

Total English

Upper Intermediate

Going back to school...

- 1 Read the following extract from the writer's memory of school and answer the following questions.

I actually really enjoyed my school days. Most of my teachers were brilliant and very inspiring - if they didn't seem that enthusiastic towards their subject then that affected me. I wasn't that interested. But that didn't happen very often. My favourite subjects were English, drama and French. Looking back, I think that my passion for these subjects has helped me in my life. I continue to enjoy reading and seek out different types of books to read as well as learning a lot about life from books. It is a form of relaxation and stress relief for me. Drama was great fun at school, but also in real life situations it has helped to be able to stand up and speak confidently in my job and with all people in general. It sort of helps you assume different roles required of you in life! Despite enjoying French, I was always a bit shy, I guess, and didn't speak up enough in class, so my spoken French could be better, but I've enjoyed so many holidays to France and been able to carry out whatever task needed in French, which for me and my family has been a great bonus.

Now I'm older and wiser, I realise that school really may be the only time in your life you get to study exclusively and improve your knowledge in so many areas. With the busy lives we lead now, there are times when we want to undertake a new course, but have to consider time availability - when will we fit in the study? It's important that new courses don't become a stress when they are meant to be a learning opportunity!

I would always advise my children to really make the most of school and the learning options available. I would like to think that I could trust their instinct also - if they want to do science to become a doctor - fine, and if they want to study mechanics, art or cookery to follow a career in that line, then fine too!

- 1 What does the writer mean when his teacher's are described as 'inspiring'?
 - 2 How did the writer react to teachers who seemed disinterested in their subject?
 - 3 Have the writer's favourite school subjects had a long-term effect?
 - 4 What do you think the writer means when he describes reading as a form of relaxation?
 - 5 The reader says that drama has 'helped him assume different roles required in life'. What does that mean?
 - 6 Why is the writer's spoken French perhaps not as good as it could be?
 - 7 What does the reader realise about school later in life?
 - 8 What does 'instinct' mean in the last paragraph?
- 2 Discuss in pairs. The writer above names three subjects which have benefited him throughout his life. Can you name three subjects that you studied at school which have benefited you? Explain why to your partner.

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TEACHER'S NOTES:

Aim: to provide further practice of the communication page; Lessons from history. This worksheet is designed to be used in conjunction with unit 3.

Time: 40 minutes

Materials: photocopies of the worksheet for each student

- 1 Get students to read the passage and then answer the questions. Monitor as they work and answer any questions related to language in the passage. Give students time to discuss answers with their partner at the end of the activity, before checking them with the class.

Answers: 1 Their energy and enthusiasm towards their subject is transferred to the students. 2 The writer also became disinterested in the subject. 3 Yes, they have. Each subject has had some influence on the writer's post-school days. 4 It is an escape from his own world - something he can enjoy without thinking about anything else. 5 In life it is sometimes necessary to act in certain ways in certain situations to make things work, e.g. an interview, a presentation, meeting new people, representing someone or something. 6 The writer was rather shy at school and didn't speak up a lot in the class, so didn't get the practice at speaking. 7 It may be the only time in your life when you get to study exclusively with no other distractions. 8 natural feelings towards something without having to think too much about it

- 2 Get students to compare the writer's experience with their own. Are there any school subjects which have influenced them post-school? Encourage them to explain why to their partners. Get feedback from various pairs.