

Education.

The British education system has much in common with that in Europe.

Full-time education is compulsory for all children in the middle teenage years. Parents are required by law to see that their children receive full-time education, at school or elsewhere, between the ages of 5 and 16 in England, Scotland and Wales 4 and 16 in Northern Ireland. The academic year begins at the end of summer. Compulsory education is free charge, though parents may choose private school and spend their money on education their children.

About 93% of pupils receive free education from public funds, while the others attend independent schools financed by fees paid by parents.

There are three stages of schooling with children, moving from primary school to secondary school. The third stage provides further and higher education, technical college of higher education and universities. There is, however, quite a lot that distinguishes education in Britain from the way it works in other countries. The most important distinguishing features are the lack of uniformity and comparatively little central control. There are three separate government departments managing education: the Departments for Education and Employment is responsible for England and Wales alone; Scotland and Northern Ireland retain control over the education within their respective countries. None of these bodies exercises much control over the details does not prescribe a detailed program of learning, books and materials to be used, nor does it dictate, the exact hours of the school day, the exact days of holidays, school's finance management and such like. As many details possible are left to the discretion of the individual institution.

Many distinctive characteristics of British education can be ascribed at least partly, to public school tradition. The present-day level of "grass-root" independence as well as different approach to education has been greatly influenced by the philosophy that a school is its own community. The 19th century public schools educated the sons of the upper and upper-middle classes and the main aim of schooling was to prepare young men to take up positions in the higher ranks of the army, the Church, to fill top-jobs in business, the legal profession, the civil service and politics. To meet this aim the emphasis was made on "character-building" and the development of "team spirit" rather than on academic achievement. Such schools were (and still often are) mainly boarding establishments, so they had a deep and lasting influence on their pupils, consequently, public-school leaves for formed a closed group entry into which was difficult, the ruling elite the core of the Establishment.

The 20th century brought education and its possibilities for social advanced within everybody's reach, and new, state schools naturally tended to copy the features of the public schools. So today, in typically British fashion, learning for its own sake, rather than for any practical purpose is still been given a high value. As distinct from most other countries, a relatively stronger emphasis is on the quality of person that education produces rather than helping people to develop useful knowledge and skills. In other words, the general style of teaching is to develop understanding rather than acquiring factual knowledge and learning to apply this knowledge to specific tasks.

Public Schools – For Whom?

About five per cent of children are educated privately in what is rather confusingly called public schools. These are the schools for the privileged. There are about 500 public schools in England and Wales most of them single-sex. About half of them are for girls.

The schools, such as Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Winchester, are famous for their ability to lay the foundation of a successful future by giving their pupils self-confidence, the right

accent, a good academic background and, perhaps most important of all, the right friends and contacts. People who went to one of the public schools never call themselves school-leaves. They talk about “the old school tie” and “the old boy network”. They are just old boys or old girls. The fees are high and only very rich families can afford to pay so much. Public schools educate the ruling class of England. One such school is Gordonstoun, which the Prince of Wales, the elder son of the Queen, left in 1968. Harrow School is famous as the place where Winston Churchill was educated, as well as six other Prime Ministers of England, the poet Lord Byron, the playwright Richard Sheridan and many other prominent people.

Public schools are free from state control. They are independent. Most of them are boarding schools. The education is of a high quality; the discipline is very strict. The system of education is the same: the most able go ahead.

These schools accept pupils from preparatory schools at about 11 or 13 years of age usually on the basis of an examination, known as Common Entrance. There are three sittings of Common Entrance every year in February, June and November. Scholarships are rarely awarded on the results of Common Entrance. The fundamental requirements are very high. At 18 most public school-leaves, gain entry to universities.

Schooling

Great Britain does not have a written constitution, so there are no constitutional provisions for education. The system of education is determined by the National Education Acts.

Schools in England are supported from public funds paid to them local education authorities. These local education authorities are responsible for organizing the schools in their areas. Let's outline the basic features of public education in Britain. Firstly, there are wide variations between one part of the country and another. For most educational purposes England and Wales are treated as one unit, though the system in Wales is a little different from that of England. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own education systems.

