**EDUCATION**

**THE UNITED KINGDOM**

The education system of the United Kingdom is governed by each of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England and Wales, 93% of schools are free state schools and 7% are fee-paying private schools.

Education is **compulsory from the age of 5 to 16**. There are 4 main stages – **nursery school**: from the age of 3-4, **primary** (Years 1-6; age 5+); **secondary** (Years 7-11; age 11+); with optional 'sixth form' (two or three years of pre-university study) and **tertiary** education (at the universities, age 18+). State secondary schools are mainly ‘comprehensive’ schools, which mean pupils don't have to pass a special exam to go there.

England and Wales have a **national curriculum** (Scotland has its own) and pupils have to study core subjects like maths, English and science. At fourteen, students can study optional subjects. At sixteen, pupils specialise and choose three or four subjects.

At 16, they do exams called **GCSE** (General Certificate of Secondary Education). If pupils stay on at school, they take **'A level'** exams in their specialised subjects as part of the university entrance procedure.

About 40% of pupils go on to higher education. The government gives only a few grants so most students borrow money from a bank which they have to pay back when they leave university. Students graduate after completing their first degree, usually in three years.

Generally, the day starts at nine and there is a lunch break which usually lasts about an hour and a quarter.

The school year in England usually begins on September 1. The students have a number of holidays throughout the year. There is the autumn, spring and summer half-term holidays and they last a week. Students also have two weeks over Christmas and five weeks from the end of July to the end of August.

**THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

In the US, 90% of schools are free state schools.

There is **no national system** (each of the 50 states has its own laws regulating education) but most states have compulsory education from 6 or 7 to 17 or 18.(5-6: kindergarten) There are twelve 'grades'; **elementary** **school** (lst-8th grade); **high school** (9th-12th grade). Some states have 'junior high' schools (6th-8th grade).

There is no national curriculum but in most states, core subjects are compulsory. Students can also choose options or 'electives'. Some of the most popular of these are performing arts, cooking and driver's education.

Most schools have exams after each of the higher grades. Then, after 12th grade, pupils take **exams to get their high school diploma**.

Over 60% of students go on to higher education; Students have to pass SAT tests for two-year colleges for vocational training or four-year colleges and universities for academic degrees. State universities are run by the individual state and charge quite low tuition fees. There are also private universities. The most prestigious and expensive are Harvard, Yale and Princeton.

**THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

School attendance in the Czech republic is compulsory from the age from six or seven to fifteen or sixteen. Most children attend state school, but there are also newly established private and church schools. Private and church schools charge school fees. Students do not wear uniforms.

The teachers are supposed to follow the national curriculum.

At 6 they start to go to primary schools and they stay there until 15. At the age of 15 pupils transfer from primary to secondary school. There is another way. Pupil can transfer to grammar school at the age of 11 or 13 after they have passed an entrance exam.

Universities provide tertiary education which last from 4 to 6 years. Before he (or she) is accepted they have to pass an entrance exam.

The university college students can enrol at three-year courses for a Bachelor's Degree or four and five-year courses for Master's Degree. Medicine usually takes 6 years.

The school year starts on 1st September and ends on 30th June of the following year. The school year is divided into two terms. Classes usually begin between eight and eight-fifteen.

**One important difference** is the system of assessment. In the US and the UK marks, or grades, are expressed differently than in the CR. The overall percentage (0-100%) is converted into a letter grade (A, B, C, D or F). Some universities also use the +/- system.

In the Czech Republic pupils and students are evaluated by marks from 1 to 5, 1 is the best, 5 is the worst. Each term they get school report with marks of each subject.

**Famous Universities**

Our oldest university is Charles university in Prague. Other notable universities are Masaryk University in Brno, Palacký University in Olomouc.

**USA:** Harvard– the oldest university in US; Yale university

**UK:** Cambridge, Oxford – the oldest university in the English-speaking countries

**Uniforms:**

**UK: Primary + secondary school – Pupils wear uniforms** to support positive behaviour and discipline; support good relations between different groups of pupils; ensure pupils of all races and backgrounds feel welcome; protect children from social pressures to dress in a particular way.

**US**: only 23% of public, private, and sectarian schools had any sort of uniform policy.

