

78 Education: school

A The system

Most children in England and Wales follow this route in the **state system** (= free education).

Age

- 3 some go to **nursery school**
- 5 everyone starts **primary school**
- 11 pupils go to a **secondary school** (AmEng = **high school**). This may be a **comprehensive** (= mixed ability) or a **grammar school** (= children selected for their **academic ability**)
- 16 they **leave school** and get a job, or go to a college for **vocational** (= job) training, e.g. hotel management, secretarial courses; or **stay at school** for two more years
- 18 they leave school and get a job or $\begin{cases} \text{go to university} \\ \text{go to a college for further education/training,} \\ \text{e.g. teaching, business studies.} \end{cases}$

Note:

- You **go to school** (as a pupil to study) and **go to university** (as a student to study). You don't use the definite article 'the' here. Other expressions like this are **go to bed** (to sleep); **go into hospital** (when you are ill); **go to church** (to pray / to worship).
- In some areas of the UK there are not many grammar schools.
- There are also **public schools**. In fact, these are private, and parents pay to send their children there. Some are expensive. About 5% of the population go to public schools.

B A school timetable

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
Lesson 1	Religious Education	Maths	Social Education	English	Visual Art
(break)					
Lesson 2	History	Science	Music	Science	Geography
Lesson 3	English		French	Physical Education (PE)	Maths
(lunch)					
Lesson 4	Maths*	History	Information Technology	Maths	Physical Education
Lesson 5	Geography	Visual Art		French	English

* Maths is an abbreviation of mathematics.

As you can see, the **pupils** have five **lessons** every day, and altogether they **do** (= study) eleven **subjects** a week plus Physical Education (PE). Every morning they have a twenty-minute **break**. There are three **terms** (= periods of continuous work) in a school year, and the timetable changes every year.

Note: Some words in English which end in 's' look plural, but in fact they are singular:

Maths **isn't** my favourite subject, and physics **is** very difficult.

Most nouns of this type refer to subjects; other examples are **economics** and **politics**.

Exercises

78.1 Here are some school subjects but the letters are mixed up. What are the subjects?

Example: MGREAN ..German.....

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 TAHMS | 6 EHGORAGPY |
| 2 IRTHOSY | 7 RAT |
| 3 CNECSEI | 8 SIMCU |
| 4 NISGEHL | 9 EHNFCR |
| 5 HOGTCEYNLO | 10 NEOCCIOSM |

78.2 How much can you remember? Try to answer these questions or complete the sentences without looking at the opposite page.

- 1 At what age do children go to nursery school?
- 2 At what age do they start primary school?
- 3 When they go to secondary school it is either a grammar school or a
- 4 At what age can English and Welsh children leave school?
- 5 According to the timetable the foreign languages studied is
- 6 Not including PE, how many subjects do the children do?
- 7 What happens if children fail all the exams they take at the age of 16?
- 8 What can they do if they pass all their exams at the age of 18?

78.3 What about you and your country? Answer these questions.

- 1 Did you go to nursery school?
- 2 Do most children start primary school at the age of five?
- 3 Is the secondary school system similar or different?
- 4 How many subjects did/do you study at secondary school?
- 5 Did/do you study any subjects which are not included opposite?
- 6 What was/is your favourite subject?
- 7 How many lessons did/do you have every day?
- 8 Is/was your school a state school or public school?
- 9 At what age can you leave school?
- 10 How many terms are there in a school year?

78.4 Complete these sentences with the correct expression.

- 1 When she was a child she went in a small village with only fifty other pupils.
- 2 He didn't go to school last term because he was very ill and he had to go
- 3 I was very tired, so after I finished my homework I went
- 4 When I left school I went and studied medicine.
- 5 It was a religious school, so we had to go quite a lot.

78.5 The next unit is about university and further education. Can you think of six subjects you can study at university which you do not usually study at school? Write down your answers, then turn to the next page.

79 Education: university

A Subjects

You can normally **do/study** these **subjects** at university but not always at school:

<u>m</u> edicine	law	<u>ph</u> ilosophy	<u>en</u> gineering
<u>ps</u> ychology	sociology	<u>ar</u> chitecture	<u>po</u> litics
<u>bu</u> siness studies	<u>ag</u> riculture	<u>hi</u> story of art	

Note: The underlined letters in some of the words above show the syllable with the main stress. Also note that the first syllable of **psychology** is pronounced /saɪ/ like 'my'.

