the video
- ☐ something which you liked from the video
- ☐ something which you didn't like from the video

Make a list of five things you want to remember from this part of the video.

Discussion Activities

- ☐ Do you eat a healthy or unhealthy diet?
- ☐ What can you do to make your diet better?
- ☐ What are your favourite foods?
- ☐ What kinds of food do you dislike?
- ☐ Is sport very important in your life?
- ☐ Is sport too important or not important enough in your school/country?

Guessing game

Choose a student from your class who you don't know very well.

Make a list of the types of food you think he/she likes. Make a list of the types of food you think he/she doesn't like.

Which sports does he/she like watching? Which sports does he/she like playing?

Show your lists to the other student. Were you right or wrong?

4 Holidays

This section of the video looks at holidays and vacations for young people in the UK and US.

Background

American vacations

Only 30 per cent of Americans have passports allowing them to travel abroad. But the US is a very large and interesting place with many exciting places to visit. Many Americans stay in the US for their vacations. They may travel by coach or train or fly to another part of the US for their vacation. They have big cars and fast roads so many will drive hundreds of miles to Florida on the southeast coast or to California on the west coast.

Americans enjoy different types of outdoor activities: hunting, fishing, climbing and mountain-bike riding. They have a wonderful country to explore which avoids the need to speak foreign languages in other countries.

Britain is still the favourite foreign destination for Americans who travel overseas, partly because of the shared history but also because of the common language.

British holidays

Since 1950 British people have travelled abroad more frequently. Now more than 50 per cent of the population goes abroad at least once a year. This experience of foreign cultures has changed the British diet because the tourists have enjoyed foreign foods in other countries.

Package holidays

Many British and American people like an organised holiday with no problems and no surprises.

Thomas Cook (1808–1892) invented the organised holiday, first taking workers from the Midlands and north of England by train to the seaside. Later he used coaches and today the Thomas Cook Travel Group even has its own airline. Thomas Cook gave many people their first opportunity to go away for a holiday.

Some people say that Thomas Cook ‘invented’ Switzerland as a holiday destination as he encouraged people to explore the mountains and lakes and learn to ski.

Although the package holidays organised by Thomas Cook and other groups are still very popular, many people now like to organise their own holidays, buying their airline tickets and reserving hotels through the internet. They prefer the freedom to choose which places to visit and what to do.

Follow up activities

Talk to your friends and teacher about:

- ☐ something new which you learnt from the video
- ☐ something which you liked from the video
- ☐ something which you didn't like from the video
- ☐ what did you learn which surprised you?
- ☐ what did you see which confirmed something you knew before?

Make a list of five things you want to remember from this part of the video.

Discussion Activities

- ☐ Where do you like going on your holidays?
- ☐ Do you like going to theme parks like Disneyworld?
- ☐ Have you travelled to foreign countries?
- ☐ Which countries did you like most? Why?
- ☐ Which countries did you dislike? Why?
- ☐ Have you ever travelled outside the continent where you live? What was it like?

- ☐ Do you prefer to travel with your family or in a group with other people of your age?
- ☐ Do you prefer to go on an organised holiday or do you like to plan your own holiday?

Planning a holiday

Plan a two-week holiday for a British or American friend of your age who is coming to visit your country. Think about:

- ☐ the most interesting places in your country for a foreigner to see.
- ☐ the most exciting things to do

Choose a name for your guest and plan the best holiday in your country. Don't worry, you can spend all the money in the world!

Tell your friends about the holiday you have planned for your guest.

5 Special Days

This section of the video looks at festival and special days in the UK and US.

Background

British special days

In Britain the yearly calendar used to be dominated by the Christian church calendar. People celebrated at Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and All Souls Day.

There were also festivals from Pre-Christian times such as May Day, Harvest Festival and Halloween.

New festivals have been introduced in Britain in recent years. Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day are popular but they are not national holidays.

The government also celebrates *bank holidays* in the Spring, Summer and Autumn and at New Year. These are days off work for everyone, but they have no religious, historical or political significance.

Guy Fawkes' Night

There is also a strange festival which remembers an unsuccessful terrorist attack in Britain. This is Guy Fawkes' Night (5 November).

