

A

The school system

This is the **system** for **state education** in most parts of England and Wales. State schools are free and operated by the country. Parents pay to send their children to **private** schools.

age	education
3	Almost all children attend [go to; <i>fml</i>] nursery school for up to 15 hours a week.
5	Everyone starts primary school .
11	Pupils [students at school] go to secondary school .
16	Pupils take/do GCSE exams , in up to ten subjects. Then they can go to a college for vocational [job] training , e.g. hotel management or travel and tourism courses, or they can stay at school for two more years.
18	Pupils take 'A' level exams in three or four subjects, and then they can leave school and get a job or go on to university [continue their education at university], or go to a college for further education/training, e.g. teaching or business studies.

B

The school timetable

The school day is **divided into** about 5–7 lessons, and over the course of a week, most pupils **do/study** about ten **subjects**, including English, maths, history, science, etc. There's usually a one-hour lunch **break** [period of rest between work], and a break in the morning and afternoon as well.

Language help

In American English the subject is **math**, but in British English it is **maths**.

The school year is usually divided into three **terms** [periods of study], with each term being about 13 weeks, although some schools are now having shorter terms and more frequent holidays. At the end of the school year, pupils usually **take/do** exams before they **break up** [end classes for the term]. After the summer holidays, they **go back** [return] for the new school year.

C

School rules*

“In the **past** schools generally had more rules, and if you **broke the rules**¹, you were **punished**. At my school, for example, pupils sometimes had to **stay behind**² and write an essay. I used to **get into trouble**³ for wearing **lipstick**.

I remember we had to **call** the **male** teachers ‘sir’ and **female** teachers ‘miss’, and we had to **wear** a horrible **uniform**⁴. Nowadays, the **atmosphere**⁵ is more **relaxed**⁶: older pupils can often **dress**⁷ the way they want – as long as they’re reasonably **smart**⁸ – and the teachers are not as **strict**⁹.”

* instructions telling you what you must or must not do

¹ did something wrong

² stay in a place when others leave

³ do something wrong and be punished

⁴ special clothes

⁵ the feeling in a place or situation

⁶ comfortable and informal

⁷ wear clothes

⁸ well dressed and not too casual

⁹ A strict teacher punishes pupils who do something wrong.



lipstick

Exercises

32.1 Match the words on the left with the words on the right.

- | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 go | ☒ | a the rules |
| 2 leave | ☐ | b a uniform |
| 3 take | ☐ | c into trouble |
| 4 wear | ☐ | d at school |
| 5 study | ☐ | e to school |
| 6 stay | ☐ | f school |
| 7 get | ☐ | g an exam |
| 8 break | ☐ | h a subject |

32.2 Complete the sentences about state schools in England.

- 1 When they're three, children can go to nursery school.
- 2 At the age of five they go to school.
- 3 At the age of eleven they go to school.
- 4 When they're sixteen they exams, and afterwards they can go to a college for if they want.
- 5 Many pupils at school for another two years and do 'A' levels.
- 6 Nowadays, a lot of pupils to university after they leave school.

32.3 Choose the correct word to complete the sentences. Sometimes both are correct.

- 1 We *take / do* exams in the summer. *Both are correct.*
- 2 The school *timetable / schedule* is more or less the same every day.
- 3 The day is divided *into / out of* seven lessons.
- 4 The pupils *do / study* about ten subjects.
- 5 There is usually a *rest / break* three times a day.
- 6 Schools often *break out / break up* after they finish exams.
- 7 After pupils leave school, many of them *take / get* a job.
- 8 Pupils can *wear / dress* the way they want.

32.4 Complete the sentences.

- 1 There were three terms in the school year.
- 2 I had to a uniform.
- 3 I had to call the teachers 'sir' and teachers 'miss'.
- 4 I occasionally got into at school for doing things I shouldn't do.
- 5 The teachers at my school were strict, and they pupils who broke the rules.
- 6 My school had a really nice, relaxed

32.5 Over to you

Answer the questions about the education system in your country. If possible, compare your answers with someone else.

- 1 Do you have state schools and private schools?
- 2 Do all children have nursery education?
- 3 When do children go to primary school and secondary school?
- 4 Do all schools have the same terms?
- 5 When can children leave school?
- 6 Do pupils normally have to wear a uniform, or can they wear what they want?
- 7 Are teachers usually quite strict?
- 8 Is the atmosphere quite relaxed in most schools?