

# 2

## Shorter school weeks

### SCHOOL WEEK TIMETABLE



Level: 

#### Let's think!

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a 4-day school week?
2. How would you spend the long weekends of a 4-day school week?

## The 4-Day School Week

**1** Is the four-day school week a pipe dream? In some schools in the US, long days and long weekends help solve teacher shortages. But what does it mean for students and their families?

### Pros



#### Improved well-being

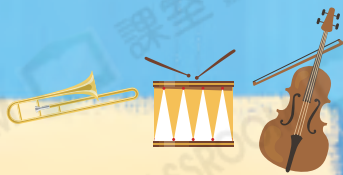
- 2** Being out of school one extra day per week allows students and teachers to relax and to be more productive.
- 3** A shorter school week promotes physical and emotional well-being. Some families appreciate the change as they have more quality time. The extra time encourages kids to hang out with friends and try new hobbies too. Kids tend to get more sleep on average than before.
- 4** It is no longer wishful thinking for teachers to achieve work-life balance. The policy provides them with more time to spend with their families or pursue personal goals.

### Cons

#### Health issues

- 5** First, longer school days are tough on younger kids. When a school switches to a 4-day schedule, it usually adds an hour and a half to each school day. Imagine a six-year-old child trying to stay focused on schoolwork for nine hours. It may be asking a lot.
- 6** Older kids do not benefit much either as longer days mean longer nights completing their homework. They become wearier as they have to go to bed later than before. Besides this, erratic sleep patterns caused by the extra day off can harm their health, posing a higher risk of obesity and depression.





### Diversified education

7 Longer classes allow for more variations in teaching methods and learning activities. Students have more chances to acquire knowledge and skills through hands-on learning. They can also take part in more extracurricular activities during long weekends. 45



### Educational inequality

8 The 4-day schedule could strike students with special needs and those from low-income families. They receive little or no support from the school during the extra day off. Only a few of them can afford additional expenses like childcare. 55



### Reduction in expenditure

9 With fewer school days per week, schools can save money on daily expenses like utilities and food services. Also, since some support staff are paid by the number of hours they work, running costs are lower. 60



### Cost savings are minimal

10 A common misunderstanding is that school expenses could be saved by one fifth. Teachers' salaries, which make up the major part of operating costs, are unaffected by the 4-day schedule because school days are extended. Another factor is that more money is instead spent on enrichment activities such as sports training on days off. 70

~410 words



### Looking into Grammar

We use the quantifiers *little*, *a little*, *few* and *a few* to refer to small amounts.

We also use *some*, *any* and *no* to talk about amounts.

They receive **little** ( a little) or **no** ( none) support from the school during the extra day off.

? Circle TWO quantifiers in paragraphs 7–10.

Read the text and answer questions 1–13. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only. (26 marks)

1. According to paragraph 1, the four-day school week \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. requires teachers to take Fridays off
- B. does not affect only teachers
- C. is a bad idea to most people
- D. is a hope that will never happen

A B C D

2. According to paragraph 2, what is good about the four-day school week?

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3. According to paragraph 3, why might the four-day schedule be a good idea for parents?

- A. because they have better sleep quality
- B. because they can do interesting things
- C. because they can spend more time with their kids
- D. because they can spend more time with their friends

3 Find the conjunction that is used to introduce a reason.

A B C D

4. Read paragraph 4. 'It is no longer wishful thinking for teachers' means \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. it is impossible to have work-life balance
- B. teachers do not wish for work-life balance anymore
- C. teachers are thinking about how to maintain work-life balance
- D. the dream of achieving work-life balance can finally come true

A B C D

5. Read paragraph 5. Determine whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

	T	F
(i) Lengthened school days are not a problem for primary school students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(ii) The four-day schedule usually costs students half an hour more per day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iii) Children are likely to have difficulty concentrating at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Give ONE example of a health threat mentioned in paragraph 6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Look for words in the text that mean the same as the following:

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_ (para. 4) 'seek'
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ (para. 6) 'irregular'

7 Pay attention to the parts of speech of the given words.

8. Complete the description by filling in each blank with ONE word taken from paragraphs 7–8.

While the four-day schedule gives students more (i) \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ activities at weekends, the (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ costs place a burden on poor families.



9. Find a word that the writer uses to emphasise that some students are badly affected by the new system in paragraph 8.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Which of the following pictures best illustrates the situation of the families in paragraph 8?

A.



B.



C.



D.



A      B      C      D  
        

11. Sunshine School is implementing the four-day week policy. Read the following comments.

Write the paragraph numbers which match the comments.

11 The subheadings are important clues.

I couldn't deal with work stress, but now I can find a balance in my life.

(i) Paragraph

I often stay up late to finish my homework.

(ii) Paragraph

I used to spend less time with my friends, but now I get to hang out with them more.

(iii) Paragraph

It's a burden to me. I can't afford to send my child to day care.

(iv) Paragraph

12. Complete the table using the information in paragraphs 9–10.

	Reasons
The policy helps save some money.	(i) _____ (ii) _____
The policy saves little money.	(iii) _____ (iv) _____

13. Determine whether each of the following statements is a fact, an opinion, or not given.

	Fact	Opinion	Not Given
(i) Longer school days may be too demanding for young children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(ii) The 4-day school week increases costs for special needs families.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iii) The new policy makes all students take up a new hobby.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Vocabulary

## GLOSSARY



A. Complete the personal narrative with the given words. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

**Adjective:** diversified    erratic    focused    hands-on    weary

**Noun:** expense    pipe dream    well-being    work-life balance

**Verb:** acquire

## Following my passion

Since I was a child, I've always wanted to create beautiful music. To me, forming a band was not just a / an (1) \_\_\_\_\_. I was determined to turn it into reality.

When I applied for university, I surprised my teacher by choosing only music programmes. My teacher told me that I should have a few backup options or alternative programmes in mind, so that my choices would be more (2) \_\_\_\_\_. He was worried that I would eventually lose interest in a music career and grow (3) \_\_\_\_\_ of it.

Despite this, I remained (4) \_\_\_\_\_ on my passion for music after graduation. I was willing to give up my (5) \_\_\_\_\_ and worked odd and (6) \_\_\_\_\_ hours, so that I had time to (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the skills to create music. I also cut down on my (8) \_\_\_\_\_ to save money to buy instruments.

To gain (9) \_\_\_\_\_ experience, I worked at Warner Music Group. I also played guitar with my band at the Fringe Club in Central. I found that these experiences brought me a sense of (10) \_\_\_\_\_ and fulfilment. It also proved to my family and teacher that becoming a musician was the right choice for me.



- B. Complete the flow charts using the given words or phrases. Read the text in pp.18–19 again to help you.

### Pros and cons of a 4-day school week

academic performance

extracurricular activities

friends and family

homework and revision

motivation

sense of stress

sleep patterns

work-life balance

#### PROS

more opportunities to take part in  
(1) \_\_\_\_\_

more time to spend with  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) a reduced \_\_\_\_\_

(4) better \_\_\_\_\_

#### CONS

take longer to do (5) \_\_\_\_\_

irregular (6) \_\_\_\_\_

decreased (7) \_\_\_\_\_ to study

decline in (8) \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing

Do you support a 4-day school week?

Write an argumentative essay on whether schools should implement a 4-day school week in about 150 words.