

Education in the USA

49 MP3

School Life

There is no national curriculum in the US. Each state has its own Department of Education¹ and in each district there is a school board². The principal or head teacher in every school chooses the curriculum. In the US they call each school year a 'grade'.



Education is compulsory from age 6-16 (or 18, depending on the state):

- Kindergarten (age 3-5);
- Elementary school (age 6-11): 1st grade to 6th grade;
- Junior High school (age 12-14): 7th to 9th grade;
- Senior High school (age 15-18): 10th to 12th grade.

In the US there are public and private schools and 88% of Americans stay at school until the age of 18. Students study Maths, Science, English, Language Arts (Reading, Composition, Grammar and Literature), Art, Physical Education and Social Studies (History, Geography and Citizenship Education³).

Students choose electives which are optional subjects. They can do Foreign Languages⁴, Home Economics⁵, Journalism, Art or Music.

Higher Education

66% of High school graduates go to University or College where they specialise or 'major' in a subject. Admission to University depends on school results, a written essay⁶ and sometimes an interview.

American Universities are usually set on a campus. This is a group of buildings in a green area with lots of sports facilities, bars, restaurants, libraries and shops. Students can live on campus or rent⁷ an apartment with friends. Some Universities are famous all over the world, particularly the eight Universities of the Ivy League – Harvard, Yale, Brown, etc. Some of the most advanced research goes on⁸ at American Universities.



50 MP3 A School Day

The typical school day starts between 7-9 am and some schools salute⁹ the American flag. Lessons finish between 3.30-4 pm, but most schools offer extracurricular activities. Pupils are encouraged to take part in them. There are drama clubs, chess¹⁰ clubs and often a school orchestra.

Sports play an important role in school life and pupils take part in voluntary work¹¹ to help elderly people in their area. American schools teach 'progressive education'. They think it is a mistake to ask children to memorise lists of facts. They want children to be interested in a subject, so they use a lot of visual aids¹² in class like TVs, computers and tablets. This makes lessons fun and they learn in an active way. The teachers suggest web sites students can use for their research. Many American students are involved in practical projects. They make models of historical events, volcanoes and enjoy scientific projects.



WORDS YOU NEED

1. Department of Education	Dipartimento dell'Istruzione	6. essay	tema, saggio
2. school board	Consiglio d'istituto	7. rent	affittare
3. Citizenship Education	educazione civica	8. go on	(qui) avvenire
4. Foreign Language	lingua straniera	9. salute	fare il saluto (alla bandiera)
5. Home Economics	economia domestica	10. chess	scacchi
		11. voluntary work	volontariato
		12. aid	aiuto

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49-50 MP3

1 Ascolta e leggi i testi, poi completa le frasi.

- In the USA they call each school a
- Admission to University depends on your school, a written and sometimes an
- Students can live on or rent an with friends.
- Pupils also take part in to help elderly people.
- Teachers use a lot of visual aids in class like TVs, and

2 Rileggi i testi e indica se le frasi sono vere (T) o false (F). Correggi le frasi errate.

- There is a national curriculum in the USA. T F
- Junior High school is from 6-11 years old. T F
- Children play chess in the morning at school. T F
- Lessons are boring and children learn in a passive way. T F
- Admission to University is automatic. T F

3 PAIRWORK. Parla con un compagno.

- When does school start and what time do you go home?
- What subjects do you study?
- Do you have after school activities? Which ones?
- What sport do you do at school?



4 And in your country?

- Can you choose electives at your school? What subjects can you choose?
- Do most young people in your country stay at school until the age of 18?