Secondly, education in Britain mirrors the country's social system: it is class-divided and selective. The first division is between those who pay and those who do not pay. The majority of schools in Britain are supported by public funds and the education provided is free. They are maintained schools, but there are also a considerable number of public schools. Parents have to pay fees to send their children to these schools. The fees are high. As matter of fact, only very rich families can send their children to public schools. In some parts of Britain they still keep the old system of grammar schools, which are selective. But most secondary schools in Britain, which are called comprehensive schools, are not selective – you don't have to pass an exam to go there.

Another important feature of schooling in Britain is the variety of opportunities offered to schoolchildren. The English school syllabus is divided into Arts and Sciences, which determine the division of the secondary school pupils into study groups: a Science pupil will study Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Economics, Technical Drawing, Biology, geography; an Art pupil will do English Language and Literature, History, foreign languages, Music, Art, Drama. Besides these subjects they must do some general education subjects like Physical Education, Home Economics for girls, and Technical subjects for boys, General Science. Computers play an important part in education. The system of options exists in all kinds of secondary schools.

The National Curriculum, which was introduced in 1988, sets out detail the subjects that children should study and the levels of achievement they should reach by the ages of 7, 11, 14, and 16, when they are tested. Until that year headmasters and headmistresses of schools were

given a great deal of freedom in deciding what subjects to teach and how to do it in their schools so that there was really no central control at all over individual schools. The National Curriculum does not apply in Scotland, where each school decides what subjects it will teach.

After the age of 16 a growing number of school students are staying on at school, some until 18 or 19, the age of entry into higher education in universities, Polytechnics or colleges. Schools in Britain provide careers guidance. A specially trained person called careers advisor or careers officer helps school students to decide what job they want to do and how they can achieve it.

British university courses are rather short, generally lasting for 3 years. The cost of education depends on the college or university and special which one chooses.

Pre-primary and Primary Education

In some of England there are nursery schools for children under 5 years of age. Some children between two and five receive education in nursery classes or in infants' classes in primary schools. Many children attend informal pre-school playgroups organized by parents in private homes. Nursery schools are staffed with teachers and students in training. There are all kinds of toys to keep the children busy from 9 o'clock in the morning till 4 o'clock in the afternoon while their parents are at work. Here the babies play, lunch and sleep. They can run about and play in safety with someone keeping an eye on them.

For day nurseries, which remain open all the year round, the parents pay according to their income. The local education authority's nurseries are free. But only about three children in 100 can go to them: there aren't enough places and the waiting lists are rather long.

Most children start school at five in primary school. A primary school may be divided into two parts-infants and juniors. At infants school reading, writing and arithmetic are taught for about 20 minutes a day during the first year, gradually increasing to about 2 hours in their last year. There is usually no written timetable. Much time is spent in modeling from clay or drawing, reading or singing.

By the time children are ready for the junior school they will be able to read and write, do simple addition and subtraction of numbers.

At seven children go on from the infants' school to the junior school. This marks the transition from play to "real work". The children have set periods of arithmetic, reading and composition which are all Eleven Plus subjects. History, Geography, Nature Study, Art and Music, Physical Education, Swimming are also on the timetable. Pupils are streamed, according to their ability to learn into, A, B, C and D streams. The least gifted are in the D stream. Formerly towards the end of their fourth year the pupils wrote their Eleven Plus Examination. The hated 11 + examination was a selective procedure on which not only the pupil's future schooling but their future careers depended. The abolition of selection at Eleven plus Examination brought to life comprehensive schools where pupils can get secondary education.

Secondary Education

The majority of state secondary school pupils in England and Wales attend comprehensive schools. These largely take pupils without reference to ability or aptitude and provide a wide range of secondary education for all or most children in a district. Schools take those, who are the 11 to 18 age-range, middle schools (8 to 14), and schools with an age-range from 11 to 16. Most other state-educated children in England attend grammar or secondary modern schools, to which they are allocated after selection procedures at the age of 11.

