

Education in the United Kingdom



25 MP3 From Primary School to University

In Great Britain education is compulsory¹ from the age of 5 to 15 years old. **State schools** are free and parents do not pay for books. They only buy pens and pencils. 93% of children in England and Wales go to state schools.

Primary school starts with Year 1 and finishes with Year 6. At the age of 11 children go to **Secondary school** (Year 7 to 11). Very clever children take an exam in Year 6 (**Eleven plus**) and go to a Grammar school. At Secondary schools children study English, Maths, Science, Information Technology (IT), History, Geography, Music, Art, Physical Education (PE), Religious Education (RE) and a modern foreign language like French or German. They take **SAT** tests (Standard Assessment Task) in all subjects at the ages of 7, 11 and 14. At the age of 16 they take **GCSEs** (General Certificate of Secondary Education).

Each student has a candidate number and an external Exam Board² corrects the exams.

Years 12 and 13 are not compulsory. Students who go into Years 12 and 13 can take **A-levels** (Advanced level exams). Pupils³ need good GCSE and A-levels results to go to University.

The Government is making school exams more difficult in England.

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Public Schools

There are about two hundred public schools in Britain. They are private independent schools and parents pay fees⁴. Public schools are very expensive, but some give scholarships⁵. These schools have wonderful facilities⁶ and some famous public schools are Eton, Rugby and Westminster.



Uniforms

In Britain schoolchildren wear a uniform! In winter boys wear long grey, blue or black trousers⁷ with a white shirt⁸ and tie⁹. They have a jumper¹⁰ and a jacket with the school logo on. They don't wear trainers¹¹ to school. They wear black school shoes. The girls wear the same and they can choose to wear a grey, blue or black skirt¹². In summer the boys wear shorts and the girls wear summer dresses.

Teachers

At Primary school children call teachers by their surname: Mr/Ms Smith.

In Secondary school they call teachers Miss or Sir.

At University students call their teachers by their name.

A Typical School Day

- 8.30 Registration: a teacher calls the names and students listen to announcements.
- 9.00 First Period: the lessons are in different rooms and places around the school. Each room has a name or number.
- 10.00 Second Period
- 11.00 Break: time for a snack and a chat.
- 11.20 Third Period
- 12.30 Fourth Period
- 1.30 Lunch
- 2.10 Fifth Period
- 3.10 School ends

After school there are clubs and activities – a theatre club, a school orchestra and a choir. There is a lot of sport at school.

Every student carries a swipe card. They swipe into every lesson. Students can put money on their swipe card¹³ and buy food and drinks.

Students use tablet computers in a lot of lessons.



Different Schools

There are different kinds of schools in Great Britain today. **Academies** are independent state schools. The head teachers of Academies can choose the subjects they want to teach. **Free schools** are schools set up by parents, teachers, community, faith groups¹⁴ and so on.

WORDS YOU NEED

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. compulsory | obbligatorio |
| 2. Exam Board | commissione d'esame |
| 3. pupil | allievo |
| 4. fee | (qui) rata, retta |
| 5. scholarship | borsa di studio |
| 6. facility | struttura |
| 7. trousers | pantaloni |
| 8. shirt | camicia |
| 9. tie | cravatta |
| 10. jumper | maglione |
| 11. trainers | scarpe da ginnastica |
| 12. skirt | gonna |
| 13. swipe card | tessera magnetica |
| 14. faith group | gruppo religioso |



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1 **Ascolta e leggi il testo *From Primary School to University*. Poi completa la tabella con le informazioni mancanti.**

	Age	Classes	Exams
Primary school	_____	Year 1 - _____	_____
Secondary school	_____	Year 7 - _____	_____
	_____	Year 12 - _____	_____

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2 **Ascolta e leggi i testi, poi indica se le frasi sono vere (T) o false (F). Correggi le frasi errate.**

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 At University students call their teachers Miss or Sir. | T | F |
| 2 A public school is a private school. | T | F |
| 3 British schoolchildren don't wear school uniform. | T | F |
| 4 Pupils stay in the same classroom all day. | T | F |
| 5 At Secondary school pupils study Italian. | T | F |
| 6 Pupils can leave school at the age of 16. | T | F |

3 **PAIRWORK. Parla con un compagno.**

- What do British students need to go to University?
- Do British children wear trainers at school? What is their uniform like?
- What are Academies?
- What do pupils call their teachers at Secondary school?
- Are public schools free?
- What do children do after school in Britain?

4 **Prendendo spunto dalla giornata scolastica in United Kingdom, descrivi la tua giornata a scuola (45-60 parole).**



5 **And in your country?**

- What do you call your teachers?
- What clothes can you wear to school?
- What subjects do you study at school?
- What exams do you take?
- What do you do with your friends at break time?