

Comparing Education in Germany, England and the United States

Germany, England and the United States all have widely differing approaches to education and as a result very different systems of education. The charts below are a starting point for a comparative study of education in the three countries.

	Germany	England/Wales	United States
Age at which school is started	6+	4+	6+
Time spent at primary school	4 years	6 years	5 years
Age at transfer to secondary school	10	11	11
Repeat a year if you fail	Yes	No	No
All-day schooling is the norm	No	Yes	Yes
Setting and streaming	No	Yes	Yes
Selective secondary education	Yes	No	No
External examinations at 16	No	Yes	No
External examinations at 18	No	Yes	No
Minimum school-leaving age	16	16	17
Students going into higher education	35%	40%	50%
Annual tuition fees for higher education	(variable)	€4,500*	\$10,000**
Percentage of GDP spent on education	4.9%	5.3%	5.4%

* Maximum amount; the actual amount depends on parental income.

** At a public university for a resident of the state, but could be as high as \$40,000 for a graduate programme.

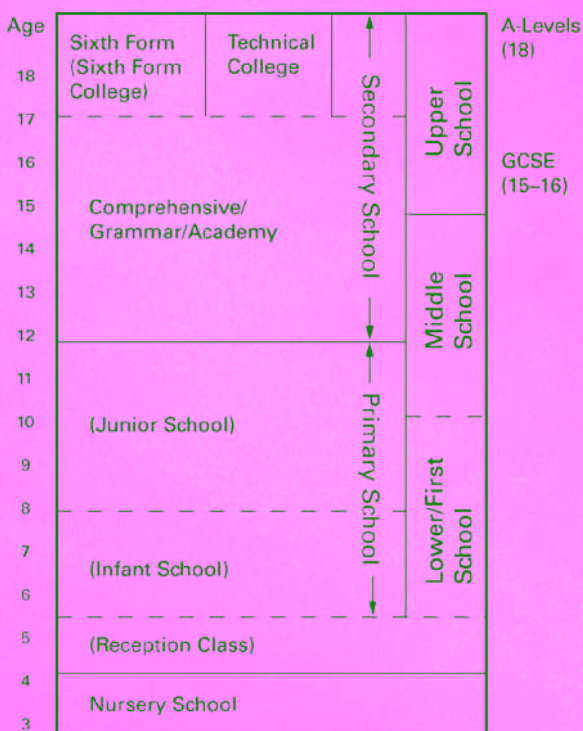
Sources:
Newsweek, 12 June 2006;
en.wikipedia.org (Education in the USA);
UK 2005 London:
Office for National Statistics, 2005

"We all got
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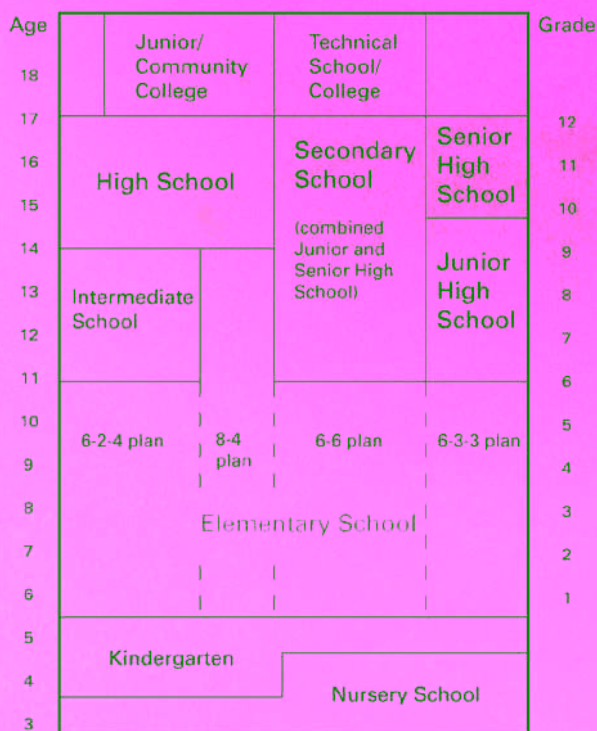
From one extreme ... (see p. 9)

School System in England and Wales



state schools (93 % of pupils)

School System in the United States



Explanations

setting: grouping students according to ability within a particular subject - **streaming:** BrE grouping students according to ability within whole classes (AmE tracking) - **GDP:** gross domestic product; the total value of all goods and services produced in a country in one year - **School**

System in England and Wales: GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education; see p. 14 - **A-level:** Advanced level; an examination that students usually take at the age of 18. Students usually take 3 or 4 subjects and courses last two years. Pass grades are A to E. See also p. 14.

Education in the United States

• Elementary school

This is the general term for schools (also called grade school or grammar school) catering for grades 1 to 5, for children aged 6 to 11. In Britain these are called primary schools.

• **Junior high or middle school** covers grades 6 to 8, for children aged 11 to 14.

• **Senior high school** covers grades 9 to 12, for students aged 14 to 18. The grades are usually given

the following names:

grade nine - freshman class,
grade ten - sophomore class,
grade eleven - junior class,
grade twelve - senior class.

• Grades

This is also the term used for the marks given to students for schoolwork that are recorded for each student in a grade book. They are based on classwork,