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# EDUCATION IN THE USA

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HUMAN RELATIONS AND EDUCATION

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## 1 K-12 Education in America

- Public (free) education: Kindergarten – Grade 12 → K-12 (“K through twelve”)
- One tenth of all students enrolled in private schools
- Most states require their schools districts to teach for 180 days a year
- 1.7% of the American children are taught at home
- Transporting students to and from school: Major concern for most school districts
  - 440.000 yellow school buses carry over 24 million students annually
  - School start times are computed with busing in mind
    - Often different start times for school types (elementary school, middle/junior high school, high school)
    - Reason: Not too many students want to take the bus at the same time
    - Reason: Students of the same age take the bus at the same time

### 1.1 Preschool

- Only offered by some public and private schools
  - Part of elementary school
- Kids work on several physical, intellectual and emotional developments, such as
  - curiosity
  - formation of character
  - personality
  - cognition
  - language skills
  - social skills

### 1.2 Primary education

- Elementary School
  - Includes Kindergarten through fifth grade
  - Basic subjects are taught
  - Students often remain in one classroom throughout the day
    - Exceptions are e.g. physical education, library, music and art classes
  - Some schools (when funding and supplies are given) have additional teachers for art and music.
  - A students learns
    - Basic arithmetic in mathematics
    - English proficiency (spelling, grammar, vocabulary)
    - Fundamentals of other subjects
  - After the elementary school, the students attend middle school (junior high school)

- Some elementary schools include all eight primary grades
  - Students proceed directly to high school

### 1.3 Secondary education

- Divided into two phases
  - middle / junior high school
  - high school
- Students have more independence
  - different classrooms for different subjects
  - allowed to choose some of their subjects (electives)
- Middle school includes 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- High school runs from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Students in these grades are referred as
    - Freshmen (9<sup>th</sup> grade)
    - Sophomores (10<sup>th</sup> grade)
    - Juniors (11<sup>th</sup> grade)
    - Seniors (12<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Students take a broad variety of classes
  - No emphasis in any particular subject
- Students must take a number of mandatory subjects
  - They may choose additional subjects (electives)
    - Common types of electives include
      - Visual arts (painting, photography, film studies, ...)
      - Computer science (computer programming, graphic design, ...)
      - Journalism / publishing (school newspaper, television production, ...)
      - Foreign languages (German, French, Italian, Spanish, ...)
  - These help to fill out the required hours of learning
- Each state has different requirements for how many years of mandatory subjects are required
  - Usually 2-4 years of:
    - Science
    - Mathematics
    - English
    - Social sciences
    - Physical education
  - Some years of a foreign language and a form of art education

- Also a health curriculum which teaches about
  - anatomy
  - nutrition
  - first aid
  - drug awareness
  - birth control
- Many high schools provide optional harder courses
  - called Honors (H), Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB)
  - the curriculum is more challenging
  - lessons are more aggressively placed
  - usually taken during the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - college-level classes

#### 1.4 Grading scale

- Students are consistently assessed throughout the year
- Report cards are issued to parents in varying interval
- Scores for tests are recorded for each student in a grade book
  - also holds the maximum number of points
- The number of points divided by the number of possible points produces a percent grade
  - can be translated to a letter grade
  - A, B, C are the passing grades
  - E and F are the Non passing grades
  - Whether the grade D is a passing grade or not varies
  - Example Grading Scale
    - A: 100% - 90%
    - B: 89.9% - 80%
    - C: 79.9% - 70%
    - D: 69.9% - 60%
    - E or F: 59.9% - 0%

## 1.5 Home schooling

- In 2014 2.9% of all children were homeschooled
- Often parents select moral or religious reasons are for homeschooling their children
  - Some wish to add religious instruction to the educational curriculum
  - Some others want to fit a curriculum to the academic strengths and weaknesses of their child
    - E.g. for kids with disabilities
  - Others feel that the negative social pressures are bad for a child's development
    - Those negative pressures can be
      - Bullying
      - Drugs
      - Crime
      - Other school-related problems
- Parents often form groups to help each other with homeschooling
  - Some classes are assigned to different parents
- Some opponents of homeschooling stated concerns
  - Fears of poor academic quality
  - Lack of socialization with others

## 2 Higher education

- Optional final stage formal learning
- The four undergraduate grades are called
  - Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior
  - first, second, third and fourth year
- Students have to apply for admission
  - Admissions involve
    - grades earned in high school courses
    - class ranking
    - standardized tests scores
  - Most colleges also involve subjective factors
    - Commitment to extracurricular activities
    - Personal essay
    - Interview
- Students engage the “undergraduate study” after being admitted
  - Consists of satisfying university and class requirements
  - Goal is to archive a bachelor's degree
  - Students pick a field of concentration (called major)
    - Usually consists of four years of studying
    - Most commonly leads to

- Bachelor of Arts
  - Bachelor of Science
  - Sometimes other degrees
- After obtaining a bachelor degree the “graduate study” is conducted
  - Often several years of professional work are done before conducting
  - Leads to more advanced degree
    - Often a master degree
    - That could be
      - Master of Arts (MA)
      - Master of Science (MS)
      - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
      - There are also less common master degrees
- After additional years of study students may earn a doctor degree
  - In a few special cases the doctor degree comes with the master degree

### 3 Index

curriculum	Lehrplan
mandatory	verpflichtend
emphasis	Schwerpunkt
assessment	Bewertung
report card	Zeugnis / Schulnachricht
admission	Aufnahme
conduct	durchführen

### 4 Sources

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary\\_education\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_education_in_the_United_States)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_the_United_States)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary\\_education\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_education_in_the_United_States)