

Education in Great Britain (wikipedia)

The education system is divided into [nursery](#) (ages 3–4), [primary education](#) (ages 4–11), [secondary education](#) (ages 11–18) and [tertiary education](#) (ages 18+).

Full-time education is compulsory for all children aged between 5 and 16, with a child beginning primary education during the school year he or she turns 5. Students may then continue their secondary studies for a further two years ([sixth form](#)), leading most typically to [A-level](#) qualifications, although other qualifications and courses exist, including [Business and Technology Education Council](#) (BTEC) qualifications, the [International Baccalaureate](#) (IB) and the [Cambridge Pre-U](#). The leaving age for compulsory education was raised to 18 by the [Education and Skills Act 2008](#). The change will take effect in 2013 for 16-year-olds and 2015 for 17-year-olds?. State-provided schooling and sixth form education is paid for by taxes. England also has a tradition of [independent schooling](#), but parents may choose to educate their children by any suitable means.

Higher education often begins with a three-year [bachelor's degree](#). Postgraduate degrees include [master's degrees](#), either taught or by research, and the [doctorate](#), a research degree that usually takes at least three years. Universities require a [Royal Charter](#) in order to issue degrees, and all but one are financed by the state via tuition fees, which have increased for both UK and [European Union](#) students.

The school year begins on 1 September (or 1 August if a term starts in August). Education is compulsory for all children from their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16. This will be raised, in 2013, to the year in which they turn 17 and, in 2015, to their 18th birthday.

State-run schools and colleges are financed through national [taxation](#), and take pupils free of charge between the ages of 3 and 18. The schools may levy charges for activities such as swimming, theatre visits and field trips, provided the charges are voluntary, thus ensuring that those who cannot afford to pay are allowed to participate in such events. Approximately 93% of English schoolchildren attend such schools.

A significant minority of state-funded schools are [faith schools](#), which are attached to religious groups, most often the [Church of England](#) or the [Roman Catholic Church](#).

There is also a small number of [state-funded boarding schools](#), which typically charge for board but not tuition. Boarding fees are limited to £12,000 per annum.

Nearly 90% of state-funded secondary schools are [specialist schools](#), receiving extra funding to develop one or more subjects in which the school specialises.

The table below describes the most common patterns for schooling in the state sector in England. In most cases progression from one year group to another is based purely on chronological age, although it is possible in some circumstances for a student to repeat or skip a year. Repetition may be due to a lack of attendance, for example from a long illness, and especially in Years requiring standard tests. A child significantly more advanced than their classmates may be forwarded one or more years.

Age on 31 August (before school year)	Year	Curriculum Stage	Schools
3	Nursery	Foundation Stage	Nursery School
4	Reception		
5	Year 1	Key Stage 1	Infant School
6	Year 2		
7	Year 3	Key Stage 2	Junior School
8	Year 4		Primary School
9	Year 5		First School
10	Year 6		
11	Year 7	Key Stage 3	Middle School
12	Year 8		
13	Year 9	Key Stage 4 / GCSE	Senior School
14	Year 10		
15	Year 11	Sixth Form / A-level, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge Pre-U, etc.	Secondary School with Sixth Form
16	Year 12 (Lower Sixth)		Upper School or High School
17	Year 13 (Upper Sixth)		College/Sixth Form

In the vast majority of cases, pupils progress from primary to secondary levels at age 11; in some areas either or both of the primary and secondary levels are further subdivided. A few areas have [three-tier education](#) systems with an intermediate middle level from age 9 to 13.

English secondary schools are mostly [comprehensive](#), except in a few areas that retain a form of the previous selective system (the [Tripartite System](#)), with students selected for [grammar school](#) by the [eleven plus exam](#). There are also a number of isolated fully selective grammar schools, and a few dozen [partially selective schools](#). Specialist schools may also select up to 10% of their intake for aptitude in the specialism, though relatively few of them have taken up this option. The intake of comprehensive schools can vary widely, especially in urban areas with several local schools.

Approximately 7% of schoolchildren in England attend privately run [independent schools](#), commonly called "private schools", whilst private sixth forms are attended by around 18% of students. Independent schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum, and their teachers are not required or regulated by law to have official teaching qualifications. Some of the earliest established independent schools are known for historical reasons as "[public schools](#)".

Education at independent schools is usually chargeable. Such schools, some of which are [boarding schools](#), cover primary and/or secondary education and charge between £2,500 and £30,000 per year. Some schools offer scholarships for those with particular skills or aptitudes, or [bursaries](#) to allow students from less financially well-off families to attend.

Traditionally, many private schools have been single-sex, but a growing number are now co-educational (mixed-sex). Traditional public schools such as [Radley](#), [Winchester](#), [Eton](#) and [Harrow](#) take boys at 13 years of age. Many students must pass the [Common Entrance Exam](#) at 11 or 13 to gain entry into highly selective schools. As in the state sector, there is a hierarchy of independent schools with schools towards the top of the hierarchy attracting applications from the strongest 11- or 13-year-olds. The net effect is one of 'distillation of talent', which may explain their academic success.