Guy (originally called *Guido*, but anglicised to *Guy*) Fawkes was one of a group of Catholics who wanted to end Protestant power in Britain. In November 1605, King James I was due to go to the Houses of Parliament in Westminster to open the new session of the Parliament. All of the most important protestant politicians would have been there. Guy Fawkes rented a room in the cellars of the Parliament Building and filled the room with wood, straw and explosives. He planned to set fire to the building when the King was there so that he could kill the King and all the other important Protestants. Perhaps luckily, or perhaps unluckily, the authorities discovered Guy Fawkes before he started the fire and detonated the explosives.

Guy Fawkes was arrested and horribly tortured for many days as the authorities tried to make him reveal the names of the other people in the plot. He revealed some names, but only names of people who were dead or who had escaped to foreign countries.

On 31 January 1606, Guy Fawkes was hanged, his body was dragged through the streets of London and then it was cut into four pieces which were displayed to the public around London.

Every 5 November this event is 'celebrated' by building large fires, roasting potatoes and letting off fireworks. Children make an effigy of Guy Fawkes (called a 'Guy') from old clothes packed with newspapers and straw. This Guy is then burnt on the top of the bonfire.

Remembrance Day

The Sunday which is closest to the 11 November is celebrated as Remembrance Day. British people buy and wear red poppies like the poppies which grew on the battlefields of the First World War. At 11 o'clock on Remembrance Day, there is a two-minute silence when they remember the soldiers who died in the past wars.

The significance of the time comes from the fact that the treaty to end the First World War was signed at the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month in 1918.

Red Nose Day

Another popular festival is *Red Nose Day*. This was organised by a group of British comedians after the success of the *Live Aid* concert in 1985. Their organisation, *Comic Relief*, organises events to collect money for Africa and for distressed people in Britain. In the evening, there is a *Telethon*, an evening of television in which the performers work for no money, but ask the public to send in donations. In 2007, Comic Relief collected £67,726,409 for charities in Africa, in Britain and in other countries.

US special days

In the US, most of the festivals are connected with significant events in the history of the US such as Independence Day (4 July) and Thanksgiving Day, which is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. Memorial Day in May remembers the dead soldiers; Labor Day in September remembers workers; Veteran's Day, near 11 November, is like Remembrance Day in Britain. The other national

holidays celebrate the lives of important people in US history: Christopher Columbus, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Martin Luther King.

These are the Federal Holidays which are celebrated throughout the US. Each state will also celebrate its own holidays but these are not nationwide holidays.

New Year's Day (1 January) is celebrated in both the UK and the US.

Follow up activities

Talk to your friends and teacher about:

- ☐ something new which you learnt from the video
- ☐ something which you liked from the video
- ☐ something which you didn't like from the video
- ☐ what did you learn which surprised you?
- ☐ what did you see which confirmed something you knew before?

Make a list of five things you want to remember from this part of the video.

Discussion Activities

- ☐ When are the National Holidays in your country?
- ☐ Which of these festivals are religious holidays?
- ☐ Which of these festivals celebrate historical events or people in your country's history?
- ☐ Are there special foods which you eat or things which you do on these days?
- ☐ Which is your favourite holiday? Why?
- ☐ Do you celebrate any special days in your own life such as your birthday?
- ☐ Do you celebrate any other days in your life?

Planning a national holiday

If you could add an extra national holiday in your country, when would it be and what would it celebrate?

Write some notes from your ideas and tell your class about them. Then choose the best idea.

6 Schools

Students rarely think about the education system in their own country until they learn about different systems.

With this topic, it is probably best to start from the video rather than starting by eliciting descriptions of local conditions.

Before the lesson, look through the video script and identify any words which will be unfamiliar for your students, so that you can pre-teach them.

Background

UK

There have been many changes in the British education system in the past 20 years. These have included:

