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Having a high-quality teacher in primary school could substantially offset the influence of poverty on school test scores, according to a paper co-authored by Mr Hanushek. Thomas Kane of Harvard University estimates that if African-American children were all taught by the top 25% of teachers, the gap between blacks and whites would close within eight years. Teachers like Mr Chew ask probing questions of all students. They assign short writing tasks that get children thinking and allow teachers to check for progress. Their classes are planned with a clear sense of the goal and how to reach it, and teacher-led but interactive. Three out of five low-performing teachers in America think they are doing a great job. And our teachers are skilled. They are strict but kind. They teach us to be clever, hard-working, honest, polite, friendly. They give us good knowledge in different subjects. They try to make the lessons interesting. There are a lot of subjects on our timetable, aren’t there? Yes, there are. And I like many of them. For example, my favourite subjects are... As our school specializes in English, we read books by American and English authors. We read some stories in English but often in Russian. I have a special liking for reading detectives, adventure stories, and historical novels. Work in groups.

1. Here are different reasons why you go to school. Discuss them and say whether you agree or disagree with them. School