Before 1965 a selective system of secondary education existed in England. Under that system a child of 11 had to take an exam, which consisted of intelligence tests covering linguistic, mathematical and general knowledge which was to be taken by children in the last year of primary schooling. The object was to select between academic and non-academic children. Those who did well in the examination went to a grammar school, while the who failed went to a secondary modern school and technical college. Grammar schools prepared children for national examinations such as the GCE at O level and A-level. These examinations qualified children for the better jobs, and for entry higher education and the professions. The education in secondary modern schools was based on practical schooling, which would allow entry into a variety of skilled and unskilled jobs.

Many people complained that it was wrong for a person's future to be decided at a so young age. The children who went to "secondary moderns" were seen as "failures". More over, it was noticed that the children who passed this exam were almost all from middle-class families. The Labor Party, returned to power in 1965, abolished the 11+ and tried to introduce the non-selective education system in the form of "comprehensive" schools, that would provide schooling for children of all ability levels and from all social backgrounds, ideally under one roof. The final choice between selective and non-selective schooling, though, was left to LEAS that controlled the provision of school education in the country. Some authorities decided for comprehensive, while others retained grammar schools and secondary moderns.

In the late 1980s the Conservative government introduced another major change. Schools could now decide whether to remain as LEA-maintained schools or to "opt-out" of the control of the LEA and put themselves directly under the control of the government department. These "grant-maintained" schools were financed directly by central government. This did not mean, however, that there was more central control: grant-maintained schools did not have to ask anybody else about how to spend their money. A recent development in education administration in England and Wales in the School Standards and Framework Act passed in July 1998. The Act established that from 1.09.1999 all state school education authorities with the ending of the separate category of grant maintained status.

There are some grant-maintained or voluntary aided schools, called City Technology Colleges. In 1999 there were 15 City Technology Colleges in England. These are non-fee-paying independent secondary schools created by a partnership of government and private sector sponsors. The promoters own or lease the schools, employ teachers and make substantial contributions to the costs of building and equipment. The colleges teach the NC, but with an emphasis on mathematics, technology and science.

So, today three types of state schools mainly provide secondary education: secondary modern schools grammar schools and comprehensive schools. There should also be mentioned another type of schools, called specialist schools. The specialist school programme in England was launched in 1993. Specialist schools are state secondary schools specializing in technology, science and mathematics; modern foreign languages; sports; arts.

State schools are absolutely free (including all textbooks and exercise books) and generally co-educational.

Under the NC a greater emphasis at the secondary level is laid on science and technology. Accordingly, ten subjects have to be studied: English, history, geography, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language, technology, music, art and physical education. For special attention there of these subjects (called "core subjects"): English, science, mathematics and seven other subjects are called "foundation or statutory subjects". Besides, subjects are grouped into departments and teachers work in teams and to plan work.

Passage from one year to the next one is automatic. At the age of 14 pupils are tested in English, mathematics and science, as well as in statutory subjects. At that same age in the third or fourth pupils begin to choose their exam subjects and work for two years to prepare for their qualifications. The exams are usually taken in fifth form at the age of 16, which is a

school-leaving age. The actual written exams are set by outside examiners, but they must be approved by the government and comply with national guidelines. There are several examination boards in Britain and each school decided that board's exam its pupils take. Most exams last for two hours, marks are given for each exams separately and are graded from A to G (grades A, B, C are considered to be "good" marks).

16 are an important age for school-leaves because they have to make key decisions as to their future lives and careers. There is a number of choices for them.

Higher education

As has been mentioned above, there is a considerable enthusiasm for post-school education in Britain. The aim of the government is to increase the number of students who enter into higher education. The driving force for this has been mainly economic. It is assumed that the more people who study at degree level, the more likely the country is to succeed economically. A large proportion of young people – about a third in England and Wales and almost half in Scotland – continue in education at a more A- level beyond the age of 18. The higher education sector provides a variety of courses up to degree and postgraduate degree level, and careers out research. It increasingly caters for older students; over 50% of students in 1999 were aged 5 and over and many studied part-time. Nearly every university offers access and foundation courses before enrolment on a course of higher education of prospective students who do not have the standard entry qualifications.

Higher education in Britain is traditionally associated with universities, though education of University standard is also given in other institutions such as colleges and institutes of higher education, which have the power to award their own degrees.

The only exception to state universities is the small University of Buckingham which concentrates on law, and which draws most of its students of overseas.

