

## Why does school start at nine?

<https://www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/2015/10/21/why-does-school-start-at-nine/>

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I [thought this whole paragraph](#) in the Guardian yesterday was fascinating. It was written by Paul Kelley of the [Oxford's Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences](#) :

*It's a common belief that adolescents are tired, irritable and uncooperative because they choose to stay up too late and are difficult to wake in the morning because they are lazy. The [real problem is their biological timing system](#) — their body clock — which shifts their wake/sleep times to two to three hours later in the day than might be expected. Adolescents should be sleeping in two to three hours later than their school or work schedules allow — instead, they regularly lose a few hours of sleep. This is unnecessarily risky when we know that more than 50% of all mental illness starts in adolescence, and those illnesses include schizophrenia, psychosis, eating disorders, panic attacks, substance abuse and bipolar disorders. When school starts are moved later it's not just performance that improves: health does as well.*

The phenomena of lethargic early-morning teenagers is one I know only too well. I know I am not alone.

But if Paul Kelley and his team are right why do secondary schools start their working day at 9?

Why not 10?

Why are we getting this so wrong if such an obvious solution (including, as a bonus, to traffic congestion, at least in the morning) is readily available?