



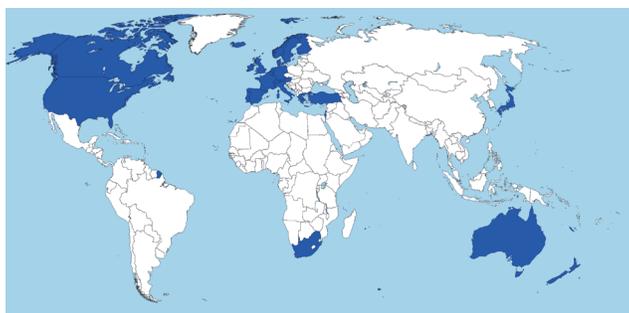
Is an extended school day the right choice for U.S. students?

GETTING ORIENTED

The weekly passage covers issues related to education and achievement. Here is some information that might be helpful to students less familiar with the topic.

Developed Countries

Developed countries are countries that have strong global economies and advanced technology. Their citizens are often educated through high school and college. These countries produce goods and services for other nations around the world.



Public Education

In the United States, government leaders and citizens have long believed that public education helps people learn important information and skills in order to succeed in society. The more educated people are, the more successful they will be. The more successful people are, the more successful the country will be. In 1827, Massachusetts passed a law making all grades of public school open to all students, free of charge. Other states followed Massachusetts' example, and public education from elementary to high school eventually became a free service the government offered its citizens.



The Relationship Between Education and a Nation's Success

The United States is a competitive nation. Americans want the U.S. to be the best country in the world, especially in education and business. The more educated a country's people are, the more careers and businesses its residents

will create. This growth helps the country's economy. It also helps the country become a global leader and allows its citizens to compete globally. Another benefit of more people being educated is better quality of life in the country overall. Having a successful country starts with getting a great education. When the people in a competitive country like the United States fall behind in science and math, everyone begins to worry that the economy will suffer in the long-term and that quality of life in the U.S. will decline.

The Achievement Gap

In the United States, there is something called "the achievement gap." This means that students who are poor or are a minority generally don't do as well, academically, as their peers. Students who don't do as well in school may not receive college degrees and are therefore not qualified to get many high-paying jobs. Because of this, their families may struggle with poverty across generations.

The achievement gap in the U.S. has its roots in America's history with slavery. Because African Americans were brought to the United States against their will and denied an education, they have not historically had the same educational and career opportunities as the majority of white Americans. Decades of legal and social discrimination have also made it more difficult for minority students to succeed. The achievement gap impacts immigrants and people who come from other minority groups, like Latinos, as well. This is part of why many minority communities today are poor, and high school graduation rates are low. Because America prides itself on being a land of opportunity, many leaders and educators work hard to close the achievement gap, so all people in the U.S. receive a good education and have the opportunity to succeed.





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EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
Business and Political Leaders	American business and political leaders want the U.S. to be the very best country in the world. They want American citizens to be educated in math and science. If students need more time to learn these subjects to succeed in their future jobs, leaders may believe we need to extend the school day to help them learn the material.	Some leaders may worry that extending the school day will cost the government billions of dollars. They may think that the U.S. does not have the money to make the school day longer for all public schools. They would say that putting money into a longer school day does not guarantee better student achievement.
Teachers	Many teachers complain that they do not have enough time to teach everything their students need to learn. Extending the school day could help them teach more material. It also gives them more opportunities to help struggling students catch up.	Other teachers feel that a longer school day means they would need to prepare and teach more lessons. This will increase their workload, and teachers already work many hours outside of school. They may feel that an extended day will make it harder for them to balance their home and work duties and that they will not get paid much more for their extra time and effort.
Students	Students want more time in school to prepare for good careers or college. They may believe they will have greater confidence in themselves and greater success in life because they are better educated. They want to help the United States be the global leader in technology and business.	Students may not want to go to school longer. They want free time to play, go out with friends, and join extracurricular activities outside of school. Even if the school day is longer, students may not feel they will be motivated to take advantage of it and learn more.
Parents	Parents want their children to get a great education, and they also want their children to be safe. A longer school day might better match these parents' work hours, so students spend less time on their own. Students in extended programs can be learning and developing skills they may use later in life. Parents want to see their children succeed, and a longer school day could help their children see greater success.	Some parents worry their children will get tired of school and then dislike learning if the school day is longer. They want school to be fun. Making the school day longer could make school seem more like a job, and it leaves less time for extracurricular activities outside of school. Parents may believe their kids need to have a balanced life, with plenty of time to play outside, see friends, and work on fun hobbies.

Additional Information

- Students in high-poverty schools with at least 25% more school time do better on nation-wide tests than their peers who attend schools with less time.
- The average length of a middle school day in the United States is 6.7 hours. The average length of a middle school day in Japan is 8.5 hours. Japanese children go to school on Saturdays at least twice a month.
- In Japan, the literacy rate is 99%. This is one of the highest in the world. In the United States, the reading and writing rate is approximately 86-87%.

- A high school graduate in the U.S. earns an average of \$712 per week. A college graduate in the U.S. earns an average of \$1,173 per week. A person with a professional degree in the U.S. earns an average of \$1,836 per week.

The Time to Succeed Coalition
<http://timeandlearning.org/about>

Bureau of Labor Statistics "Education Pays"
http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm

"Historical Timeline of Public Education in the U.S."
<http://www.arc.org/content/view/100/217/>



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ANNOTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Features of Academic Text: *Hedging*

Sometimes writers need to take a cautious stance when making a point. In many Word Generation articles, the authors use findings from research studies in their explanations of an issue. Because research is rarely definitive, the writers will use a “hedge” when introducing findings.

