

Name: _____

The best years of your life?

Many parents in Britain send their children to boarding school. They do so with the best of intentions: to give their offspring the best possible start in life. However, is it really good for children to

5 ▶ be separated from their parents for months at a time? The experience can certainly be traumatic, especially at the beginning.

Luke Clegg is eight years old. In a few days' time, his life is going to change radically. He is going to

10 ▶ leave his family and start at boarding school. Not surprisingly, he is worried. His list of concerns is long: 'Sleeping without Mummy and Daddy near me, not sleeping in my own bed, not having all my teddies ...'

Luke is one of almost 100,000 children who will

15 ▶ attend boarding school in the UK this year. However, he is younger than the majority, who start when they are thirteen.

Dominic Allen, who is eleven, is also going to start boarding school this year. He will have to travel

20 ▶ 6,000 miles to get there, as he lives in China with his English father and Chinese mother. Dominic's father, who himself went to boarding school, is convinced that his son will benefit from the experience. His

mother, Zhang Lanxin, is not so sure. 'It's a hard

25 ▶ decision to make,' she says. 'We want the best for Dominic. As parents we make a choice, and we hope we are not making the wrong choice.'

Dominic is in two minds about the move: 'I'll feel sad because I'll be away from my parents for a long time,

30 ▶ nervous because I don't know what the school is like, and excited because I look forward to doing fun stuff.' His father has given him some advice: 'My dad told me that you have to act tough and that you have to accept the fact that you're not going to see your family

35 ▶ for a long time.' However, some people think that this need to act tough and to project a hard image can have long-lasting negative effects. Nick Dufell, who has written a book about boarding schools, is one of them. He describes the typical personality of someone who

40 ▶ has been through the boarding school system: 'Outside they are competent and confident. Inside they are private and insecure and are unable to bond or form full relationships with others.'

It seems, then, that parents should ask themselves

45 ▶ some serious questions before sending their young ones to boarding school. It could harm them for life.

Adapted from the Daily Mail website

1 Choose the correct option according to the text.

- 1 Why do parents send their children to boarding school?
 - a) Because their children are doing badly at school.
 - b) Because their children have committed a crime.
 - c) Because they think that it will be good for their children.
 - d) Because they don't like to have their children in the house.
- 2 Luke is ...
 - a) younger than Dominic.
 - b) older than Dominic.
 - c) the same age as Dominic.
 - d) from a family that is poorer than Dominic's.
- 3 The author thinks that ...
 - a) boarding schools are definitely bad for children.
 - b) boarding schools might be bad for children.
 - c) parents should ask boarding schools serious questions.
 - d) parents shouldn't send their children to boarding school.

2 Answer the questions in your own words.

- 1 Why is Luke Clegg's situation not typical?
- 2 Do Dominic Allen's parents think that it is a good idea to send him to boarding school? Justify your answer.
- 3 Why can 'acting tough' be bad for children?

3 Find words or phrases in the text that mean:

- 1 children (paragraph 1)
- 2 worries (paragraph 2)
- 3 not sure (paragraph 4)
- 4 things (paragraph 4)

4 Complete the sentences in your own words.

- 1 Luke Clegg doesn't want
- 2 Although Dominic's father is English,
- 3 Dominic feels
- 4 Nick Dufell thinks that