Проект

Education in the US: primary and secondary education, American schools, the private sector, further and higher education.

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**Primary and Secondary education (American schools)**

American education remains today what it was in the earliest days of the Republic. Its goal is universal education from kindergarten to university. All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit. Education in the United States comprises three basic levels: elementary, secondary and higher education. Parents may choose whether to send their children to their local free public schools, or to private schools which charge fees.

The US education system consists of 12 years of elementary and secondary education before students can advance to post-secondary education. Around age six, U.S. children begin primary school, which is most commonly called “elementary school.” They attend five or six years and then go onto secondary school. In the US, the school calendar begins in August or September and continues through to May or June. The academic year is composed of three terms also known as semesters. Elementary and secondary school is similar across the US. However, there are minor variations from state to state. Elementary and secondary education is divided into:

* Elementary School: Runs for 6-7 years starting in Kindergarten through to Grade 5 or 6
* Middle School: Runs for 2-3 years starting in Grade 6 or 7 through to Grade 8
* High School: Runs for 4 years starting in Grade 9 through to Grade 12

Once a student has completed Grade 12, they will receive a high school diploma. Students must complete secondary school (high school) to qualify for post-secondary education. Public education in the US is generally free, however, students may come across some fees including field trips, uniforms, books, etc.

The main purpose of elementary school is the general intellectual and social development of the child from 6 to 12 or 15 years of age. In secondary schools most pupils follow a course that includes English, science, social studies, mathematics and physical education. Elective subjects may be chosen in the fields of foreign languages, fine arts and vocational training. The vocational program may give training in four fields: agricultural education, business education, home economics and trade and industrial education. This program prepares students either for employment or further training.

Usually, the pupil has one teacher for all major subjects during his or her first six years of schooling. For the last six grades, however, they have a separate teacher for each discipline.

*Grading System*

Most young Americans graduate from school with a high school diploma upon satisfactory completion of a specified number of courses. Students are usually graded from A (excellent) to F (failing) in each course they take on the basis of performance in tests given at intervals throughout the year. Students receive «report cards» at least twice a year which indicate the grades they have received in each of the subjects. High schools maintain a school «transcript» which summarizes the courses taken and the grades obtained for each student.

**Public and Private sector**

Public or state institutions are supported by state or local governments. Each state has a minimum of one state university and college. With support from the government, students are provided with an affordable post secondary option. State colleges offer a more affordable post-secondary route. They have often have a wide range of degree programs available. Students also have access to a vibrant campus life, extra-curricular activities, and state of the art teaching facilities.

Private institutions are privately run and receive no funding from the government. Notoriously, private institutions have higher tuition rates. They are also smaller in size and can have religious affiliations than their public school counterparts. Private colleges offer students with smaller class sizes, that helps the students build a relationship with their professors and advisors. They have a smaller list of the degree programs they offer but students have the option to customize their degrees and will be part of more discussion based classes. Among the private colleges are the prestigious Ivy League.

**Further and higher education**

Higher education in the U.S. is also called postsecondary education, but the latter term also refers to all formal education beyond secondary school, whether higher education (defined as degree-granting education) or not. Postsecondary education is broadly divided into two different sectors: postsecondary vocational education and training, and higher education, which includes studies undertaken in degree-granting institutions for academic credit. The US has more than 4,500 post-secondary institutions. The US is unique as their institutions are not centrally organized but are accredited on a national or regional level. There are many different types of post-secondary education systems within the US. They include:

* State College or University
* Private College or University
* Community College

Community college graduates most commonly transfer to four-year colleges or universities to complete their degree. Because they can transfer the credits they earned while attending community college, they can complete their bachelor’s degree program in two or more additional years. Many also offer ESL or intensive English language programs, which will prepare students for university-level courses.

* Institute of Technology

An institute of technology is a school that provides at least four years of study in science and technology. Some have graduate programs, while others offer short-term courses.

**The U.S. Higher Education System: Levels of Study**

* *First Level: Undergraduate*

A student who is attending a college or university and has not earned a bachelor’s degree, is studying at the undergraduate level. It typically takes about four years to earn a bachelor’s degree. You can either begin your studies in pursuit of a bachelor’s degree at a community college or a four-year university or college. Your first two years of study you will generally be required to take a wide variety of classes in different subjects, commonly known as prerequisite courses: literature, science, the social sciences, the arts, history, and so forth. This is so you achieve a general knowledge, a foundation, of a variety of subjects prior to focusing on a specific field of study.

* *Second Level: Graduate in Pursuit of a Master’s Degree*

Presently, a college or university graduate with a bachelor’s degree may want to seriously think about graduate study in order to enter certain professions or advance their career. This degree is usually mandatory for higher-level positions in library science, engineering, behavioral health and education. Graduate programs in pursuit of a master’s degree typically take one to two years to complete. The majority of a master’s program is spent in classroom study and a graduate student must prepare a long research paper called a “master’s thesis” or complete a “master’s project.”

* *Third Level: Graduate in Pursuit of a Doctorate Degree*

Many graduate schools consider the attainment of a master’s degree the first step towards earning a PhD (doctorate). But at other schools, students may prepare directly for a doctorate without also earning a master’s degree. It may take three years or more to earn a PhD degree. For international students, it may take as long as five or six years. For the first two years of the program most doctoral candidates enroll in classes and seminars. At least another year is spent conducting firsthand research and writing a thesis or dissertation. This paper must contain views, designs, or research that have not been previously published.

*Grading System*

Many institutions use either a letter grading system similar to that described for secondary school linked to a numerical system based upon points earned. The latter system is typically based on a five-, four-, or three-point scale. Some institutions do not use grades or provide them only upon request. Grading systems are determined by each institution. US universities use a grading scale to calculate a student's GPA. Students earn their grades through their overall performance during the entire academic year. GPA is an acronym for Grade Point Average. This is a number calculated from the grades you earn when studying at a US university. GPA is very important in US universities.

*Ivy League*

The Ivy League is one of the most well-known groups of universities in the world. It consists of a group of eight historic universities. They are all located in the northeast region of the US. The Ivy League was originally formed in the 1950s as an athletic association. To this day it remains an athletic association, as well as leaders on the intellectual side. The eight schools include:

* Brown University
* Columbia University
* Cornell University
* Dartmouth University
* Harvard University
* Princeton University
* The University of Pennsylvania
* Yale University

*Levels of Education Qualifications*

The US has various qualifications students can achieve while they study stateside. They are grouped into associate degree, bachelor degree, masters, and doctoral.

**Associate Degrees:** Typically 2-year programs designed to provide students with basic knowledge on subjects. They prepare students for entry-level positions in fields including nursing, designing, and education.

**Bachelor Degree:** Taking 4 years to complete, these programs provide students with education and preparation for most careers paths. Students are able to accept full-time work in their respective field right after graduation.

**There are five types of bachelor degrees:**

* Bachelor of Arts (BA)
* Bachelor of Science (BS)
* Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)
* Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
* Bachelor of Architecture (BArch)

**Masters:** Can take 1-2 years to obtain with students specializing in one area of study. Masters can be thesis or research-based depending on the student's specialization.

**Doctoral (PhD):** There are different types of doctoral degrees that students can obtain. All are typically research-based and require students to have found a research supervisor at the university they're applying to.

Each type of institution provides students with a unique schooling experience, giving students the flexibility to choose the path that works best for them and their career. The U.S. higher education system is characterized by accessibility, diversity, and autonomy and is known for both its size and quality.

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