All universities in England and Wales are state universities (this includes Oxford and Cambridge).

English universities can be broadly classified into three types. First come the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge that date from the 12th century and that until 1828 were virtually the only English universities.

Oxford

The first written record of the town of Oxford dates back to the year 912. Oxford University, the oldest and most famous university in Britain, was founded in the middle of the 12th century and by 1300 there were already 1,500 students. At that time Oxford was a wealthy town, but by the middle of the 14th century it was poorer, because of a decline in trade and because of the terrible plague, which killed many people in England. The relations between the students and the townspeople were very unfriendly and there was often fighting in the streets.

Nowadays there are about 12,000 students in Oxford and over 1000 teachers. Outstanding scientists work in the numerous colleges of the University teaching and doing research work in physics, chemistry, mathematics, cybernetics, literature, modern and ancient languages, art and music, psychology.

Oxford University has a reputation of a privileged school. Many prominent political figures of the past and present times got their education at Oxford. The Oxford English Dictionary is well-known to students of English everywhere. It contains approximately 5,000,000 entries, and there are thirteen volumes, including a supplement.

Oxford University Press, the publishing house which produces the Oxford English Dictionary has a special department called the Oxford Word and Language Service.

Cambridge University started during the 13th century and grew until today. Now there are more than thirty colleges. On the banks of the Cam willow trees droop their branches into the water. The colleges line the right bank. There are beautiful college gardens with green lawns and lines of tall trees. The oldest college is Peterhouse, which was founded in 1284, and the most recent is Robinson College, which was opened in 1977. The most famous is probably King's College" because of its magnificent chapel, the largest and the most beautiful building in Cambridge and the most perfect example left of English fifteenth-century architecture. Its choir of boys and undergraduates is also very well known.

The University was only for men until 1871, when the first women's college was opened. In the 1970s, most colleges opened their doors to both men and women. Almost all colleges are now mixed.

Many great men studied at Cambridge, among them Desiderius Erasmus", the great Dutch scholar, Roger Bacon", the philosopher, Milton, the poet, Oliver Cromwell", the soldier, Newton, the scientist, and Kapitza, the famous Russian physicist.

The universities have over a hundred societies and clubs, enough for every interest one could imagine. Sport is part of students' life at Oxbridge. The most popular sports are rowing and punting.

Vocabulary

higher education noun [uncountable] education at a university or college, especially to degree level:

- There were demands for wider access to higher education.

further education noun [uncountable] British English education for people who have left school, that is not provided by a university

adult education (also continuing education) noun [uncountable] education provided for adults who are not in full-time education, usually by means of classes that are held in the evening:

- The government is committed to continuing to fund adult education of all kinds.

university especially British English (also college/school American English) noun [uncountable and countable] an educational institution of the highest level, where people study for degrees:

- a student at Cambridge University
- Without public universities and public financial aid, many Americans would be denied the opportunity to go to college.

college noun [uncountable and countable] British English a school for advanced education, especially in a particular profession or skill:

- a lecturer at the Royal College of Art

junior college (also community college) noun [countable] a college in the US that students can go to for two years in order to learn a skill or prepare for university:

- He taught math at a community college on Staten Island.

school noun [uncountable and countable] (also *academy noun* [countable]) a place where a particular subject or skill is taught:

- the Guildhall School of Music
- a group of friends who met at drama school
- the U.S. Naval Academy

graduate school noun [uncountable and countable] American English a place, usually part of a college or university, where you can study for a master's degree or a doctorate after receiving your first degree:

- She graduated with very good grades and went on to graduate school.

institute noun [countable] an organization that has a particular purpose such as scientific or educational work:

- the California Institute of Technology

educational adjective relating to education:

- We need to raise educational standards in the inner cities.

course British English, program American English noun [countable] a set of classes or period of study relating to a particular area of study, especially a student's main area of study:

- The course covers a range of subjects including animal behaviour and animal welfare.
- The English program at UC Berkeley is one of the best in the country.

course (also *class American English*) *noun* [countable] a set of meetings between a teacher and his or her students, during which they learn about a particular subject:

