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From the ages of five to sixteen years we have to accept school as a way of life. The law forces us to attend some kind of educational establishment and therefore it is important that we make the most of whichever school we are expected to attend.

Rebelling against the system of education that this country has will do little to help us in the years to come when we are reliant upon qualifications in order to obtain jobs and develop a career.

There are, of course, many good and bad points about our country's schools. If I had the chance to complain about anything to do with the general education that I have received I think I would first of all discuss the education system. It is drummed into us from a very early stage that in order to make anything worthwhile of our lives we have to leave school with qualifications. In order to gain qualifications we have to pass our examinations, in order to do that we are expected to follow a course for two years and then cram all the information that we have gathered over that period into about four hours of exams per subject. If we experienced an 'off day' when we have our exam, then that is hard luck and your whole prospective livelihood rests in the balance.

When we leave school we need our qualifications to stun our would-be employers. Initial lists per interview are made upon the examination results that you put on your application form. This means that your personality, practicability and suitability for the job are not taken into account until you have passed all your exams and can impress the interviewer. Those with few or no exam pass marks are often pushed to the bottom of the pile and do not receive any chances to prove their character or suitability for the job.

When in the fifth year we take our exams it is a tremendous anti-climax to receive nothing but a piece of paper which represents all the hard work put into the two year course. Looking back over the last year and considering my own 'O' level and C.S.E. results, I find that I cannot even remember most of the information that I put into those exams. Once the 'O' levels are over, if what you learnt is not needed for your every day existence or for further exams, then it is just forgotten. I think that this is another valid reason for a revision of examination systems.

Schools are communities of people brought together to learn information; therefore I consider that it is very important for teachers to develop a community spirit within their schools. Many young people resent the authority that school and teachers represent. They show their resentment by rebelling against the system and refusing to obey the rules set down by the school. I think that there must be something wrong with a system which produces so many people who are against authority. The seeds of this are sown while at school. All through our working lives we are going to have to cope with people who are unpleasant but have the power to tell us what to do, and in order to preserve our jobs and security we will have to do as they say. If we cannot even respect what teachers say, how will we cope with other people?

Students who do not do well academically often have a harder time when it comes to finding a job. This seems very unfair, as these people often prove to be the most practically minded and have the greatest potential for putting the knowledge that they have into use. What is the point of being exceptionally clever if you have not the slightest idea about how to apply it?

Many children rebel against the school system with which they are forced to comply because it represents authority and restricts their freedom. What they don't seem to realise is the harm that they are doing to themselves. The codes of conduct to which we are expected to adhere in the outside world are much harsher than those laid down in school and regularly appear to be much more unreasonable. School is a good starting point for the self discipline which we will have to exercise during our working lives - if we are unable to cope with the school rules, then it will be much harder to cope with more stringent ideas. School should also develop a pupil's feeling as part of a team - many schools fail to do this. If a school does not have an identity and represent something for a pupil to be proud of, then it is hardly surprising that so many schools are vandalised and gain bad reputations. The teachers and their attitudes affect the pupils' reaction to the school and also the amount of involvement that parents have with their child's education. If a teacher has a bored approach to lessons and the life of the school, then pupils will consider this the correct way to behave and react in a similar way, while at the same time losing respect for the authority that the teacher represents. Young people need to be guided towards the realisation that school is more than an educational establishment, it is a place where our minds are allowed to grow and develop, a school is what you as pupils and teachers make it, and how you as parents support it. Qualifications are not the most important things that someone brings out of school - character, a sense of responsibility and respect for fellow human beings are far more important and are what many schools appear to neglect when educating children.