



# ZOOM

in on america

A Monthly Publication of the U.S. Mission to Poland and Hungary

Issue 14

## HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

### Classes

Many high schools require each student to earn at least a certain number of credits (e.g. 22) during the four years of study in order for him or her to be able to graduate.

For example some required courses are: 4 credits of English, 2 of Science, 2 of Math, etc. There's also a number of so-called elective classes which the students are not obliged to take, such as foreign languages.

Each student, assisted by a school counselor, registers for each class in a particular semester. Usually about 6 subjects are chosen each semester. A freshman (1st year) student may choose to take the following classes in his first semester: English I, Freshman Science, Math I, World Geography, Physical Education (PE), and Consumer Education.



Photo by Barry Fitzgerald, Department of State

### Grades and Exams

High school students are graded on a scale from A through D. There is also the F grade which means "fail." A Grade Point Average is calculated for each student every semester.

Students who plan to go to college should take either the Scholastic Aptitude test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT),

which are offered several times a year. Both tests are intended to measure what the student has learned in high school and his or her potential for college-level work.

PERIOD	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:15 - 9:00	English I	English I	English I	English I	English I
9:05 - 9:50	World Geography	World Geography	Consumer Ed	Consumer Ed	World Geography
9:55 - 11:25	Math I	Math I	Math I	Math I	Math I
12:00 - 1:30	Freshman Science	Freshman Science	Consumer Ed	Freshman Science	Freshman Science
1:40 - 3:10	PE	PE	PE	PE	PE



USDA Photo by Ken Hammond

### Lunch

Students may bring their own lunches to school or get something to eat at the school cafeteria. Usually there is a main course and some extras to choose from, such as vegetarian lasagna and fresh fruit or vegetable, bread and milk. Some states or schools try to fight obesity in students by banning sugared sodas and sweets from school cafeterias and vending machines.

### Graduation

Graduation week, which is usually in June, brings with it a mix of feelings and emotions for those who are about to depart school. Nervousness over final exam results, elation that the pressure of studies is just about over, sadness at pending separations from close friends, and excitement about what is coming next. Students sign yearbooks, empty their lockers, and prepare for the graduation ceremony.



Photo by Barry Fitzgerald, Department of State

Adapted in part from the Electronic Journal *American Teenagers*, available on-line at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0705/ijse/ijse0705.htm>

# ■ Wassup?

"How much skril you pay for those kicks?" - if somebody asked you that question, would you know what they meant? Well, an American high school kid would know. In high school slang "**skril**" means money and "**kicks**" are shoes. Look below at some other American high school slang words.

I wish mom would let me hang out with the crew tonight...

crew or set -  
a group of friends

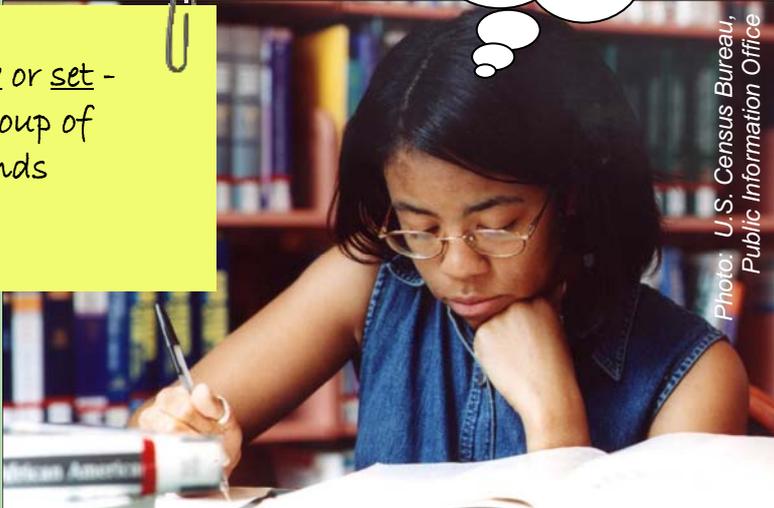


Photo: U.S. Census Bureau, Public Information Office

bummer -  
an unpleasant situation

This pop quiz is a real bummer!

