

The Education System in France



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Some Numbers

- 1/4 of the population is in the education system (15 million)
- 2 million in higher education
- 100,000 go to schools specializing in various disabilities
- 200,000 go to agricultural or vocational schools
- 300,000 that are 16+ have work contracts

French Education

- Primary education
 - Ages 3-11
- Secondary education
 - Ages 11-18
- Higher education
 - 18+

Major Holidays and Breaks

- All Saints
 - 1 ½ weeks at the end of October/beginning of November
- Christmas
 - 2 weeks around Christmas Day and New Years Day
- Winter
 - 2 weeks in mid-February
- Spring/Easter
 - 2 weeks starting in mid-April
- Summer
 - 2 months starting in early-July

Pre-School

- Not mandatory
- Very popular
- Ages 3 to 5
- Also known as nursery classe

Primary Education

- Mandatory at age 6
- 2 yrs old-preschool
- 3 yrs old-kindergarden
- Learn to write and read the first year after kindergarden

| Maternelle (Kindergarten) | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Age | Grade | Abbreviation |
| 3 -> 4 | Petite section | PS |
| 4 -> 5 | Moyenne section | MS |
| 5 -> 6 | Grande section | GS |
| École élémentaire (Primary school) | | |
| Age | Grade | Abbreviation |
| 6 -> 7 | Cours préparatoire | CP / 11ème |
| 7 -> 8 | Cours élémentaire première année | CE1 / 10ème |
| 8 -> 9 | Cours élémentaire deuxième année | CE2 / 9ème |
| 9 -> 10 | Cours moyen première année | CM1 / 8ème |
| 10 -> 11 | Cours moyen deuxième année | CM2 / 7ème |

Primary Education cont.

- Set up similar to our elementary school
 - 1 or 2 teachers for numerous subjects
- Don't teach religion
- Teach about the Republic instead
- March 2004-government banned all conspicuous religious symbols from school and other public institutions

Secondary Education

- *Collège* (high school) for the first 4 years right after primary school
 - Ages 11-15
- *Lycée* (high school-preparing for college) for the next 3 years
 - 15-18

| Collège (Junior High) | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Age | Grade | Abbreviation |
| 11 -> 12 | Sixième | 6 ^e |
| 12 -> 13 | Cinquième | 5 ^e |
| 13 -> 14 | Quatrième | 4 ^e |
| 14 -> 15 | Troisième | 3 ^e |
| Lycée (High school) | | |
| Age | Grade | Abbreviation |
| 15 -> 16 | Seconde | 2 ^{nde} |
| 16 -> 17 | Première | 1 ^{ere} |
| 17 -> 18 | Terminale | Term or Tle |

Brevet

- Brevet-first official diploma
 - Not required to enter high school
 - Consists of the grades from the final year and a final exam
 - Only French, mathematics, history, and geography

Baccalauréat

- High school diploma
- Needed in order to get into a university or any professional work
- Refers to the diploma and the exams that go along with it
 - Similar to SATs or ACTs

Secondary Education cont.

- During the final year of collège, students are allowed to pick some of their subjects
- Also get to pick what direction they want their curriculum to take
- For lycée students can either choose to go to a general, technical, or vocational schools
- Prepares students for *baccalauréat* exams taken when 18

