



**KEY SKILLS
COMMUNICATION**

Level 3 - COMPETITION IN SCHOOLS

[KSC31]

Source Booklet

TUESDAY, 22 MAY 2007

- This booklet contains source material for the Level 3 Communication test **Competition in Schools**
 - The test questions will be based on this material
 - You must hand in this Source Booklet at the end of the test, along with your Question Paper and Answer Booklet
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The Level 3 Communication test will assess your ability to:

- select and read material that contains the required information
 - identify accurately, and compare, the lines of reasoning and main points from the text and images
 - synthesise the key information in a form that is relevant to the purpose
 - select and use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to the purpose and subject matter
 - organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate
 - ensure text is legible and spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate so that meaning is clear
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Blair puts competition back into school sports

Labour invest £459m in coaching programme



School sports day, June 1961

Senior ministers are planning to restore traditional competitive sports to the centre of school life. Tony Blair is backing plans which will see around half a billion pounds a year pumped into specialist sports training, a massive expansion in extra-curricular sports, which will lead to sports leagues, both within and between schools. But the battle is not yet won. While the Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell, herself a keen runner, has come under backbench pressure to force schools to make competitive sports compulsory, the Education Secretary was anxious that more burdens should not be placed on teachers or the curriculum. Headteachers will not be compelled to offer competitive sport within the timetable but specialist staff will provide coaching in lunchtimes and before and after school.

The move – aimed at tackling childhood obesity and nurturing future Olympic champions – will mark a sea change in British education and overthrow what Ms Jowell yesterday described as the "politically correct nonsense of the 1980s that competition damages children and sports days are undesirable". She went on: "I am wholeheartedly behind more competitive sports for children and I want to see competition

between schools. You only have to look at what young children do in the playground to see that they thrive on competition."

As specialist sports colleges had proved, competitive sport improved attendance, behaviour and academic achievement. Ms Jowell said: "What competing in sport in childhood does is to teach children how to win and lose – which is not only good for them when they're at school but stands them in good stead for the rest of their lives. What is also important is that the more children who play sport, and the more sports they play, the more likely it is they're going to discover a talent."

Following the 1980s teachers' dispute, many teachers refused to coach extracurricular sports and the number of fixtures between state schools fell by 70%, according to the Secondary Heads Association, and has never fully recovered. The government is trying to redress this, with £459m being invested into the School Sports Partnership Programme, which will see 400 specialist sports colleges working with up to 1,600 secondary schools, and 14,000 primary schools. But it wants to go far further and has ring-fenced £500m a year to be spent on specialist coaches and PE teachers. In addition, talented 14-18 year-old athletes, who have taken a "Step into Sport" leadership course, will be teaching primary school children.

"What we want to see is properly trained PE teachers and sports coaches going into schools," said Ms Jowell. "You can't assume an English teacher can also teach tennis, and you can't run the scale of expansion we want to see by relying on good nature and volunteerism. Relying on the volunteerism of teachers is too fragile a basis for something as important as this."

Ministers hope that school teams will soon be sufficiently good to compete with one another

with every school being involved in a league – the best of which could be broadcast on digital TV.

Competition would start at the age of seven, with backbenchers pushing for football, rugby, athletics, hockey, swimming and cricket to be offered. With 17-year-old British boxing lightweight Amir Khan proving a star of the Olympics, even boxing could be taught. "If we are exposing children to a very wide range of sports with all the proper safeguards and protections, I wouldn't object to boxing being one of the sports," said Ms Jowell.

Andy Burnham, one of the backbenchers who has pushed for a manifesto pledge that all schools should be compelled to offer competitive sport, said that state school children currently receive haphazard sports training and the Labour Party needed to usher in a major cultural shift in school sports. "We can't celebrate an Olympic gold and yet agonise over whether competitive school sport is right or not. School sport cannot be about egg and spoon races with prizes for everyone."

Source: Adapted from *Blair puts competition back into school sports*, Sarah Hall, The Guardian, 25 August 2004 and Barking and Dagenham Council website.

A Visit to the Steiner School at Kings Langley

There are a total of 31 Steiner schools in the UK. Each one is self-funded and has its own individual character but all are united by their commitment to the Steiner curriculum and teaching methods. These aim to engage and nourish each child's innate curiosity and love of learning. The curriculum provides for a balance of academic, artistic and practical activities, so that the child is thoroughly prepared for life ahead.



A collaborative approach to teaching and learning

I visited the Steiner School in Kings Langley, North London, which is proud of its claim that each child is accepted and valued for what he or she brings, be it artistic or academic ability, physical or social skill. Here, children are measured not against one another but against their own potential, and competition is reserved for the games lessons in higher classes.

Liliana is the mother of two children at the school: Marisa 15, and Elena, 11. Marisa is quite clear about her position on education. "I've been to nine different schools throughout the years, you know. I like the Steiner ones best. Definitely."

She's an articulate, well-spoken young woman with a distinctive air of confidence and an awareness that she is important in the world.