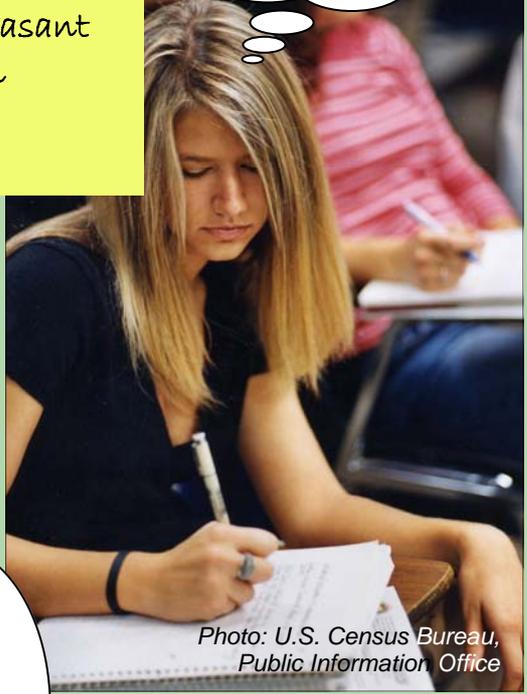


Photo: U.S. Census Bureau, Public Information Office

Guys, I'm hungry, let's go get some grub!

This place is dull, let's bounce!

True dat!



(AP Photo/Tina Fineberg) ©AP/WWP

bounce - leave  
true dat - so true

Photo: U.S. Census Bureau, Public Information Office

guy - a man; but:  
guys - may refer to a group of people, even all females  
grub - food



**American teenagers' slang online**

**Track That Word!**  
<http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/trackthatword/>

**Slang Dictionary**  
<http://www.thesource4ym.com/teenlingo/index.asp>

**Wassup with Teen Talk?**  
<http://www.naa.org/artpage.cfm?AID=5197&SID=1129>

# ■ From Central Europe to Northern Ohio

Louisa Fricke and Arne Schlegelmilch from Germany and Zuzana Oravcova from Slovakia spent their 11th grade year attending a public high school in Amherst, Ohio. They sat down with author Robert Taylor to discuss their impressions and experiences in making friends in a new country, dealing with a different academic environment, and adjusting to America's automobile and fast-food culture.

## Likes and Dislikes



Asked what she liked most about being in the United States, Louisa said, "In the fall, I liked going to football games because we just don't have that at home. We don't have this big 'school spirit' thing, and I really enjoy that. And I enjoy the way the teachers are here. They all are fun. Our school is much harder in Germany, I would say. Our teachers are still a little strict."

"For me, life seems simpler here than it is at home," said Zuzana. "People here don't seem to have problems. They don't look like they're really stressed. They really don't. Everyone sees everything so simple, and they're full of optimism. And the teachers do make education more fun. They make you like a class and try to make everything easier for you. It may be better sometimes if you get a stricter teacher, but still, I liked that part."

## Life in the USA

As for what her life has been like in the United States, Louisa said, "I've been very busy the whole time. I made friends pretty quickly, first because I was playing soccer and then I was swimming. Other than that, the days have been pretty much the same. You come home, do your homework, eat, and sleep. And then the next day it's the same again."

Zuzana had a different experience at first. "At the beginning, when I came," she said, "I didn't really do anything except go to classes. I didn't play any sports, but then, I got involved in the art club and the chess club and was busy with that. Also, in the winter I was in the ski club. Now that I know more people, I enjoy going with friends to concerts or to movies, but it's not as easy to do that here as it is at home. In Slovakia, you can take your bicycle or a bus or a train to go anywhere, but here, if I want to go someplace, I have to make sure somebody is going to take me or pick me up, and it gets complicated."

Arne, an articulate, gregarious young man, surprised the group by saying, "Actually, I had some trouble making friends at first. I'm really extroverted, but that seemed to bother a lot of people around here, so I had trouble making friends. I had a lot of people that I talked to and they talked to me, but I didn't have people that I actually hung out with after school. It just takes a while. People are open here, they talk to you, but they won't, like, start hanging out with you immediately. Then, during the winter, I was playing indoor soccer, and that's when I started making friends. By now, I have a lot of friends. I really do."

"I think I feel a little differently here," said Arne, "about the 'fun' classes. All of mine were really hard. My school at home required that I take all these advanced placement classes, so I took advanced English my first semester, and that kept me really busy. I had to work hard in class all the time. What I did like most was doing stuff on the weekends. The whole life here goes on during the weekends. As soon as school is out on Friday, everybody starts to be themselves. Outside of school, you actually get to know the people. Inside of school, there's a lot of 'want to be,' I believe. There's a lot of masking."

