

Primary education

Schooling in [France](#) is mandatory as of age 6, the first year of primary school. Many parents start sending their children earlier though, around age 3 as [nursery](#) classes (*maternelle*) are usually affiliated to a borough's primary school. Some even start earlier at age 2 in *pré-maternelle* or *très petite section* classes, which are essentially [daycare](#) centres. The last year of *maternelle*, *grande section* is an important step in the educational process as it is the year in which pupils are introduced to [reading](#).

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

After nursery, the young students move on to [primary school](#). It is in the first year (*cours préparatoire*) that they will learn to write and develop their reading skills. Much akin to other educational systems, French primary school students usually have a single teacher (or perhaps two) who teaches the complete curriculum, such as [French](#), [mathematics](#), [science](#) and [humanities](#) to name a few. Note that the French word for a teacher at the primary school level is *maître* or its feminine form *maîtresse* (previously called *instituteur*, or its feminine form *institutrice*).

Secondary education

Main article: [Secondary education in France](#)

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 ^{de}
16 -> 17	Première	1 ^e
17 -> 18	Terminale	Term or Tle

French secondary education is divided into two schools:

- the *collège* for the first four years directly following [primary school](#);
- the *lycée* for the next three years.

The completion of secondary studies leads to the [baccalauréat](#).

Brevet des collèges

The [Brevet des collèges](#) (or *brevet*) is the first official diploma a pupil has to sit. It is not required in order to enter *lycée*. Until 2006 the school marks for the whole of the third (4ème) and final year (3ème) were taken into account for a percentage of the mark. The rest of the mark consisted of the final exam, the Brevet. Pupils were only tested on [French](#), [Mathematics](#), [History/Geography/Citizenship](#) for the exam.

Starting in 2007, only the marks from the final year (3ème) were taken into consideration. Since 2011, pupils are tested on [History of the Arts](#), an oral test.