

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

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