



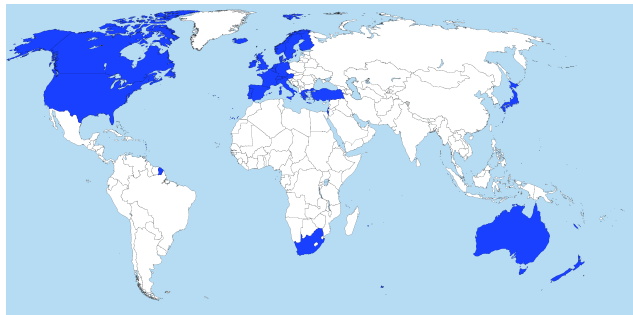
## Is an extended school day the right choice for middle school students?

### 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. And 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 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. Another benefit of more people being educated is better quality of life in the country overall. This overall quality of life inspires or makes Americans want to take pride in their country. 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 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 in a minority group do not achieve as much academically or in school as students who are well-off or in the majority. These students often do not receive college degrees and are therefore not qualified to get high-paying jobs. Their families struggle with poverty.

The achievement gap 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 had the same educational and career opportunities as the majority of white Americans. This is why many black communities today are poor and high school graduation rates are low. The achievement gap also impacts immigrants and people who come from minority groups, like Latinos. Because America prides



itself on being a land of opportunity, many leaders and educators work hard to close the gap so that all people in the United States receive a good education and have successful careers.



## Is an extended school day the right choice for middle school students?

### EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
<b>Business and Political Leaders</b>	American business and political leaders want the U.S. to be the very best country in the world. The leadership wants American citizens to be educated in math and science. If students need more time to learn these subjects and succeed in their future jobs, then we need to extend the school day to help them learn the material.	Extending the school day will cost the government billions of dollars. The United States is still recovering from a bad economy. It does not have the money to make the school day longer for all public schools. Putting money into a longer school day does not guarantee more student success.
<b>Teachers</b>	Teachers complain that they do not have enough time to teach everything their students need to learn. Extending the school day helps them teach more material. It also gives them more opportunities to help struggling students catch up.	A longer school day means that teachers need to prepare more lessons and more time to teach. This will increase their workload. Teachers already work many hours outside of school. An extended day will make it harder for them to balance their home and work duties. They may not get paid much more for the longer school day. The extended day may not be worth the time or money.
<b>Students</b>	Students will become more skilled at math and science. They will be more prepared for college and their careers. They will get better jobs. They will help the United States be the global leader in technology and business. They will have greater confidence in themselves and great success in life because they are highly educated.	Students do not want to go to school longer. They want free time to play, go out with friends, and have fun. Even if the school day is longer, students may not take advantage of it. They may not be motivated to learn more.
<b>Parents</b>	Parents want their children to get a great education. If they are behind in math and science, they want teachers to help them catch up. They also want their children to be safe. When they are teenagers, instead of having too much free time to get into trouble, students in extended programs will be learning and doing positive activities. Parents want to see their children succeed in the world. They will support a longer school day to help their children achieve this result.	Parents do not want their children to get tired of school and then dislike learning. They want school to be fun. Making the school day longer makes school seem more like a job that takes up the whole day. Parents want their kids to have a balanced life. They want their kids to be kids and have time to play outside, see friends, and relax.

#### Additional Reading for Teachers

The Time to Succeed Coalition

<http://www.timetosucceed.com/about-the-coalition/>

Bureau of Labor Statistics "Education Pays"

[http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_chart\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)

"Historical Timeline of Public Education in the United States"

<http://www.arc.org/content/view/100/217/>

*Evidence and Perspectives*  
continues on the next page.

