

American Educational System

English	French	English	French
Audit	auditer	Dormitories	résidence universitaire
Campus	campus	Elementary School	école élémentaire
Coed (Coeducational)	étudiante dans un établissement mixte	Extracurricular Activities	en dehors des heures de classe
Community College (Junior College)	centre universitaire de premier cycle	Faculty	faculté
Compulsory Education	éducation obligatoire	Final Exam	examens à la fin de l'année scolaire
Credits	unité d'enseignement	Financial Aid	aide financière

Degrees and Diplomas

France	U. S. A.
Baccalauréat	High School Diploma / GED
DUT / BTS	2-year vocational certificate (Associate's)
DEUG	Associate's Degree (Assoc)
License	(Bachelor's) / Doesn't exist in the USA
Maîtrise	Bachelor of Arts (BA) / Bachelor of Science (BS)
DEA / DESS / Masters	Master's Degree (MS, MA)
Doctorat	Doctorate (PhD)

English	French	English	French
Fraternity (university)	association d'étudiants pour les hommes	Middle School	collège
GED General Education Degree	diplôme d'études secondaires obtenu en candidat libre	Midterm Exam	examens de milieu de l'année scolaire
Grades	notes	Minor	matière secondaire
Graduate (v)	obtenir sa licence / son diplôme	Open Campus	campus ouvert
Graduate (n)	licencié(e)	Pre-school	garderie
Graduation	cérémonie de remise des diplômes	Principal	chef d'établissement
High School	lycée	Private School*	école privée
Home Room	<i>classe principale</i>	Public School*	école publique
Home School	l'école à domicile	Scholarship	bourse
Honors Program	classes des meilleurs élèves	Secondary School	lycée
Major (subject)	dominante	Sorority (university)	association d'étudiants pour les femmes

* the terms Private School and Public School are opposite in meaning in British English.

1. General Information about American Schools

- Americans **never** go to school on Saturday (except to attend or participate in school sporting events).
- There is no national system. The federal government sets the minimum standard, and each independent system is expected to fund their own schools, buses, etc. (This is usually done through state and local taxes.) This means that poor areas have minimal resources, and areas that are **better off** have better resources.
- Starting with 1st Grade, American young people **attend classes** from around 8:15 AM to around 3:30 PM with 30 or 35 minutes for lunch.
- Uniforms – it depends. Every school, public and private, decides for themselves.

American Educational System

- School lunch – You can buy a lunch at school or bring your own lunch from home. Some schools (especially high schools) have an **open campus**, which means that you can leave the school during your free hours.

2. Sports. One major difference between schools in the US and elsewhere is **extracurricular** sports. Starting in middle school, schools form teams to compete amongst each other in various sport competitions – (American) football, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer, track and field events, volleyball, wrestling, hockey, etc. Usually there are both boys' and girls' teams. For many sports – especially American football and basketball – the competition is particularly **cutthroat**.

3. Higher Education (University). Generally speaking, the words *college* and *university* mean the same thing in the USA. Although this is technically incorrect, it is modern usage. (All universities are colleges, but not all colleges are universities.)

Since standards can vary from city to city or between public and private schooling, before deciding on a university students must take the **SAT** or the **ACT** test. These are standardized tests used for college admissions. They examine such areas as English, math, reading, science, and writing. These tests are normally taken near the end of the Senior year at a centralized location (not at your regular school).

To help students prepare for these tests they can take the pre-SAT or the pre-ACT during their junior year of high school. (This would be a similar idea to the Bac Blanc.)

Education False Friends (*faux amis*)

- Students **attend** classes. (*assister*) Students **take** tests. (*passer un examen*)
- Except for Mid-terms and Finals (Mid-term exam), we usually say “test” and not “exam”.
- To **pass** a test. (*réussir un examen*) To **fail** a test. (*rater un examen*)
- **College** = *l’université* Collège = **Middle School**
- Children color with a **crayon** (*crayon de couleur*), and they write with a **pencil** (*crayon*) or a **pen** (*stylo*).
- When I graduate from high school I have a **diploma** (*Baccalauréat*).
- When I finish a university program (2-year, 4-year, etc.) I have a **degree** (*diplôme*).
- In science I will have to do **experiments** (*expériences scientifiques*).
- American students play both **football** (*football américain*) and **soccer** (*football*). In English “football” is both the game and the ball that is used in the game.
- Most schools have their own **library** (*bibliothèque*). If there is a *libraire*, it is called a **bookstore**.
- In France a **teacher** is called *professeur*. In American English a **professor** is any university teacher with a degree. At all other levels of schooling, we say “teacher”. (This is my math teacher. This is my English teacher.)

Phrasal Verbs for Education

to hand in / to turn in	<i>remettre</i>	Please hand in your homework before the end of the day.
to hand out	<i>distribuer</i>	Marie Lou would you please hand out the worksheets.
to drop out	<i>abandonner ses études</i>	Bob felt discouraged and dropped out of school.
to kick out	<i>flanquer à la porte</i>	Because of his bad behavior Tom was kicked out of the class.
to catch up	<i>se remettre à jour</i>	After her illness Sally had to catch up with the rest of the class.
to fall behind	<i>rester en arrière</i>	Because of her illness Sally had fallen behind the rest of her class.
to read up on	<i>se renseigner sur</i>	Before you do your homework you need to read up on the subject.
to read over	<i>relire</i>	Read over your notes before you take the test.

Grades. The American grades listed in this table are based on the average *public school*. Private schools tend to have tougher (higher) standards. The system in the USA is a rigid system. This means that if all of the students score a 50% on a test, then all of the students have failed that test. Despite the class **average**, generally speaking, the grades are fixed, and everyone either passes or fails based on their own abilities and their own scores.

American Educational System

France	U S A		
Mark	Grade	Percentage	GPA*
15-20	A	93-100%	4.0
14	A-	90-92%	3.7
12-13	B+	88-89%	3.3
11	B	83-87%	3.0
10	B-	80-82%	2.7
9	C+	78-79%	2.3
8	C	73-77%	2.0
7	C-	70-72%	1.7
6	D+	68-69%	1.3
5	D	60-67%	1.0
0-4	F	0-59%	0.0

(source: Jenny, american-high-schools_31377 ppt)

*GPA = Grade Point Average (GPAs are most commonly used at the university level.) *moyenne des notes*

France	U S A	Age	
Terminale	12 th (Senior)	17-18	High School
1 ^{ère}	11 th (Junior)	16-17	
2 ^{nde}	10 th (Sophomore)	15-16	
3 ^{ème}	9 th (Freshman)	14-15	
4 ^{ème}	8 th	13-14	Middle School
5 ^{ème}	7 th	12-13	
6 ^{ème}	6 th	11-12	
CM2	5 th	10-11	Elementary School***
CM1	4 th	9-10	
CE2	3 rd	8-9	
CE1	2 nd	7-8	
CP	1 st	6-7	
Maternelle	Kindergarten*	5-6	
Maternelle	Preschool** (not compulsory)	3-5	Preschool

*Kindergarten is not required in all states.

**Usually, private institutions for which the parents must pay. Private schools sometimes offer K3 – K5 (Kindergarten ages 3, 4, and 5.)

***Elementary school can also be called *Grammar School*, *Primary School*, and *Grade School*.