**Eton**

Within a ten minute walk of Windsor Castle, across a bridge over the River Thames, there’s an old Gothic building. It is the legendary Eton College. It is one of England’s largest independent schools and one of the highest in prestige. Members of the British royal family are traditionally educated here. It was one of the best schools when first founded and remains so now; it is still commonly known as one of the greatest schools among all the schools in the world.

Following the old tradition, Eton is a full boarding school, which means all students live and study at the school with their fellow students throughout the school year. Eton is also one of the four remaining boys’ schools, so there’s no opportunity for a girl to study there. Eton students traditionally come from England’s wealthiest and most prestigious families, many of them aristocratic. Boys enter Eton at about 13 and continue there until they are ready to enter university.

The school was founded by Henry VI in the fifteenth century to provide free education for poor pupils who would then go on to get a higher education at King’s College in Cambridge. That connection no longer exists today.

All students have a uniform of a black tailcoat and a waistcoat, a white collar and dark trousers. All students wear a white tie. This uniform is not for special occasions, it is worn at all times for all classes. If you visit Eton during term time, you will see students walking along the streets with books under their arms dressed in their uniforms.

At Eton, there are dozens of organizations known as ‘societies’, in many of which students come together to discuss a particular topic. The societies are traditionally governed by the boys themselves. Societies range from astronomy to Scottish dancing and stamp-collecting. Some of them are dedicated to music, some to arts, some to languages, and so on.

The official colour of the college is the so-called ‘Eton blue’. It’s a light blue-green colour which has been used since the early 19th century. The main purpose was to identify Eton sportsmen in rowing races and on the cricket field.

**Reading test**

**I. Choose the correct answer:**

1. Eton is in … .

a) America b) Scotland c) England

2. Eton is a famous … .

a) university b) school c) society

3. Eton is a … .

a) school for girls b) mixed school c) school for boys

4. Students wear a uniform … .

a) every day b) on special occasions c) on holidays

5. The societies at Eton are … .

a) sports clubs b) interest organizations c) music groups

**II. Say if the statements are TRUE or FALSE:**

1. Eton College is one of the most prestigious schools in the world.

2. Girls of the British royal family can study at Eton.

3. Nowadays Eton provides free education for poor pupils.

4. The students wear a uniform during the school year.

5. Teachers govern the societies at Eton.

**III. Complete the sentences:**

1. Eton is a …, which means all students live and study at the school with their fellow students throughout the school year.

2. Eton students traditionally come from … families.

3. Students enter Eton at … and continue there until they are ready to enter university.

4. Societies are organizations, in which students come together to … .

5. The official colour of the college is … .

IV. Answer the questions:

1. Where is Eton College situated?

2. Is it a school or a university?

3. Who founded Eton college? When was it founded?

4. What is the uniform of the students?

5. What societies are there in Eton?

V. Express your opinion (5-6 sentences):

If you had a chance, would you like to study at Eton? Why (not)?

Key:

**I.** 1 – c; 2 – b; 3 – c; 4 – a; 5 – b.

**II.** 1. True 2. False 3. False 4. True 5 False

**III.** 1. boarding school

2. England’s wealthiest and most prestigious

3. about 13

4. discuss a particular topic

5. ‘Eton blue’/ a light blue-green colour

**IV.** 1. Eton is situated in London/England/ ten minute walk of Windsor Castle, across a bridge over the River Thames.

2. It is one of England’s largest independent schools.

3. The school was founded by Henry VI in the fifteenth century.

4. All students have a uniform of a black tailcoat and a waistcoat, a white collar and dark trousers. All students wear a white tie.

5. Societies range from astronomy to Scottish dancing and stamp-collecting. Some of them are dedicated to music, some to arts, some to languages, and so on.