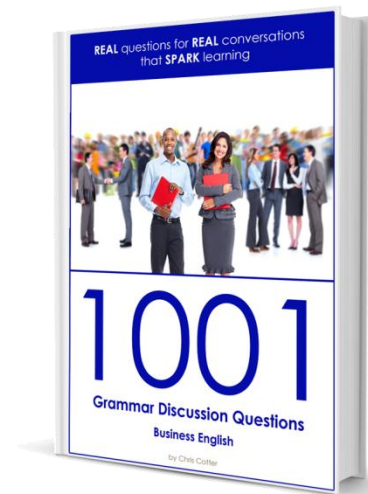
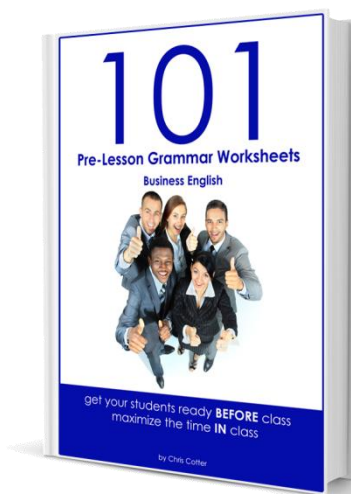
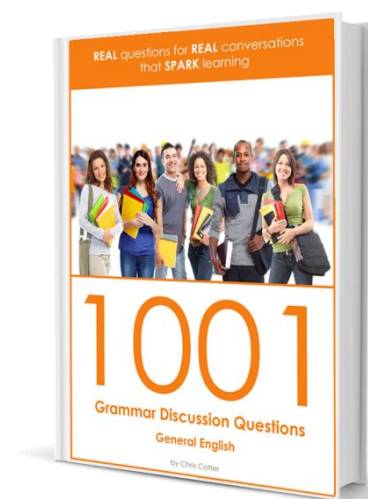
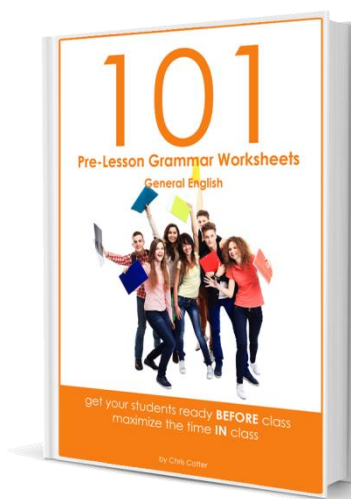
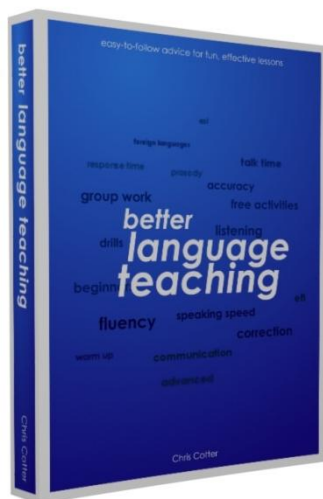


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

Education Woes

More than one in ten high schools in the US has been labeled a "dropout factory." The distinction is far from flattering, as the nickname applies to schools in which 40% or more of the children don't graduate.

The greatest concentration of these dubious schools lies in large urban centers and areas with high poverty. The surrounding neighborhoods may experience high crime rates, drugs, and violence, and students may need additional help from social services. But officials also point out that some neighborhoods and towns just don't possess a strong tradition underscoring the importance of high school graduation. In the past, there were enough blue-collar jobs to go around.

Many of the students who attend dropout factories enter with poor literacy and math skills, which only exacerbate the search for a solution. The kids enter ninth grade with fifth grade reading skills, for example. Faced with these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, it's no small wonder that so many schools fail to give these children opportunities in the land of opportunity.

Conversely, in Japan, private high schools cater to children without the academic and social skills for traditional school. Expensive, yet easy to enroll, these institutions are degree mills. Principals and administrative staff pressure teachers to administer grades based largely on attendance. If students fail the final test or don't do homework, but attend 100% of the lessons, they can walk out with a B average. What's worse, kids can sleep, text messages, or chat with friends rather than participate in the lesson. Teachers readily admit they're in a quandary, and simply wait to be transferred elsewhere.

