

Reading

▶ 30 minutes

1 Read the article in exercise 4 quickly to find out what it is about. Choose the best summary for the text.

- 1 A particular educational institution in New York.
- 2 Changes in the American system of education.
- 3 Problems that young Americans face with gaining qualifications.

2 Read paragraph 1 carefully. Choose the best answer: a, b, or c. What is the paragraph about?

- a The school building looks frightening.
- b The students who attend Manhattan Comp make friends there.
- c Manhattan Comp is not what it seems at first sight.

3 Now read paragraphs 2–5 and summarise each paragraph in a single sentence.

EXAM TIP

First read the whole text quickly to get a general idea of what it's about. Then read each paragraph more carefully to decide what its main focus is. This will help you find the right missing sentence that fits the context.

America's First Night High School by Retta Blaney, *Current* No.6 1992. © Mary Glasgow Magazines/Scholastic. Reprinted by permission of Mary Glasgow Magazines.

READING EXAM

▶ 15 minutes

4 Read this article about an American school. Four extracts are missing from the text. Complete the text with the missing extracts from options A–E below. There is one extract you will not need to use.

AMERICA'S FIRST NIGHT HIGH SCHOOL

The first impressions are rather menacing. Visitors must sign in and show identification before being allowed into the building. ¹_____ But what a deceptive first impression! Manhattan Comprehensive Night High School may be the friendliest, most caring institution in all of New York City. A school of last resort for many of its students, it is their best chance to turn their lives around, and make friends in the process. Manhattan Comp, as it's called, is the first full-time night high school in America.

High school is compulsory until the age of sixteen in America, but many students drop out, either before or after they reach sixteen, and before receiving their high school diplomas. Until now, night education programmes for dropouts only provided the basics and then awarded an equivalency certificate. ²_____ The students receive an academic diploma, which they say is more helpful in getting a job than an equivalency certificate. More than sixty percent of Manhattan Comp's students go on to college.

Most of the school's 450 students have either been expelled from or dropped out of other high schools. Some have been in two or three schools before this one.

What seems to make this school work for these hard-to-place students is the staff and, most importantly, the principal. All the students call him Howard. ³_____ The institution is his own creation. He designed and opened it in 1989.

Most students at Manhattan Comp are between eighteen and twenty-two years old. You must be at least seventeen to enrol (in regular day high schools, students are usually between fourteen and eighteen years old). The classes run from 5 to 11 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, with all-day enrichment programmes on Sundays which explore topics like playwriting, art and video production. ⁴_____ Most students already have some academic credits from previous schools, so instead of the normal four years in high school, they spend, on average, between six months and two years at Manhattan Comp.

- A School terms are ten weeks long, which gives students the opportunity to take time off for family matters or jobs.
- B The community coordinator helps students write resumés and find jobs, and has even brought in clothes for students so they can dress up for interviews.
- C As he walks through the building, he greets students by name, asks about their families or jobs and jokes with them about the lack of variety in the school cafeteria.
- D Such tight security gives one the feeling of entering a prison or some other dangerous place.
- E But now, Manhattan Comp offers the total high school experience, complete with a 'lunch' break, physical education and clubs.

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