- ❑ Introduction of a National Curriculum for all subjects.
 - This has had a generally good result, although there have been some difficulties. Both State and Private schools follow the National Curriculum.
- ❑ Introduction of Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) in key subjects (English, Maths and Science) at ages 7, 11 and 13.
 - This has worked quite well, although some teachers feel their students are doing too many tests. Results at matriculation level have been getting better every year.
- ❑ Regular school inspections and reports by a government body called OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education). Based on these reports and pupils' exam results, schools are put into 'league tables'.
 - League tables have put pressure on good schools to increase their size and have withdrawn resources from poor schools which require the most help.
 - In Britain, most State schools are 'secular' and not attached to any religious body. There have always been some 'faith' schools which are partly funded by religious groups such as the Catholic Church or the Church of England (Protestant). There are also Jewish schools and more recently Muslim schools. These faith schools are not exclusive to pupils from that faith but they can give priority to pupils from that faith when accepting new students. The publication of league tables has shown that frequently these faith schools achieve better results than secular schools. For this reason, many parents try to get places for their children in these faith schools.
 - League tables have also influenced house prices. Most schools like to have pupils from the local community, so families like to buy houses which are close to good schools. This means that a house close to a good school is more expensive than a house of a similar size elsewhere.
 - Most schools in Britain are co-educational, that is boys and girls attend the same school and take classes together. Controversially, the league tables have suggested that girls in all-girl schools get better results than girls in mixed, co-educational schools. On the other hand, boys in co-educational schools often get better results than boys in single sex schools. This suggests that girls have a good educational influence on boys, but boys have a negative educational influence on girls.
- ❑ In the video, James mentions academies and specialist schools. This is a new type of school, usually at Secondary level, which, in addition to covering the national curriculum, offers training in one area of the arts or professional skills. As James says, some of these schools are partly funded by local businesses.
 - Very few of these new schools have been opened and so it is too soon to assess their impact.
- ❑ The establishment of many more universities and an increase in the percentage of students who attend university.
 - In the past about 10 per cent of school students continued to university. Now the percentage has greatly increased. The government has set a target for 50 per cent of

students continuing to university, but this target has not yet been achieved.

- ❑ The introduction of tuition fees at universities.
 - This has replaced the previous system in which most students received grants from the government to help with their living expenses and tuition was free.
- ❑ The introduction of a 'student loan service' which allows students to borrow money for their living expenses and tuition fees while they are at university. The loan is repaid after they qualify and start earning money.
 - This has worked reasonably well but many university students are stressed because of the large loans they will have to repay. When students leave university, they often do not earn the large salaries which allow them to pay back the loans.

US

The education system in Britain has been becoming more similar to the system in the US.

In the US, the education system is controlled and funded by the State Government rather than the (national) Federal Government. Each of the fifty states has its own Education department which decides on education policy such as the curriculum, teachers' salaries and so on. Education at Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High and Senior High schools is usually free and paid for through State taxes. Students need to pay for university education. The top universities, such as Harvard and Yale, are very expensive.

For various historical reasons, American schools are very patriotic. Many start the school day with a Salute to the Flag (the 'Stars and Stripes').

Educational methodology

Educational methodology is similar in both the US and the UK. There is a stress on creativity and social interaction for younger children. As pupils grow older they learn to take greater *personal responsibility* for their learning. Students work on individual or group assignments or projects. They do their own research and they learn how to present their results.

In both the US and UK, there is an increased use of *continuous assessment* through the school year. The final 'grade' which many schools give at the end of the year is based on both the results of continuous assessment and the final examination.

School uniform

The interviews in the DVD summarise very well the arguments in favour of and against school uniforms. In both the UK, and to a lesser extent in the US, many schools insist on their students wearing school uniforms.

Today, the design of school uniforms is less old-fashioned and more colourful. Schools try to choose inexpensive uniforms because they know the pupils are growing very fast and will frequently need to buy a bigger size.

As we see in the DVD, many students hate wearing their school uniform, but this is often because teenagers hate being told what to do by adults!

Follow up activities

Talk to your friends and teacher about:

- ❑ something new which you learnt from the video
- ❑ something which you liked from the video
- ❑ something which you didn't like from the video
- ❑ what did you learn which surprised you?
- ❑ what did you see which confirmed something you knew before?

Make a list of five things you want to remember from this part of the video.

Discussion Activities

- ❑ Should education be free at all ages or should people pay for their education?

- ☐ Should there be a National Curriculum for all students, or should they be allowed to choose what they want to study?
- ☐ Do you like the idea of 'project based assessments' as mentioned in the video or do you prefer more traditional tests?
- ☐ Do you think it is better to study in an 'all-boys' or 'all-girls' or in a mixed school?
- ☐ Do you like the idea of lots of after-school clubs and sports activities?

Project

Design a school uniform for your school. When you have completed your design, tell your friends why you have chosen those styles and colours.

What kind of club would you like to start in your school? Think about the things you would like to do in the club. Tell your friends about it.