What Louisa liked least was "the lack of freedom. In Germany, I don't have a curfew. On weekends, I have to be home at 12 o'clock here, but in Germany I'm coming home at 4 o'clock in the morning sometimes. Because we're allowed to. I think our parents trust us more."

"What's bothered me here," said Arne, "is that you can't always rely on people. I'm serious. People say, 'We might pick you up at maybe 5, 5:30,' and you call them at 6, and they say, 'Well, we're still over at this other place, but we are gonna come pick you up.' And they do, eventually. So, I guess what I really liked least was not being able to drive myself. That was a real problem. Everybody here drives, so they go places all the time that we can't go unless we can find a ride."

"What I didn't like," said Zuzana, "was the culture of the fast food. I had a hard time getting used to it when I came."

Excerpts from the Electronic Journal *American Teenagers*. Read what they say about their schools and communities, their love of music and sports, their religious and volunteer activities, and their plans for the future at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0705/ijse/ijse0705.htm>

# Activity Page

## Win a Prize!

To win a prize answer this question:

**What is a  
Grade Point  
Average?**

Send your answer to  
zoom@usembassy.hu

Please give your name  
and address.

Deadline:  
February 28, 2006

**Good Luck!**

**ZOOM**  
in on america

**Zoom is available  
online at**  
[http://www.usembassy.hu/  
zoom.html](http://www.usembassy.hu/zoom.html)

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for subscription to:**  
zoom@usembassy.hu

**Regional English  
Language Office**  
relomail@usembassy.hu

**Information Resource  
Center**  
infousa@usembassy.hu

**Mailing address:**  
U.S. Embassy  
Public Affairs Section  
1054 Budapest  
Szabadság tér 12.

## ■ Brocoli or Broccoli?

*Below are words spelled in two different ways. Mark the correct spelling!*

accommodation - accomodation  
brocoli - broccoli  
defenitely - definitely  
developement - development  
embarrassing - embarassing  
existence - existance  
finnally - finally  
independent - independant  
judgment - judgement  
Mississippi - Mississipi  
privilege - privilegede  
recieve - receive  
satellite - satelite  
seperate - separate

## ■ My Own Words

*Fill in each blank with the word that fits the context. The first letter of each word is given.*

I remember what it was I \_\_\_\_\_ being a teenager, wanting to f \_\_\_\_\_ in, but still feeling like maybe I never would, that I'd never find what was right for me. You want to find that place, find that niche of friendship and f \_\_\_\_\_ like you belong. So what I did was get involved in a lot of extracurricular a \_\_\_\_\_, trying to find something that I enjoyed.

I did a l \_\_\_\_\_ bit of everything. I played multiple sports, not just one sport. I played basketball, football, baseball. I also joined after-school activities just to see what I liked, and to see what t \_\_\_\_\_ of people I liked, and figure o \_\_\_\_\_ if that was something that I wanted to do.

Sometimes you find out you're lousy. Sometimes you screw up and you're a \_\_\_\_\_ people are going to laugh at you, but so what? You have to d \_\_\_\_\_ your best to not be afraid of people laughing or not agreeing w \_\_\_\_\_ what you're doing. You have to stand up and be your own person first of a \_\_\_\_\_. And second, when you find that thing you do enjoy d \_\_\_\_\_, that thing you're good at, keep at it.

Text by Marvin Lewis, adapted from the Electronic Journal *Growing Up Healthy*, available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0105/ijge/ijge0105.htm>

**Find correct answers at: [http://www.usembassy.hu/quiz\\_key.html](http://www.usembassy.hu/quiz_key.html)**

## ■ Glossary

— With page numbers where the words appear

**aptitude** - natural or acquired talent or ability(1)

**articulate** - capable of, speaking in, or characterized by clear, expressive language (3)

**curfew** - a regulation to retire from the streets at a prescribed hour (3)

**extracurricular** - outside the regular course of study but under the supervision of school (4)

**gregarious** - seeing and enjoying the company of others (3)

**to hang out** - (slang) to spend one's free time in a certain place (3)

**to keep at** - to continue doing, practicing (4)

**lousy** - (slang) poor, inferior (4)

## ■ Tongue Twisters

*Try to say these really quickly!*

**I wish to wish the wish you wish to wish, but if you wish the wish the witch wishes, I won't wish the wish you wish to wish.**

**Give papa a cup of proper coffee in a copper coffee cup.**

**I can think of six thin things, but I can think of six thick things too.**

**She sells sea shells on the seashore; she sells sea shells no more.**