

Colombian vs. U.S. Schools

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BEFORE YOU READ:

1. In the title, “vs.” is an abbreviation for “versus.” It means as opposed to or against. We also use it when we talk about sports teams, for example, the Celtics vs. the Lakers. In legal cases, “versus” is abbreviated as “v.” – for example, *Brown v. Board of Education*. Why do you think the author uses “versus” in the title? What do you infer the article will be about?
2. Use “versus” in several sentences.

Colombian Schools

In Colombia, the classrooms are small, but they have a lot of children. There are 40 to 45 kids per room with just one teacher! It is very complicated to maintain calm and quiet in all the classrooms; in fact, it is virtually impossible. There is a lot of pressure and stress on the teachers. In Colombia, students take more than eight subjects per year, but the schools don't have much technology, so the students can't learn them all well.

Not all of it is bad, though. Colombian schools encourage students to practice sports, and the coaches are very demanding. They push the students to have self-control and discipline. Sports help students focus on good things, not bad activities.

Unfortunately, the government doesn't do enough to support students in their studies.

U.S. Schools

American schools are very big yet often have no more than 15 kids in a classroom, which seems crazy coming from Colombia! In my town in Connecticut, each class has one teacher and one paraprofessional teacher or helper. There are also

other professionals for special needs children. The teachers are very kind with the students and they encourage social skills and being helpful to each other.

On the other hand, schools here can be crazy with drugs and bullying. To my surprise, though, each school has a police resource officer! Wow! Other staff in the school also encourage students to continue with their studies and sports.

The government supports schools with a lot of funding, so it is easier here to continue your studies.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. How does the author contrast school in Colombia with school in the U.S.? Be specific.
2. Read the article on p. 22 contrasting school in China and in the U.S. Write your own article comparing and contrasting school in two countries.

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