- While at Stanford Law School, she took a business class on entrepreneurship.
- He taught a college course on America's involvement in Vietnam.

evening class (also *evening classes*) *noun* [C or plural] a series of classes for adults, held in the evening:

- She went to evening classes to study dress design.

module noun [countable] especially British English one of the separate units that a course of study has been divided into. Usually students choose a number of modules to study:

- The chart shows modules which each student is registered for.

subject noun [countable] an area of knowledge that people study at a school or university:

- Women are much less likely to study science subjects than men.

discipline noun [countable] an area of knowledge, especially one that people study at a university:

- He saw physics as a discipline essentially concerned with fundamental laws.

class noun [uncountable and countable] a period of time during which someone teaches a group of people

seminar noun [countable] a class at a university in which a small group of students and a teacher study or discuss a particular subject

tutorial noun [countable] a period of teaching and discussion involving a tutor and a very small number of students, especially in a British university

laboratory work (also lab work) noun [uncountable] experiments or other work done in a laboratory by students who are studying science subjects

student noun [countable] someone who is studying at a university or college

undergraduate noun [countable] a student at a university or college who is working for their first degree

undergraduate adjective [only before noun]:

- Another important feature of all undergraduate courses in this faculty is the final-year project.

freshman/sophomore/junior/senior noun [countable] American English a student at a university or college who is in their first year, second year, third year, or fourth year:

- Freshmen receive priority for rooms in the dormitories.

postgraduate especially British English (also graduate student especially American English) noun [countable] a student at a university who is working to get a master's degree or a doctorate

postgraduate especially British English (also graduate especially American English) adjective [only before noun]:

- The department supports a large programme of postgraduate research.

dean noun [countable] someone in a university who is responsible for a particular faculty or area of work:

- the dean of social sciences

professor noun [countable] American English a teacher in a university or college professor
British English, full professor American English noun [countable] a teacher of the highest rank in a university department

lecturer *British English*, assistant professor *American English* noun [countable] a teacher at a university below the level of senior lecturer or associate professor

department noun [countable] a part of a school or faculty in a university that does teaching or research in a particular subject

student loan noun [countable] an amount of money that a student borrows from the government or a bank to pay for their education at a university or college:

- After graduating, they will have to pay off huge student loans.

grant noun [countable] an amount of money given to someone, especially by the government, to help pay for their education, research etc:

- proposals to abolish the system of grants for university students

scholarship noun [countable] an amount of money that is given to someone by an educational organization to help pay for their education:

- He had won a scholarship to Oxford.

bachelor's degree noun [countable] a first university degree

BA *British English*, B.A. *American English* noun [countable] a first university degree in a subject such as history, languages, or English literature:

- a BA in history

BSc *British English*, B.S. *American English* noun [countable] a first university degree in a science subject:

- a B.S. in physics

master's degree noun [countable] a university degree that you can get by studying for one or two years after your first degree

MA *British English*, M.A. *American English* noun [countable] a master's degree in a subject such as history, languages, or English literature that you can get after your first degree

MSc *British English*, M.S. *American English* noun [countable] a master's degree in a science subject that you can get after your first degree

MPhil noun [countable] *British English* an advanced university degree that you can get after your first degree, which is based on research

doctorate (also PhD British English, Ph.D. American English) noun [countable] a university degree of a very high level, which involves doing advanced research:

- a PhD in economics

doctoral adjective:

- a doctoral dissertation

BIBLIOGRAPHY

O'Driscoll J. Britain. Oxford University Press, 1996

Павлоцкий В.М. British Studies Санкт – Петербург: «Оракул», 1997.

По Британії: Навчальний посібник до курсу «Країнознавство». – К.: Товариство «Знання»б 1997. – 64 с.

The United Kingdom: geography, history, education, painting. – М.: Лист, 1997.

Encyclopedia Britannica

References:

1. http://www.london.ac.uk/colleges_institutes
2. <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/ugprospectus/imperialprofile/originsanddevelopment>
3. http://www.cityofsound.com/blog/2003/11/senate_house_un.html City of Sound
4. <http://www.c20society.org.uk/docs/building/senate.html>
5. <http://www.uln.co.uk/content/index.php?page=9> London Student