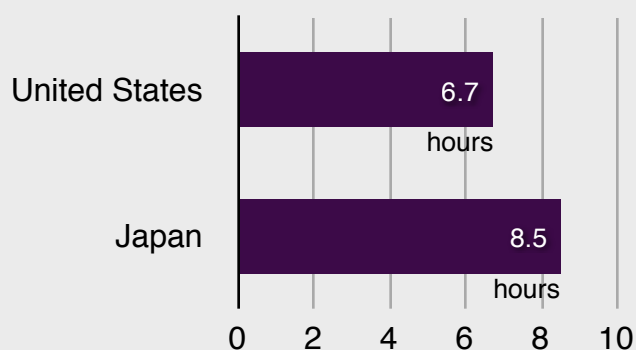


## Is an extended school day the right choice for middle school students?

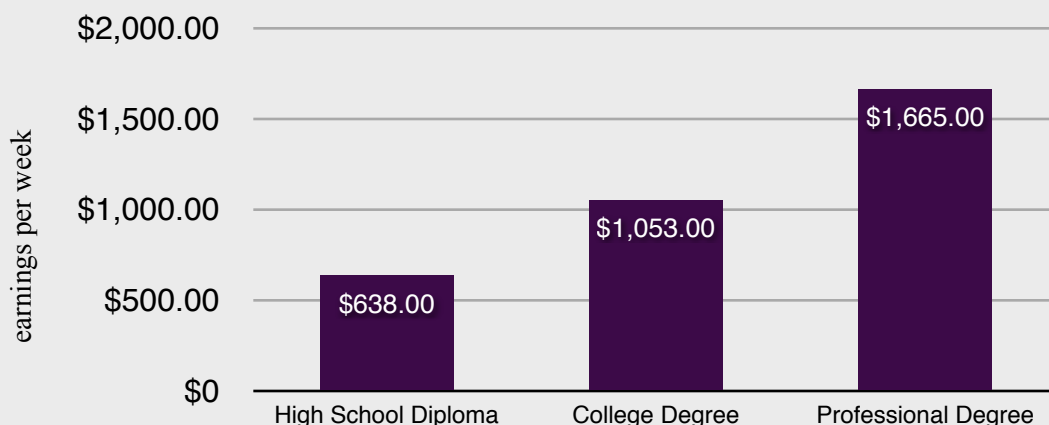
### EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES, continued

- ✓ 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 reading and writing rate (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%.
- ✓ In 2003, the United States participated in a study with five other countries to see how capable adults were at reading and understanding information from all kinds of sources like news stories, tables, charts, forms, etc. The results showed that all adults in three out of the five countries did better than adults in the United States. Even the lowest scoring adults in the other countries did better than the lowest scoring adults in the United States.
- ✓ A person with a high school diploma in the United States earns an average of \$638 a week.
- ✓ A person with a college degree in the United States earns an average of \$1,053 a week.
- ✓ A person with a professional degree in the United States earns an average of \$1,665 a week.

Average Length of a Middle School Day



Income and Education Level in the U.S.





## Is an extended school day the right choice for middle school students?

### 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. 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 a year.

**Test scores suggest that 180 days may not be enough.** In 2006, fifteen-year-olds from the U.S. scored lower on an international math test than students in 23 other developed countries.

Principal Hedges said U.S. schools need to improve if Americans want to compete in the global economy.

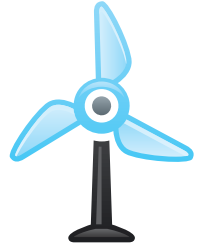
The late Senator Edward Kennedy also supported extending the school day. He proposed an **initiative** that is being tested in Massachusetts.

Schools that are part of this initiative have added two extra hours to every school day. In some schools, students spend the extra time on Mondays through Thursdays focusing on academics. They use the extra hours 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 achievement. They argue that just adding hours will not make a difference to student attainment 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 to teach are teaching subjects they know best. 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 student academic attainment?



## Is an extended school day the right choice for middle school students?

### GENERATING WORDS

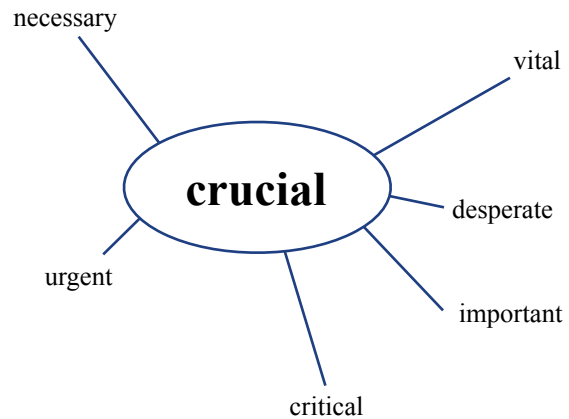
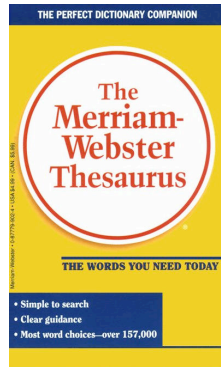
#### Using a Thesaurus

**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 book 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 use the words above to most clearly express the idea in the sentence.

1. Learning English is \_\_\_\_\_ if you live in America.
2. To be healthy, you must remember that it is \_\_\_\_\_ that we sleep eight hours each night.
3. It is \_\_\_\_\_ to drive safely.
4. It is \_\_\_\_\_ that we learn the importance of respect.
5. 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 your sentences above and add a word such as **extremely**, **very**, or **absolutely** to emphasize your point.

---

---

---

---



















## Is an extended school day the right choice for middle school students?

### 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.

Topic of Discussion: Is an extended school day the right choice for middle school students?

Casual	Fortified
 I think they should have longer days.	 In my opinion, it is <b>crucial</b> that schools extend school days so that students will learn more effectively.
You're crazy. Just having more time won't work. 	I disagree. Simply adding hours to the school day won't help us <b>attain</b> the goal of more learning. We need more <b>radical</b> change. 
 But what if it was your family member having trouble at school? Wouldn't you hope someone would help them?	 Yes. Teachers could make learning more engaging and not just focused on tests. We could learn by doing projects that real people do.
	
	
	
	
	

With a partner, read these two versions of the same conversation. Fill in the missing boxes with either the casual or fortified response.

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