

Should School Be Year-Round?

Many students say that June is the best time of year. In most places, school lets out as summer begins. Some students don't spend summers at home or at camp, though. They are in school instead. That is because they go to year-round schools.

Students in some year-round schools go to school the same number of days as students in schools with a long summer break. They get mini-breaks throughout the year instead of one long summer vacation. The mini-breaks are a few weeks long. For example, students at some year-round schools get a few weeks off at Thanksgiving instead of just a few days.

More and more schools are becoming year-round places of learning. The National Association for Year-Round Education states that the number of students in year-round schools tripled from 1990 to 2000. By 2001, there were about 3,000 year-round schools.

Is your school year-round? If not, would you want it to be? Read the arguments that follow.

Yes, Schools Should Be Year-Round

Year-round schools are better than schools with a long summer break. Students in year-round schools have more breaks. They get to enjoy time off in every season.

Year-round schools allow families to plan vacations at times other than summer. Students in year-round schools are less likely to have to miss school for a trip that isn't in the summer.

Frequent breaks are good for students. They have less stress when they go back to school after a short break. They become more eager to learn. One student said, "I love it. Just about the time I'm really tired, I get a break."

Breaks also give teachers time to plan better lessons. Teachers in schools with a long summer break are so busy teaching that they have less time to plan lessons for their classes. Students in year-round schools tend to remember what they learn. That is because their breaks aren't too long. Teachers don't have to spend time going over things that students have forgotten over the summer. All schools should be year-round.

No, Schools Should Not Be Year-Round

Year-round schools are a bad idea. Summer is a great season. Students should be able to enjoy their summers fully.

Most families plan vacations over the summer. Year-round schools restrict summer family vacations. They also don't allow students to go away to camp or take on summer jobs to earn money for the future.

Too many breaks disrupt learning. The breaks allow teachers to focus on a topic for only a few weeks. During mini-breaks, students are away from school long enough to forget what they learned.

In schools with a long summer break, lessons are not broken up by frequent breaks. Teachers can spend more time on one topic. Teachers also don't have to plan around as many breaks. Summer can also be very hot. Many schools don't have air conditioning. How can students learn in a hot classroom?

Christopher Newland, a researcher at Auburn University, said that year-round schools do not help students learn. Newland said, "The evidence is that it would be as useful as changing the color of the school buses."

Schools with a long summer break work just fine. There is no need to change to year-round schools.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, why might students have trouble learning in school during the summer?

- A Many students would rather be at the beach than inside a classroom.
- B Many schools do not have air conditioning, and students would be too hot to learn.
- C Year-round schools make students more tired than schools with a long summer break.
- D Many students are more likely to daydream when the weather outside is hot.

2. How does the author organize the information in this passage?

- A The author describes a problem and several possible solutions.
- B The author defines several different terms.
- C The author describes an argument and then presents evidence to support both sides.
- D The author gives evidence to support his opinion but ignores other opinions.

3. Read this statement: "Students feel like they need frequent breaks." Which piece of evidence from the text supports this statement?

- A the information from the National Association for Year-Round Education
- B the quote from a student
- C the quote from the researchers
- D the information about air conditioners

4. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A students do not remember material after breaks
- B students do not read during breaks
- C teachers do not teach well enough during the school sessions
- D teachers can get better at teaching during breaks

5. Read these sentences from the introduction:

"Is your school year-round? If not, would you want it to be? Read the arguments that follow."

In these sentences the author is

- A summarizing his arguments
- B stating his opinion and supporting it with evidence
- C speaking directly to readers to increase their interest
- D creating a mood of anger within the passage

6. This passage is mostly about

- A reasons why nine-month schools should offer longer vacations
- B reasons why all schools should be year-round schools
- C reasons why year-round schools are or are not a good idea
- D reasons why teachers would prefer to teach in year-round schools

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Students at a year-round school might get several weeks off at Thanksgiving _____ a year-round schedule includes mini-breaks throughout the year rather than one long summer break.

- A but
- B although
- C because
- D however

8. What evidence is presented in the text to show that year-round schools are becoming more popular?

9. Summarize the five arguments for more year-round schools.

10. The author suggests that the decision about school schedules affects multiple groups of people. List the groups of people and describe why this decision may affect each group.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 650

Featured Text Structure: Argumentative – the writer presents evidence for both sides of an argument

Passage Summary: In “Should School Be Year-Round?”, the author describes the increase of year-round school schedules. The author then presents evidence for both sides of the question of whether schools should be year-round. The author includes perspectives from students and researchers.

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8. What evidence is presented in the text to show that year-round schools are becoming more popular?

Suggested answer: The author includes a statistic from the National Association for Year-Round Education stating that the number of students in year-round schools tripled from 1990 to 2000. By 2001 there were about 3,000 year-round schools.

9. Summarize the five arguments for more year-round schools.

Suggested answer: The five arguments for more year-round schools are:

- (1) Students in year-round schools have more breaks, so they can enjoy time off in every season.
- (2) Families can go on trips at various times throughout the year.
- (3) Frequent breaks reduce student stress.
- (4) Frequent breaks allow teachers more preparation time.
- (5) Breaks at year-round schools are shorter, so students retain more information.

10. The author suggests that the decision about school schedules affects multiple groups of people. List the groups of people and describe why this decision may affect each group.

Suggested answer: The author suggests that this decision affects (1) students, (2) teachers, and (3) families. The decision affects students because it affects the amount of—and distribution of—their breaks. It may also affect their learning. This decision affects teachers because it affects their preparation time, student memory of information (and thus teaching decisions), and the ability to teach topics or units in a given time frame. This decision affects families because their vacation time depends on the school break schedule.