

## China's crackdown on tutoring leaves parents with new problems

### Level 2: Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

a. What do you know about higher education? Choose the best answer to complete each statement.

1. The oldest university in the world is in **Germany / Italy**.
2. The oldest university in the UK is **Cambridge / Oxford**.
3. With 3.5 million students, the biggest university in the world is in **China / India**.
4. With over 4,000 universities, **India / the USA** has the most universities in the world.
5. The most remote university in the world is in **Norway / Russia**.

#### 2 Key words

a. Find the following words in the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. a plural noun meaning *the money you pay to a professional person or institution for their work*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1)
2. a noun meaning *an amount that you guess or calculate using the information available*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (2)
3. an adjective meaning *always trying to be more successful than other people*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3)
4. a verb meaning *be different in different situations* \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
5. a verb meaning *increase a lot in size, amount, or importance over a very short period of time*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (4)
6. a noun meaning *strong action that someone in authority takes to stop a particular activity*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (6)
7. a two-word noun meaning *places where people buy and sell shares in companies*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (6)
8. a verb meaning *obey a rule or law or do what someone asks you to do*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (6)
9. a noun meaning *an occasion when a lot of people are asked what they feel about something*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (8)
10. a noun meaning *working for a company, usually for low pay, in order to learn the type of work that they do* \_\_\_\_\_ (11)

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- 1 In 2018, Ms Hu spent a third of her annual income sending her child to summer school in Shanghai. In the following year, the cost went up. Still, she and her partner paid the fees. "My son started to learn English at age five. I was afraid he would be left behind if we didn't pay," she said.
- 2 Hu and her husband are among the many parents who pay for private tutoring – survey estimates range from 65% of families with school-aged children in 2016, up to 92% in 2021. The private tutoring industry in China is worth more than \$150bn.
- 3 On 23 July, China's state council released new rules banning for-profit companies from tutoring basic subjects, and foreign investment in such companies. It will not give any new licences and all existing companies must register as non-profits. The move is partly to reduce pressure on parents and students in China's competitive education field. "Parents want their children to have a happy childhood, but they are afraid they will lose at the starting line in a competition over scores," said China's leader, Xi Jinping, in March.
- 4 The quality and resource of education varies greatly between urban and rural areas, from province to province, and between top- and lower-tier cities. There are few university places relative to the number of students, and even fewer at the top universities, which are mainly on the east coast and in major cities. It is in these areas where private tutoring has exploded in the past decade.
- 5 "Education and health are the two main concerns of Chinese people," said Dr Ye Liu, of King's College London. "Because of the one-child policy, urban families used education as an investment. They need the private tutoring because it's so competitive."
- 6 While there were signs from China's leaders that a crackdown was coming, the industry was surprised by the July announcement. The share price of some tutoring companies listed on the New York and Hong Kong stock exchanges fell by as much as 60%. Knowing that they could not fight a Chinese government order, some of the biggest companies released statements saying the new policy was not good news for them but that they would comply with the instructions.
- 7 There is also some discussion that the reforms are an attempt to prevent a demographic crisis by reducing the cost of raising children. The falling birth rate is a result of the high cost of living, low wages and long hours.
- 8 Almost 70% of the 2,400 respondents in a recent poll said they didn't think the policy reform would reduce pressure on parents. Just 18% thought it would partly or entirely reduce this pressure.
- 9 In Shanghai, Hu said the policy's intention was good and that she would now spend more time with her child doing outdoor activities. However, she is among many who fear that other parents will instead spend their money on private individual tutors, which would make things even worse.
- 10 "It is financially and mentally difficult for parents to send their children to private schools," said one parent. "At the same time, I am worried that parents will have to pay for the education of their kids. Those with good grades succeed and the rest will be left far behind."
- 11 Liu says the government needs to fund more students – particularly those from lower socio-economic regions – and encourage them to enrol in vocational education, apprenticeships and other skills training. "The key is for the government to use their propaganda skills to associate these jobs with high social status and high returns."

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#### 3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. It was quite cheap for Ms Hu to send her child to summer school.
2. Very few Chinese families pay for private tutoring.
3. A new rule in China means that private tutoring companies have to register as not-for-profit.
4. Education is not the same in urban areas as it is in rural areas.
5. There aren't enough places for everyone who wants to go to university.
6. No one knew that a crackdown was coming.
7. The government wants to reduce the cost of raising children.
8. Most people in the poll thought the policy reform would reduce the pressure on parents.
9. Some people think spending money on private tutors will make things worse.
10. Dr Liu believes vocational education and apprenticeships might be the answer.

#### 4 Key language

a. Complete the phrases from the text using these prepositions.

from    by    at    of    in    between    with    on

1. pressure \_\_\_\_\_ parents
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the starting line
3. difference \_\_\_\_\_ urban and rural areas
4. surprised \_\_\_\_\_ the announcement
5. comply \_\_\_\_\_ the instructions
6. a result \_\_\_\_\_ the high cost of living
7. students \_\_\_\_\_ lower socio-economic regions
8. enrol \_\_\_\_\_ vocational education

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#### 5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "In education and in health, private is always best."
- "All education should be free."

#### 6 In your own words

a. Use an internet search engine to find out more about education in a chosen country (X).

**Answer some or all of these questions:**

- How many school students are there in X?
- When do children start school?
- When do they start secondary school?
- How many universities are there in X?
- How many university students are there?
- Which subjects are the most popular?
- How many students from X study in other countries?
- Did you find any other interesting information about the education system in X?
- How different is education in X from education in your own country?

**Find more information if possible. Present your findings to the class.**