*An example of a hedge is “Test scores **suggest** that 180 days **may not be enough**.”*

*If the author wrote “Test scores **tell us** that 180 days **are not enough**,” that would tell the reader that we know this for sure. Even though there is a lot of evidence showing that this is true, we cannot be 100% sure. In order to communicate that in writing, we use hedges. Here are some more hedges:*

- *verbs: seem, tend, appear to be, indicate*
- *phrases: it could be the case that, it looks as if, often times, in most cases*

Marisa Green knew sixth grade was not going to be easy. On the first day of class, Principal Hedges told the students of a **radical** change to their schedule. The school day was going to be **extended** until 5:00 p.m. Students would even have to attend classes on some Saturdays.

Principal Hedges explained that other countries such as Germany, Singapore, and Japan have up to 280 days in a school year. Most American students attend school only 180 days per year. **Test scores suggest that 180 days may not be enough.** In 2012, fifteen-year-olds from the U.S. scored lower on an international math test than students in 33 other developed countries. Principal Hedges said U.S. schools need to improve if Americans want to compete in the global economy.

The late Senator Edward “Ted” Kennedy also supported extending the school day. He proposed an **initiative** that was tested in Massachusetts. Schools that were part of this initiative added about two extra hours to every school day. In some schools, students spent the extra time on Mondays through Thursdays focusing on academics. They used the extra time on Fridays for enrichment activities, such as art or music. People who support an extended school day believe it is **crucial** for students who need extra time to **attain** grade-level reading and math skills.

Some people think extending the school day is insufficient to improve student performance. They argue that just adding hours will not make a difference in student achievement in reading, math,

and science. They point out that teachers will need more time to prepare lessons for the extended day. Teachers may need more materials for the lessons as well. Also, extended days do not guarantee that the teachers who are hired will be well-qualified for the subjects they must teach. For example, some schools don’t have enough math teachers. In those schools, English teachers may have to teach material they have not been trained to teach. Many people argue that we need to focus on improving school quality, rather than just extending the day.

What is your opinion? Should schools extend the school day to improve students’ attainment of crucial academic skills?



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GENERATING WORDS

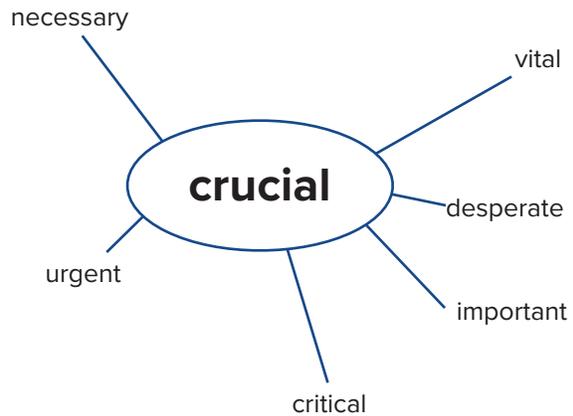
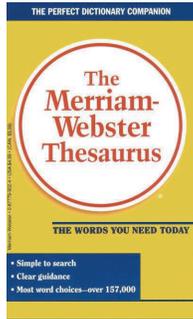
Using a Thesaurus

Crucial is an adjective that is used to emphasize a situation.

Crucial comes from the Greek *crux* meaning crisis. If something is **crucial**, it is more than just important.

For example: It is **crucial** that you take this medicine. This means there could be a crisis if you don't take the medicine.

Crucial is an excellent word to give emphasis to a problem. If you look **crucial** up in a thesaurus (a resource that provides other words to express the same idea), you will find synonyms such as **necessary, critical, important, desperate, urgent, and vital**.



Work with a partner and choose the synonyms for crucial (shown above) that most clearly express the ideas in the sentences below.

- Learning English is _____ if you live in America.
- To be healthy, you must remember that it is _____ that we sleep eight hours each night.
- It is _____ to drive safely.
- It is _____ that we learn the importance of respect.
- When other people have radical ideas, it is _____ to listen to them carefully before judging what they say.

Sometimes, we add a word to emphasize our point. For example, we can say: It is *extremely* necessary that you take this class to graduate.

Rewrite two of the sentences above and add a word such as extremely, very, or absolutely to emphasize your point.

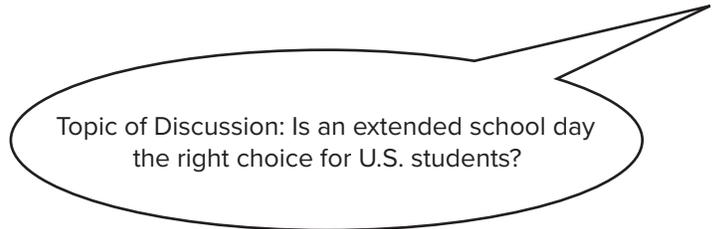


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DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

Fortify a Conversation

Below is a conversation between two people. The casual conversation is the way two friends might talk. The fortified conversation uses school language that is more precise and academic. With a partner, read these two versions of the same conversation. Fill in the rest of the boxes with either the casual or fortified response.



Casual	
	I think they should have longer days.
	You're crazy. Just having more time won't work. 
	But what if it was your family member having trouble at school? Wouldn't you hope someone would help them?
	
	
	
	
	

Fortified	
	In my opinion, it is crucial that schools extend school days so that students will learn more.
	I disagree. Simply adding hours to the school day won't help us attain the goal of more learning. We need more radical change. 
	You may be right about needing more change, but have you thought about how the extended school day could help someone you care about who is having trouble?
	
	
	
	
	

 Rehearse your fortified conversation. Share with another pair of students.