



## READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 16–30 which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

Is it any wonder that there are teacher shortages? Daily, the press carries reports of schools going on four-day weeks simply because they cannot recruit enough teachers. But why? There is no straightforward answer. For a start, fewer students are entering teacher-training courses when they leave school. But can you blame young people after the barracking faced by the teaching profession in the UK over the last decade? The attack, relentless in the extreme, has been on several fronts. Government inspectors, by accident or design, have been feeding the media a constant stream of negative information about the teaching establishments in this country. Teachers also come in for a lot of flak from politicians. And the government wonders why there are problems in schools.

The government's obvious contempt for the teaching profession was recently revealed by one of the most powerful people in government when she referred to schools as 'bog standard comprehensives'. Hardly the sort of comment to inspire parents or careers advisers seeking to direct young people's future. Would you want to spend your working life in a dead-end profession? The government doesn't seem to want you to either.

On the administrative side, most teachers are weighed down by an increasing flow of bureaucracy. Cynicism would have me believe that this stops teachers from

fomenting dissent as they are worn out by useless administrative exercises. Most teachers must then also be cynics!

Teacher bashing has, unfortunately, spread to youngsters in schools as the recent catalogue of physical attacks on teachers will testify. If grown-ups have no respect for the teaching profession, young people can hardly be expected to think any differently. The circle is then squared when, as well as experienced, competent teachers being driven out of the profession by the increased pressure and stress, fewer students are applying for teacher-training courses.

Increased salaries are certainly welcome, but they are not the complete answer to a sector in crisis. Addressing the standing of the profession in the eyes of the public is crucial to encourage experienced teachers to remain in the classroom and to make it an attractive career option for potential teachers once again.

It might also be a good idea for the relevant ministers to go on a fact-finding mission and find out from teachers in schools, rather than relying overmuch on advisers, as to what changes could be brought about to improve the quality of the education service. Initiatives in the educational field surprisingly come from either politicians who know little about classroom practice or educational theorists who know even less,



but are more dangerous because they work in the rarefied air of universities largely ignorant of classroom practice.

Making sure that nobody without recent classroom experience is employed as a teacher-trainer at any tertiary institution would further enhance the teaching profession. If someone does not have practical experience in the classroom, they cannot in all seriousness propound theories about it. Instead of being given sabbaticals to write books or papers, lecturers in teacher-training establishments should be made to spend a year at the blackboard or, these days, the whiteboard. This would give them practical insights into current classroom practice. Student teachers could then be given the chance to come and watch the specialists in the classroom: a much more worthwhile experience than the latter sitting thinking up ideas far removed

from the classroom. Then we would have fewer initiatives like the recent government proposal to teach thinking in school. Prima facie, this is a laudable recommendation. But, as any practising teacher will tell you, this is done in every class. Perhaps someone needs to point out to the academic who thought up the scheme that the wheel has been around for some time.

In the educational field, there is surprisingly constant tension between the educational theorists and government officials on the one hand, who would like to see teachers marching in unison to some greater Utopian abstraction and, on the other, practising teachers. Any experienced classroom practitioner knows that the series of initiatives on teaching and learning that successive governments have tried to foist on schools and colleges do not work.

### Questions 16–22

Complete the summary below of the first four paragraphs of Reading Passage 2.

Use **ONE WORD** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 16–22 on your answer sheet.

Is it surprising that there is a **16**..... of teachers? Schools do not have enough teachers, but what are the reasons for this? To begin with, fewer students are going into **17**..... courses after finishing school. But this is not young people's fault. The **18**..... of teaching has been under constant attack over the last ten years. The government's lack of respect for the profession is **19**..... . Moreover, administratively, the flow of bureaucracy is **20**..... . Even pupils in schools have no respect for those who teach them, as a **21**..... series of assaults on teachers shows. The growing strain and stress means that, as well as fewer applications for teacher-training courses, teachers who have experience and are **22**..... are also being driven out.

**Questions 23–29**

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in Reading Passage 2?

In boxes 23–29 on your answer sheet write

- YES** if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer  
**NO** if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer  
**NOT GIVEN** if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

**Example**

The four-day week in schools is caused by a lack of teachers.

**Answer**

Yes

- 23 More students are entering teacher-training courses.
- 24 The government is right to be surprised that there are problems in schools.
- 25 Teachers are too weighed down by administrative duties to stir up trouble.
- 26 All teachers are cynics.
- 27 Politicians are not as dangerous as educational theorists, who know even less than the former about educational theory.
- 28 Any experienced classroom practitioner knows that the initiatives on teaching and learning that governments have tried to impose on schools do not work.
- 29 The government's attitude with regard to teachers is of great interest to the general public.

**Question 30**

Choose the appropriate letter **A–D** and write it in box 30 on your answer sheet.

- 30 Which one of the following is the most suitable title for the passage?
- A** Politicians and teachers.  
**B** A profession undervalued.  
**C** Recruitment difficulties in the teaching profession.  
**D** Teacher-training needs improvement.

**Before you check your answers to Reading Passage 2, go on to page 58.**



## FURTHER PRACTICE FOR READING PASSAGE 2

### SUMMARY COMPLETION

- The summary will be a completion of part or all of the passage so check carefully which part the summary refers to.
- The words used in the summary may not always be the same as those in the original phrase. Look for synonyms of key words in the text.
- All the words which you need are in the original text, but their grammatical form may need to be changed (see below).

*The questions below will help you to make sure that you have chosen the correct answers for questions 16–22 on Reading Passage 2.*

- 1 Below is a list of the grammatical items that you need to complete spaces 16–22 in the test. Choose one for each blank space. Items can be used more than once and you may not need all of them.

- 16 .....  
 17 .....  
 18 .....  
 19 .....  
 20 .....  
 21 .....  
 22 .....

#### List of grammatical items

- a singular noun  
 b plural noun  
 c adjective  
 d adverb  
 e verb

- 2 In summary completion exercises, parts of the original passage are often paraphrased in the summary. Find the word or phrase in the summary that means the same as the words or phrases below taken from Reading Passage 2:

#### Paragraph 1

- 1 any wonder .....  
 2 entering .....  
 3 barracking .....  
 4 decade .....

#### Paragraph 2

- 5 contempt .....

#### Paragraph 4

- 6 teachers .....  
 7 catalogue .....  
 8 pressure .....

**Now check your answers to these exercises. When you have done so, decide whether you wish to change any of your answers to Reading Passage 2. Then check your answers to Reading Passage 2.**