

British and American system of education

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British system of education

Education in the UK is compulsory for everyone between the ages of five to sixteen. It is responsibility of parents to see that their children attend school. Although age 16 marks the end of compulsory schooling, the majority of students stay on for an extra one or two years. Schools and Further Education Colleges are expanding and developing new courses to meet the increasing demands.

There are two parallel school systems in the UK:

1. The state system, where education is provided free
2. The independent system, where parents normally pay fees

Britain has a National Curriculum – a statement of the minimum learning requirements of all children at each stage in their education. This curriculum is compulsory in the state system. Independent schools are not bound by it, but in practice most of them teach what the National Curriculum demands.

In the last year of compulsory education, Public Examinations known as GCSE's (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are usually taken. They are taken for example at the age of 16. At the age of 18 they take exams called A levels. In Scotland these examinations are called the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE).

Schools and Further Education Colleges also offer Vocational Courses. These courses are directly related to a particular career.

Many students continue with their education which includes universities, teacher training colleges and other colleges of technology, art, and professions connected to medicine.

Degree titles vary according to the practice of each university. A Bachelor's degree (Bachelor of Arts – B.A., Bachelor of Science – B.Sc.) is given to students who pass examinations at the end of three or four years of study. A Master's degree (Master of Arts – M.A., Master of Science – M.Sc.) is given after attending a postgraduate course or by writing a paper, or thesis. The degree of Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) is given for a thesis both in humanities and science.

The oldest universities in the UK are Oxford, Cambridge, St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh.

The school year in England and Wales normally begins in early September and ends the following July. (Scotland varies a bit.) The year is divided into three terms of around 13 weeks each (September-December, January-March, April-July). In some schools the school uniforms are worn.

The school day begins between 8 and 9 a.m. and ends around 4 p.m.. It includes a fairly long morning and afternoon break and about an hour's lunch break.

age	type of school
3-4	pre-school
5-12	primary school
13-16	secondary school - GCSE
17-18	secondary school - A levels
19-21	Bachelor
22-23	Master
24-28	Doctorate

American system of education

In the United States, education is mainly the responsibility of the individual states. All schools are controlled by an elected local body known as the „school board“ and by the city and state in which the school is located.

The majority of schools are public schools. These schools are free. Then there are private schools which charge high fees and are therefore attended mostly by children of the rich.

The beginning of the school year may vary in each state from mid-August to mid-September. The school year usually ends in May or June. At some schools the year is divided into three terms - fall, spring, summer, similarly as at British schools. The school day usually begins between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. and ends around 3 p.m.. It includes a lunch break and sometimes free hours during the day. School uniforms are worn only in private schools.

School attendance is compulsory from 6 until the age of 16.

Pre-school education includes nursery schools and kindergartens which are up to age 5 and 6. Compulsory education starts at the age of 6. Both elementary and (6-11) and secondary education is comprehensive.

Years in the US are called grades, so elementary school lasts from first grade until fifth grade.

Secondary education is provided by Middle Schools (from 11 to 14 years of age, sixth-eighth grade) or by High schools which are often divided into Junior High (12-15) and High School (15-18). The basic school leaving qualification is usually the High School Diploma.

Some of the high-school graduates continue on higher education. Institutions of higher education are divided into Community Colleges, Vocational-technical schools, Universities, Colleges and Technical Colleges.

Degree titles vary according to the practice of each university or college. Bachelor's degree (BA – Bachelor of Arts, BS – Bachelor of Science) is given to students after successful completion of four year study. Some universities and post-graduate colleges also award Master's Degrees both in humanities and science (MA, MS) usually after one to three years of study and Doctoral Degrees after two to five years of study.

The oldest universities are: Harvard, Yale University, Princeton University, ...

age	type of school
4-6	kindergarten/preschool
6-10/12	elementary school
10-14	junior high school
14-18	high school
after 18	Bachelor
	Master
	Doctorate

College in the UK means the sixth form of secondary school in which people study towards A levels, but college can be used to mean almost any school where people go to study after the age of 16, other than university.

College in the US is an institution for advanced education where you study for your bachelor's degree.

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