

Education system in France



The education system is divided 5 main sections: nursery (ages 3 - 6), primary education (ages 6-11), secondary lower education (ages 11-15), secondary lower education (ages 15-18) and higher education (ages 18+). Full-time education is compulsory for all children aged between 3 and 16. At the age of 15, students sit national exams known as *le brevet*. Students may then continue their secondary studies for a

further three years by attending an Upper Secondary School (*Lycée*), which leads most typically to the *baccalauréat* or the *baccalauréat professionnel* examinations.

State education is free, although parents have to pay for stationery and school trips. Most students in France attend local public schools, which are free. Schools are mixed sex and secular. The majority of schools are state-run (*écoles publiques*), whereby the government pays the teachers' salaries and the school follows the national curriculum. There are also private schools (*écoles privées*) that are fully independent. Schools affiliated to a particular religion are also usually private and thus fee paying. There is no school uniform at most schools in France.

The curriculum at the *école maternelle* generally revolves around arts, crafts and games with the basics of reading being started in the final year to prepare the children for primary school. The aim of it is to develop a child's social skills and co-ordination and children can take their teddies to have a sleep in the afternoon. Children must be toilet trained before they start.

All public schools in France are required to follow the National Curriculum, which is made up of ten subjects. The subjects—French, Mathematics, Science, Art & Design, Citizenship, Geography, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Music and Physical Education.—are compulsory for all students aged 5 to 16. In 2015 the French government proposed some controversial educational reforms to the *collège* system (11-15). These involved the teaching of modern languages and history, encouraging teachers to work together to teach topics across different themes in interdisciplinary classes.

Higher education is divided into three cycles: the 1st cycle, two-year course up to DEUG level; the 2nd cycle, third year up to the licence followed by the one-year maîtrise; and the 3rd cycle or higher postgraduate study beginning with the (DEA) or DESS

The school year in France

The school year starts at the beginning of September. French schools have long holidays - a two-month summer holiday starting in July, two or three weeks at Christmas and Easter, as well as half term breaks. Dates vary according to where you live; France has been divided into three zones for school holidays and. Private schools set their own dates.

The school week in France

Students go to school between 24 and 28 hours a week, spread over four, four and a half, or five days depending on the region. Some maternelles, primary and middle schools (11-15) close on Wednesday or Wednesday afternoons. Students preparing the *baccalauréat* may have as many as 40 hours per week.

The school day starts around 8.30am and ends at 4.30pm (later for older students), with two breaks (and at least an hour and a half for lunch. Students can return home for lunch or stay and eat in the school *cantine*. School lunch usually consists of a starter, main meal, dessert and cheese. After the school day ends students can go home - with their parents' permission - or go to *études* (study lessons).

Many maternelle and primary schools have a fee-based childcare system, *service de puériculture*, available before and after school and during vacations. Students, even younger children, are expected to do homework most evenings - older pupils can have two or more hours every day.

QUESTIONS

What are the five levels of the English education system?

At what age do children have to start school?

What are the two state exams called and at what age do students do them?

What does secular mean?

What changes have been made to the *collège* system ?

What do children do in Maternelle?

What are the subjects studied in school?

Name 2 characteristics of a private school.

School uniforms are compulsory. Justify your response

True

False

After school care is free. Justify your response

True

False

Answer the following questions.

Do you like school?

What are your favourite subjects?

Would you like to go to school in France?

Discuss the differences between the French and English education systems

Look at the school rules. Draw a table and put the rules under the 3 appropriate categories.

Obligation

Permission

lack of Permission

General School Rules

- Be punctual.
- Be present every school day.
- In case of absence, parents should call the school in the morning of the absence and notify the teacher in writing upon the student's return to school.
- Respect each other at all times.
- Buildings and the campus will be kept clean and neat.
- Do not deface or damage school property.
- Maintain order when moving to different areas.
- Do not run.
- Restricted products
 - radios, cell phones, pagers and other electrical equipment
 - yoyos, darts, sling shots, and other potentially dangerous toys
 - pets
 - skateboards, roller skates, rollerblades, razors
 - valuables, extra money, computer games, items of sentimental value
 - fireworks, matches
 - weapons or expensive toys
 - gum
- Remain within school boundaries at all times.
- Students leaving the campus must have a Student Pass and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. (Leaving campus without consent is a Class C offense, prohibited by DOE Rules).
- Using abusive or profane language and gestures.
- Do not climb trees, gates, railings, fences, and the school buildings.
- Respect the property rights of others.
- Leave the premises immediately after school duties/responsibilities are completed.
- Buying/selling of personal items and trading are not allowed.

Must
have to

Obligation

be allowed
Can

Permission

be not allowed
Can't

lack of
Permission

Now make the rules for an ideal school using

Obligation

Permission

lack of Permission