

The School Year

The school year runs from 1st September to July and is 39 weeks long.

For many areas the year is divided into six terms:

- September to October
- October to December
- January to February
- February to March
- April to May
- June to July

School holidays

The main school holidays are:

- Christmas- 2 weeks
- Spring - 2 weeks
- Summer - 6 weeks

There are also one week holidays:

- end of October
- mid February
- end of May

When do kids start school?

Children normally start primary school at the age of five, but many schools now have a reception year for four year olds. Children normally leave at the age of 11, moving on to secondary school (High school).

When do kids leave school?

British children are required to attend school until they are 16 years old. Current government proposals are to raise the age until which students must continue to receive some form of education or training to 18. This is expected to be phased in by 2015.

All pupils undergo National Curriculum Tests (NCTs, commonly still referred to by their previous name, SATs) towards the ends of Key Stage 2 in the core subjects of Literacy, Numeracy and Science, but not in the foundation subjects such as Geography, History and Information & Communication Technology where individual teacher assessment is used instead.

At the age of 16, students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland take an examination called the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). Study of GCSE subjects begins at the start of Year 10 (age 14-15), and final examinations are then taken at the end of Year 11 (age 15-16).

After completing the GCSE, some students leave school, others go onto technical college, whilst others continue at high school for two more years (6th form) and take a further set of standardized exams, known as A levels, in three or four subjects. These exams determine whether a student is eligible for university.

Higher education often begins with a **three-year bachelor's degree**. Postgraduate degrees include **master's degrees**, either taught or by research, and the **doctorate**, a research degree that usually takes at least three years.

Education stages

Nursery School	3-4 years old (Foundation Stage)
Primary School	5-11 years old Key Stage 1 - Years 1 and 2 (infant school) Key Stage 2 -Years 3 - 6 (Junior school)
Secondary School	11-18 years old Years 7-13 (Key Stage 3, 4 & 5)

In most cases progression from one year group to another is based purely on chronological age, although it is possible in some circumstances for a student to repeat or skip a year. Repetition may be due to a lack of attendance, for example from a long illness, and especially in Years requiring standard tests. A child significantly more advanced than their classmates may be forwarded one or more years.

ACTIVITIES

4. Go back and complete the rest of the chart (see Education on Britain Part I).
5. Write a formal essay discussing the differences and similarities of the British and Greek School Systems (include school size and organisation, technology and homework, subjects, timetable and hours of work, holidays, exams etc).