"You're 15 now," I say. "Have you thought about exams at all?" Marisa waves a dramatic hand in the air. "The teacher tells us not to worry, but naturally you do think about it. I'm not sure what to take – French of course, English, geography, mathematics, physics, and art. I might not bother with German. I'm not quite so good at that." She laughs.

Liliana also has two younger children: Harry 9 and Heidi 7, both of whom are also at a Steiner school. The previous evening, Heidi and Harry had shown me their work. They had eagerly plied me with their main lesson books illustrating stories, myths and fairytales; for example, some of the lives of the saints, the pages boldly covered with lovely drawings. Their teachers ask that they complete the work as beautifully as possible and that requirement gives them pride in what they do.

At seven years old, Heidi is just beginning to learn her letters, but she will learn them thoroughly through stories and drawing. Letters will come to mean something to her, something special. They will be grounded in her own experiences and in her heart. Heidi will say what she thinks, because Steiner-taught children are expected, and tenderly encouraged, to speak up and contribute their ideas and feelings to the class.

But what if one child is quicker than the others to finish a given task? Then he looks around for someone to help, I'm told. Children who have similar temperaments sit

together and draw strength from each other. These young people are encouraged to care and share, and they certainly learn how to deal with and understand one another thoroughly.

"Students come and go as in any other school, but some form a group of friends that go on to further education together. Surrey University is now accepting Steiner pupils on interviews where they describe what they've done and show the interviewers their lesson books and project work. It's a great stride forward. This is an acknowledgment that what we teach is important for an individual's future," says teacher, Glenn Rawlinson.

Steiner children may take GCSE and A levels a year later than average. Results are better than state schools, but not as good as other independent schools: 63.51 per cent achieved five or more at grades A-C, compared to 42.5 in state schools and 80.4 in other independent schools.

I pause in the last classroom to ask 14 year-old Kitty and Amy if they like school. "Oh yes," says Amy, "we don't want to leave at all. But this is the last – the highest class. We'll miss it very much. Our teacher is more like a friend – we visit them at home, you know."

"What do you like about Steiner School?" I turn to Kitty. "There's no bullying and no exam pressure." "We aren't allowed to wear anything with a brand name on it either," Amy says, "so there's no competition over clothes and that sort of thing." Kitty nods. "There's no competition at all," she says. "I just hope I can go to another Steiner School."

I then spoke to teacher, Glenn Rawlinson. "What are the main lessons?" I ask. "Well, for a few weeks it may be geography or form drawing, or mathematics. For example, one teacher visited a farm for a day, where the kids helped out, and now he uses that to teach mathematics." He can see my puzzled look. "For example, the teacher would ask how many eggs does the farmer gather altogether if there are 15 in one box, 14 in the next and 12 in the last?"

I've been invited to help out in class and Harry smiles a welcome as I go in. Class 3 is having a lesson with a patient and steady teacher, Brien Jacques. He is helping 16 nine year-olds sew pencil cases from scratch – using colourful material, tape measures, zips, needles, and thread. Is he nervous? "Er, we had four extra helpers last week. It's just you and me today." He surveys me a bit doubtfully. I've already warned him that sewing isn't my favourite thing.

Source: Adapted from *A Visit to a Once and Future School – The Waldorf School of South West London*, Diane Varty, The Waldorf School Website, 2005.

A range of views on competition in schools

P. Smith: education researcher

A culture of competition in schools may be to blame for a rising incidence of disruption in the classroom, researchers say. A study of high school pupils in the United States suggests that levels of disruption are higher in classrooms where teachers encourage pupils to outperform their peers.

In contrast, teachers who put an emphasis on improving pupils' performance and learning from their mistakes are more likely to maintain discipline in class. The research – published in the *British Journal of Psychology* – questions the effectiveness of encouraging competitiveness and suggests unruly behaviour should not be blamed on pupils.

Report on comments by Howard Cooper: Director of Education (The Week magazine)

An education chief has told his staff not to describe children as gifted or talented because it 'suggests exclusiveness'. Howard Cooper, Director of Education for Wirral Council, wants such elitist terms as 'very able' to be replaced with 'with specific gifts or talents'.

K. Anderson: teacher

Children's sport provides kids with the opportunity to challenge themselves and each other and encourages them to play the best they can. Winning and losing provide valuable lessons about success and failure.

James Jenkins: parent

Learning to cope with failure is as important as learning to cope with success. If people are not exposed to failure, they are unlikely to learn how to deal with it.

Omar Seguna: education psychologist

Competition is not only undesirable but it is also not effective. Competition increases social differences and stereotyping. Children will tend to take lower risks with less fear of failure. Many kids try the easiest way and achieve points. Fear of failure may lead to lack of responding. Children may tend to become lazy and unmotivated.

P. Daniels: child psychologist

For children to learn, above all they need confidence. With confidence they can achieve anything in life. If they feel loved, secure, encouraged and stimulated, they will learn - they don't need the more damaging competition that comes from a sometimes-threatening school environment, from peers and teachers!

Source: Adapted from *Competition in Sport*, Xander Stephenson, The Adam Smith Institute, 2005 and *Competitive classes 'cause disruption'*, BBC News Online, 10 June 2002.