Students at both state schools and independent schools typically take [GCSE](#) examinations, which mark the end of compulsory education. Above school-leaving age, the independent and state sectors are similarly structured. In the 16–18 age group, sixth form education is not compulsory at present, although mandatory education until the age of 18 is to be phased in under the [Education and Skills Act 2008](#). This will take effect for 16-year-olds in 2013, and for 17-year-olds in 2015.

Students will typically study in the sixth form of a school, in a separate [sixth form college](#), or in a [further education college](#). These courses can also be studied by adults over 18. This sector is referred to as [Further Education](#). Some 16-18 students will be encouraged to study [Key Skills](#) in Communication, Application of Number, and Information Technology at this time.

Students normally enter [university](#) from age 18 onwards, and study for an [academic degree](#). Historically, all undergraduate education outside the private [University of Buckingham](#) and BPP University College was largely state-financed, with a small contribution from [top-up fees](#), however fees of up to £9,000 per annum will be charged from October 2012.

The typical [first degree](#) offered at English universities is the [bachelor's degree](#), and usually lasts for three years. Many institutions now offer an undergraduate [master's degree](#) as a first degree, which typically lasts for four years. During a first degree students are known as [undergraduates](#). The difference in fees between [undergraduate](#) and traditional [postgraduate](#) master's degrees (and the possibility of securing LEA funding for the former) makes taking an undergraduate master's degree as a first degree a more attractive option, although the novelty of undergraduate master's degrees means that the relative educational merit of the two is currently unclear.

Students who have completed a [first degree](#) are eligible to undertake a [postgraduate](#) degree, which might be a:

- [Master's degree](#) (typically taken in one year, though research-based master's degrees may last for two)
- [Doctorate](#) (typically taken in three years)

Specialist qualifications

- Education: [Postgraduate Certificate in Education](#) (PGCE), [Certificate in Education](#) (Cert Ed), [City and Guilds of London Institute](#) (C&G), or [Bachelor of Education](#) (BA or BEd), most of which also incorporate [Qualified Teacher Status](#) (QTS).
- Law: [Bachelor of Laws](#) (LLB).

- Medicine: [Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery](#), studied at [medical school](#)
- Business: [Master of Business Administration](#) (MBA).
- Psychology: Doctor of [Educational Psychology](#) (D.Ed.Ch.Psychol) or [Clinical Psychology](#) (D.Clin.Psych.).

Criticism

One-half of British universities have lost confidence in the A* or A grades that are awarded by secondary schools, and require many applicants to sit for a competitive [entrance examination](#). According to the Schools Minister, “strong evidence has been emerging of [grade inflation](#) across subjects” in recent years

An analysis of 2010 school data by [The Guardian](#) found that state faith schools were not taking a fair share of the poorest pupils in their local areas, as indicated by free school meal entitlement. Not only was this so at an overall national level, but also in the postcode areas nearby the schools. This suggested selection by religion was leading to selection of children from more well-off families.

The Moser Group of the Basic Skills Agency has found that one out of five English adults are functionally illiterate, while two out of five are functionally innumerate. The [Confederation of British Industry](#) is also complaining of falling academic standards. Employers often experience difficulty in finding young people who have such basic employability skills as [literacy](#), [numeracy](#), [problem solving](#), [teamworking](#) and [time management](#). As a result, employers either have to pay for employees' [remedial education](#), or they must hire foreign candidates.

School in Scotland

The table below lists rough equivalences with the year system in the rest of the United Kingdom (For England and Wales, the equivalence given is for children born before 1st September; the equivalence for those born from September to February [December for deferred pupils] is given in brackets):

Scotland	Age at start of school year	Age at end of school year	England and Wales	Northern Ireland
Primary 1	4 - 5	5 - 6	Year 1 (Reception)	P2
Primary 2	5 - 6	6 - 7	Year 2 (Year 1)	P3
Primary 3	6 - 7	7 - 8	Year 3 (Year 2)	P4
Primary 4	7 - 8	8 - 9	Year 4 (Year 3)	P5
Primary 5	8 - 9	9 - 10	Year 5 (Year 4)	P6
Primary 6	9 - 10	10-11	Year 6 (Year 5)	P7
Primary 7	10 - 11	11-12	Year 7 (Year 6)	Year 8 (1st Year)
S1 (First Year)	11 - 12	12-13	Year 8 (Year 7)	Year 9 (2nd Year)
S2 (Second Year)	12 - 13	13 - 14	Year 9 (Year 8)	Year 10 (3rd Year)
S3 (Third Year)	13 - 14	14 - 15	Year 10 (Year 9)	Year 11 (4th Year)
S4 (Fourth Year)	14 - 15	15 - 16	Year 11 (Year 10)	Year 12 (5th Year)
S5 (Fifth Year)	15 - 16	16 - 17	Year 12 (Year 11)	Year 13 (Lower sixth)
S6 (Sixth Year)	16 - 17	17 - 18	Year 13 (Year 12)	Year 14 (Upper sixth)