Higher education

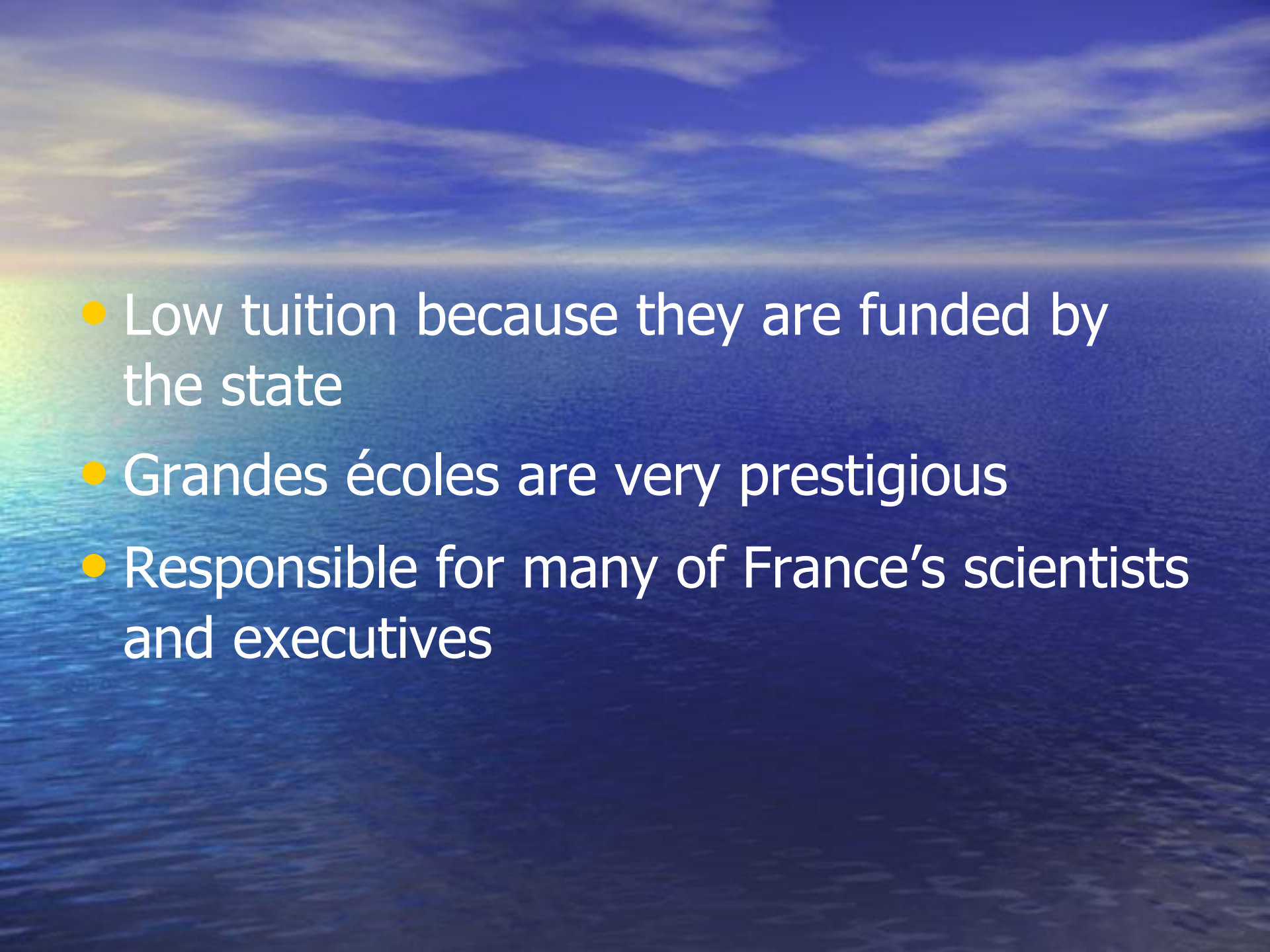
- Grandes écoles
 - More prestigious
 - Highly competitive selection system
 - Ex. 12,000 candidates for 400 spots
- Universities

Higher Education Cont.

- In Paris and suburbs
 - 13 universities that don't specialize in any specific area
 - Large number of institutions that do specialize in specific areas
- Universities are named after the big cities they are located near followed by numbers
 - Paris I to XIII

More Higher Education

- Also named after famous French people
- Influenced by the European standards
- Difficult to change majors without falling behind a semester or a whole year
- Complex and rigid system

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- Low tuition because they are funded by the state
 - Grandes écoles are very prestigious
 - Responsible for many of France's scientists and executives