Additional woes on the state of education come out of England. Despite a massive program to raise reading rates, reports indicate there has been almost zero impact. Rates remain unchanged since the 1950s.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface are the answers.

the Article (for students)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

insurmountable	mills	literacy	services	distinction
attend	dubious	conversely	principles	woes
quandary	indicate	labeled	underscoring	exacerbate

Education Woes

More than one in ten high schools in the US has been (a. _____) a "dropout factory." The (b. _____) is far from flattering, as the nickname applies to schools in which 40% or more of the children don't graduate.

The greatest concentration of these (c. _____) schools lies in large urban centers and areas with high poverty. The surrounding neighborhoods may experience high crime rates, drugs, and violence, and students may need additional help from social (d. _____). But officials also point out that some neighborhoods and towns just don't possess a strong tradition (e. _____) the importance of high school graduation. In the past, there were enough blue-collar jobs to go around.

Many of the students who (f. _____) dropout factories enter with poor (g. _____) and math skills, which only (h. _____) the search for a solution. The kids enter ninth grade with fifth grade reading skills, for example. Faced with these seemingly (i. _____) obstacles, it's no small wonder that so many schools fail to give these children opportunities in the land of opportunity.

(j. _____), in Japan, private high schools cater to children without the academic and social skills for traditional school. Expensive, yet easy to enroll, these institutions are degree (k. _____). (l. _____) and administrative staff pressure teachers to administer grades based largely on attendance. If students fail the final test or don't do homework, but attend 100% of the lessons, they can walk out with a B average. What's worse, kids can sleep, text messages, or chat with friends rather than participate in the lesson. Teachers readily admit they're in a (m. _____), and simply wait to be transferred elsewhere.

Additional (n. _____) on the state of education come out of England. Despite a massive program to raise reading rates, reports (o. _____) there has been almost zero impact. Rates remain unchanged since the 1950s.

STEP ONE

Speculate: What might "dropout factory" mean? Brainstorm possible answers with a partner(s) for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the ideas together.

STEP TWO

Vocabulary match: Match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B. Use a dictionary for any words you don't know, but be sure to check your English-English dictionary, too.

a.	distinction	q.	impossible
b.	dubious	r.	dilemma
c.	underscore	s.	worsen
d.	literacy	t.	show
e.	exacerbate	u.	recognition
f.	insurmountable	v.	questionable
g.	conversely	w.	opposite
h.	quandary	x.	suffering
i.	woe	y.	emphasize
j.	indicate	z.	reading

STEP THREE

Fill in the Blanks: Fill in the blank with the correct word.

	underscoring	distinction	insurmountable	woes	exacerbate
	indicate	literacy	quandary	dubious	conversely
a.	The () is far from flattering, as the name applies to schools in which children don't graduate.				
b.	Most of these () schools lies in large urban centers and areas with high poverty.				
c.	Some neighborhoods and towns just don't possess a strong tradition () high school graduation.				
d.	Many of the students who attend dropout factories enter with poor () and math skills.				
e.	Poor skills only () the search for a solution.				
f.	Faced with these seemingly () obstacles, it's no small wonder that so many schools fail.				
g.	(), in Japan, private high schools cater to children without the skills for traditional school.				
h.	Teachers readily admit they're in a (), and simply wait to be transferred elsewhere.				
i.	Additional () on the state of education come out of England.				
j.	Despite a program to raise reading rates, reports () there has been zero impact.				

STEP FOUR

The Article: 1) Read the article, but don't worry about the missing words. 2) Fill in the blanks with today's vocabulary, followed by all the other words. 3) Read the article again, and circle any unknown words/phrases. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the words or phrases your circled. 4) Answer the questions to check your comprehension.

a.	What does "dropout factory" mean?
b.	Where are most of the dropout factories?
c.	According to the article, why do so many of the students fail to graduate?
d.	What's the problem Japan faces?
e.	According to the article, what did England try to do recently?

STEP FIVE

Discuss: Write down five vocabulary words from today's article that you want to use.

a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	

Now talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Every time you use a vocabulary word, place a check next to it.

a.	What is/was your high school like? Please explain.
b.	What can be done to improve education and graduation rates?
c.	Are there similar problems in your country? Are there different problems? Please explain.
d.	Will children receive a better or worse education in the future? Why do you think so?

Score yourself:

10 or more times: Fantastic! Be sure to review the words at home.

6-9 times: Pretty good! You're on your way to acquiring today's vocabulary. Try writing your own sentences at home for additional practice.

5 or less times: Try harder next time! To acquire new vocabulary, you need to use the new words as much as possible.