



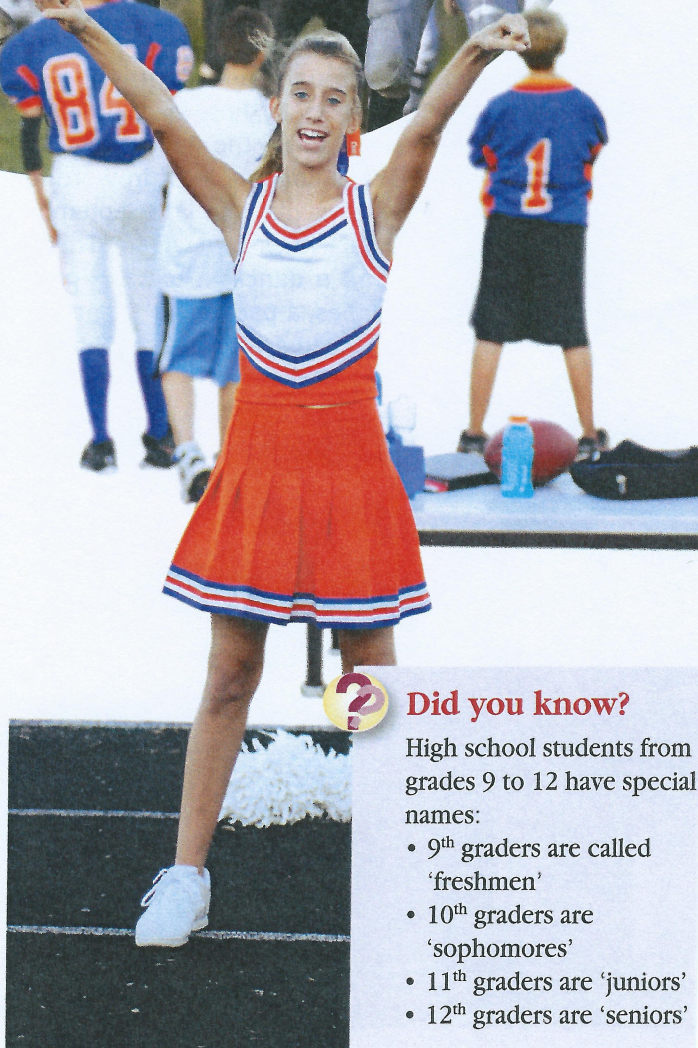
The curriculum

There are five compulsory subjects in US schools. They are English, Maths, Science, Social Studies and Physical Education.

All the other subjects in US schools are chosen by students and are called 'elective studies'. Common types of electives include: Visual Arts (e.g. painting, photography, film), Performing Arts (e.g. drama, orchestra, dance), Technology, Computing, Publishing (e.g. student newspaper, yearbook, literary magazine), Foreign Languages and Sport. Religious Education is not part of the curriculum of American state schools.

Extracurricular activities

American schools give a high priority to extracurricular sports, clubs and activities. These activities usually take place after the school day finishes at about 2.30 pm. Sports, such as American football and basketball, are particularly popular and students often play in a school team and represent the school in interstate competitions. State high school tournaments attract a lot of public interest. Most American schools also have teams of cheerleaders who support their sports teams and compete in annual cheerleading competitions.



Did you know?

High school students from grades 9 to 12 have special names:

- 9th graders are called 'freshmen'
- 10th graders are 'sophomores'
- 11th graders are 'juniors'
- 12th graders are 'seniors'

Listening



4 Listen to a British exchange student who is studying in the USA for a year. Fill in the gaps in the passage about his school.

Tom is studying in a state high school in¹.
 He's in² grade. He thinks that the school has a very³ atmosphere.
 The students⁴ a uniform and there⁵ school rules.
 He starts school every day at⁶.
 Before the lessons start, the students attend an⁷ in the school hall. They sing the⁸ and salute the American⁹.

Tom studies¹⁰ subjects all together. Five of them are¹¹. He has chosen to study journalism, computing and¹² as elective studies. There are two school breaks in the morning, one mid morning and one for¹³ at 12.45. Lessons finish at¹⁴ and then Tom plays¹⁵. His team is called The West High¹⁶.

Writing

5 Write an e-mail to a friend in the States. Talk about your school day and the subjects you study. Say what you like and what you don't like.