B Studying at (a British) university

If you want to **go to** (= **enter** *fml*) university, you must first **pass examinations** that most students take at the age of eighteen (called 'A' levels). Most students take three 'A' levels (three examinations in three different subjects) and they must do well in order to **get/obtain** a place at university because the places are limited. At the moment, approximately 30% of young adults go to university in Britain.

If you get a place at university, the **tuition** (= the teaching) is free, and some students also **get** (= receive) a **grant** (= money to pay for living expenses, e.g. food and accommodation) as well. Students at university are called **undergraduates** while they are studying for their first degree.

Most university courses **last** (= go on for / continue for) three years, some courses last four years, and one or two courses, e.g. medicine, may be even longer. During this period students can say that they are **doing/studying** history, or **doing / studying** for a degree in history, for example. When they finish the course and pass their examinations, they receive a **degree** (the qualification when you complete a university course successfully). This can be a **BA** (= Bachelor of Arts) or a **BSc** (= Bachelor of Science), e.g. I have a friend who has a BA in history, and another who has a BSc in chemistry.

C Postgraduate courses

When you complete your first degree, you are a **graduate**. (In the US, students also use this word as a verb and say, they 'graduated in history' or 'graduated in chemistry', for example.) Some students then go on to do a second course or degree (**postgraduate course / postgraduate degree**). These students are then **postgraduates**. There are usually three possible degrees:

MA (Master of Arts) or MSc (Master of Science); usually one year

MPhil (Master of Philosophy); usually two years

PhD (Doctor of Philosophy); at least three years

When people study one subject in great detail (often to find new information), we say they are **conducting / doing / carrying out research** (U); e.g.

I'm doing some research **into/on** the languages of different African tribes.

D School vs. university

At school, you have **teachers** and **lessons**, at university, you have **lecturers** and **lectures**.

When a lecturer **gives/does** a lecture, the students listen and **take/make notes** (= write down the important information), but do not usually say much, except to ask occasional questions.

Exercises

79.1 Read these sentences spoken by university students. What is each person studying?

- 1 We have to know every bone in a person's body.
- 2 I'm concentrating on the modernist style and the work of Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright.
- 3 The way we use fertilizers is much more precise than twenty years ago.
- 4 We're going to concentrate on Freud and Jung this term.
- 5 I've been reading some books on time management.
- 6 Expressionism was really a reaction to the work of the Impressionists.
- 7 We've spent a lot of time on American foreign policy and how it has been affected by various domestic problems.
- 8 You must know this case – it's one of the most famous in legal history.

Now mark the stress on each of your answers, check with the answer key, and practise saying the words.

79.2 What do you call:

- 1 the money some students receive if they get a place at university?
- 2 the qualification you get at the end of university?
- 3 the name we give students during this period at university?
- 4 teachers at university?
- 5 students when they have completed their first degree?
- 6 students studying for a second degree?
- 7 the study of one subject in great depth and detail, often to get new information?
- 8 the talks that students go to while they are at university?

79.3 Replace the underlined verbs with different verbs that have the same meaning in the context.

- 1 Who is giving the lecture today?
- 2 Did she receive a grant for her course?
- 3 Is it more difficult to obtain a place at university?
- 4 You have to pass the exams before you can enter university.
- 5 He's studying physics, I think.
- 6 I think they're carrying out some research into the cause of asthma.
- 7 I didn't take any notes in the lecture yesterday.
- 8 The course goes on for three years.

79.4 How similar is university education in your own country? Answer these questions. If possible, compare your answers with someone else from your own country and/or someone from a different country.

- 1 Do you need to pass examinations before you can go to university?
- 2 Do some students get a grant to study at university?
- 3 Is the tuition free if you go to university?
- 4 Do most students go to university at the age of 18 or 19?
- 5 Do more students go to university in your country than in Britain?
- 6 Do most degree courses last three years?
- 7 What is your equivalent of the British BA or BSc?
- 8 Do you have similar postgraduate degrees in your country?