

ВСЕРОССИЙСКАЯ ОЛИМПИАДА ПО АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ «State of the american education nowadays»

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Why are Americans becoming more stupid? Our entire education system needs a revolution
(MEGAN JELINGER/AFP via Getty Images)

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«The empires of

1. a) a; b) the; c) an; d) ___

future are the empires of the mind», said Winston Churchill. And judging by the state of education in America, it seems both of those empires could soon crumble. The dysfunction is evident from top to bottom: from Ivy League outposts down to the secondary schools. Both are producing a generation that is ill-informed, illiterate and innumerate. In other words, a generation increasingly ill-suited

2. a) function; b) functioning; c) to have functioned; d) to function

as productive citizens in a democracy.

One might expect, then, that the creation of a raft of new universities and schools focused on doing

3. a) something; b) anything; c) nothing

Different would seem like a fundamental necessity. After all, young people are deserting college in droves, with enrolments down by 15% over the past decade; in the lower grades, it's common to hear talk of «zombie schools», the product of more than 20% of pupils being «chronically absent».

And yet, the emergence of these still-small shoots

4. a) terrifies; b) will terrify; c) have been terrifying; d) have terrified

the educratic establishment. Some claim the shift in emphasis towards classics and civics, now occurring in places such as Florida's New College, is «sinister development» by nefarious Right-wingers. Similarly, the teachers' unions have resisted a number of moves to create charter schools — which increase choice in the public system — because they are part of a «war on schools».

In some cases, the defence

5. a) of; b) from; c) on; d) upon

failure is breathtaking. Blue states such as Illinois have worked to all but eliminate charters, even as the Land of Lincoln boasts 53 schools where *not one student* can do grade-level math and 30 where none can do so in English. These schools are overwhelmingly in Chicago, where a significant increase in spending per student since 2019 seems to have made no impact.

Yet Chicago's failures are wholly

6. a) generic; b) archetypal; c) run-of-mill; d) representative.

The most recent National Assessments of Educational Progress found that only 27% of eighth graders are proficient in reading, 20% in math, 22% in geography, and a mere 13% in US History. The Covid lockdowns may have accelerated the deterioration, but scores

7. a) continue; b) have continued; c) will continue; d) had continued

to decline since the pandemic ended. IQ scores, which had been rising for decades, are now falling even among college students.

More influential here is education's gradual radicalisation, which has its origins at the top of the food chain. Already

8. a) in; b) on; c) at; d) upon

2018, one study of 51 top-rated colleges found that the proportion of liberals to conservatives was generally at least 8 to 1, and often as high as 70 to 1. Five years later, nearly three in five US professors admitted to self-censoring

9. a) avoid; b) avoiding; c) to avoid; d) to have avoided

offending administrators and students.

The ideological stance of elite colleges is often justified with reference to their enlightened commitment to social justice. But in reality, the educational system has become

10. a) many; b) more; c) much; d) most

elitist and less connected to the rest of society. We are a long way from the massive expansion of higher education during the mid-20th century, largely through the GI Bill and later the National Defense Education Act, as well as post-war efforts to expand universities in the UK and across Europe.

One clear factor is the soaring cost of a university

11. a) constitution; b) education; c) formation; d) background

in the US, which, even after adjusting for inflation, has risen by 180% since 1980. Harvard, Princeton, Stanford and Yale collectively enrol more students from households in the top 1% of income distribution than from households in the bottom 60%.

Even at the secondary-school level, many state systems

12. a) chose; b) are choosing; c) will choose; d) choose

to put their markers on progressive indoctrination. California's K-12 system, for instance, fails to educate the majority of its students: less than half meet national standards for literacy, while only one-third do for math. The state's

13. a) solution; b) settlement; c) accomplishment; d) call

is basically to lower standards; well before students possess knowledge of the basics and the scientific method, the math curricula includes an emphasis on "social justice" and mandates programmes steeped in climate catastrophism.

It is no surprise, then, that the education system fails to produce the workers needed by employers.

14. a) Late; b) The latest; c) Later; d) The latter, in particular, note a lack of "soft skills" in young workers, such as the ability to think critically, as well their "unrealistic" expectations about work. Even as business schools, particularly elite ones, push

15. a) so; b) such; c) such a; d) kind of

themes as critical race theory, roughly half of all major corporations are now eliminating college degrees as a prerequisite for hiring.

«When you hear these things», Arizona State professor Paul Carrese tells me, «you don't know whether to laugh or cry». Yet, despite all this, he also

16. a) suggested; b) is suggesting; c) suggests; d) has suggested

that "we are at the end of a downward spiral", where "loss of confidence in education has become a wake-up call".

For the most part, new institutions that seek to provide an oasis in America's education desert

17. a) are being set up; b) to be set up; c) have been set up; d) were set up

in reddish states, including in Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Tennessee and Ohio. In some places, these function as departments; in others as separate parallel schools. At the University of

18. a) a; b) an; c) the; d) ___

Texas, for instance, the new Civitas School seeks to take advantage of the wholesale desertion of civics education by the professoriate.

And in others, there are moves to create entirely separate universities, most notably the University of Austin (UATX) and Ralston College based in Savannah. The emergence of these institutions reflects in

19. a) lager; b) large; c) the largest; d) the larger

part the alienation of the donor class; in recent years, many major donors have cancelled their gifts to elite colleges and are instead funding new schools within and outside the current educational hierarchy.

A parallel revolution is also slowly taking shape at the secondary-school level.

20. a) For; b) On; c) In; d) At

years, it has been clear that Catholic schools have out-performed public ones, and are having a particularly positive impact on inner-city males. Kids who went to

21. a) this; b) that; c) thoses; d) these

schools are twice as likely to graduate from college than their more secularly minded counterparts, notes Tulane sociologist Ilana Horwitz. Overall, students attending Catholic schools also easily out-perform public schools, with their average score in the

22. a) four; b) fourth; c) fourt; d) fouth

grade roughly 1.5 grade levels ahead.

And yet, the truth is that Catholic schools

23. a) hampered; b) have been hampered; c)are hampered; d) have hampered

by the church's financial issues and face limits on their expansion; private Christian schools, which continue to enjoy steady growth, are very much the exception. The big game-changer, then, could prove to be the rapid rise of publicly funded charter schools, whose numbers have doubled since 2005, while the student count has grown

24. a) by; b) to; c) upon; d) in

more than threefold. Even though some of these schools have been infected by progressive ideology, they have consistently outperformed their traditional public school rivals in terms of academic results.

25. a) On; b) In; c) Above; d) At present, these alternatives are little more than pinpricks in the colossal edifice educational system. Yet they could augur a beginning of a concerted attempt to rescue education from the educators and their prevailing ideology. Universities and secondary schools were once engines of upward mobility and civic culture. They must become that again — or risk isolation, decline and, ultimately, irrelevance.