



EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES



Almost 90 percent of American students under 18 years of age attend public elementary and secondary schools, which do not charge **tuition** but rely on local and state taxes for funding. Traditionally, elementary school includes kindergarten through the eighth grade. In some places, however, **elementary school** ends after the sixth grade, and students attend middle school, or **junior high school**, from grades seven through nine. Similarly, secondary school, or high school, traditionally comprises grades nine through twelve, but in some places begins at the tenth grade.

Most of the students who do not attend public elementary and secondary schools attend private schools, for which their families pay tuition. Four out of five private schools are run by religious groups. In these schools religious instruction is part of the **curriculum**, which also includes the traditional academic courses. (Religious instruction is not allowed in public schools). There is also a small but growing number of parents who educate their children themselves, a practice known as **home schooling**.

*The texts on this page come from the Department of Education site:
www.ed.gov/index.jhtml*

The United States does not have a national school system. Nor, with the exception of the military academies, are there schools run by the federal government. But the government provides guidance and funding for federal educational programs in which both public and private schools take part, and the U.S. Department of Education oversees these programs.

In America, a college is an institution of higher learning that offers courses in related subjects. A **liberal arts college**, for example, offers courses in literature, languages, history, philosophy, and the sciences, while a business college offers courses in accounting, investment, and marketing. Many colleges are independent and award **bachelor's degrees** to those completing a program of instruction that typically takes four years. But colleges can also be components of universities. A large university typically comprises several colleges, graduate programs in various fields, one or more professional schools (for example, a law school or a medical school), and one or more research facilities. (Americans often use the word "**college**" as shorthand for either a college or a university.)

Every state has its own university, and some states operate large networks of colleges and universities. Some cities also have their own public universities. In many areas, junior or community colleges provide a bridge between secondary school and four-year colleges for some students. In junior colleges, students can generally complete their first two years of college courses at low cost and remain close to home. Unlike public elementary and secondary schools, public colleges and universities usually charge tuition.

■ Types of Schools

Public schools

Regular public schools are organized and structured according to the policies and regulations of the local school district and state in which they operate.

Private Schools

Private schools may be either religious or secular and they follow a wide variety of curricular and pedagogical approaches. There are also private schools that specialize in serving special needs students.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools that have been turned over to local parent and community groups, who receive a charter making them responsible for the operation and success of the enterprise.

To read more about charter schools please go to:
www.ed.gov/programs/charter/contacts.html

Source: www.ed.gov/

Community Colleges

Community colleges provide the first two years of a university education. Students are able to transfer to a university for an additional two years to complete the Bachelor's Degree. This system is called "2+2." These institutions are an important sector of the U.S. higher education system. There are nearly 1,200 accredited community colleges with an enrollment of 11 million students.

Increasing numbers of international students are choosing to begin their higher education in the U.S. at community colleges. During the past decade, the growth of international students attending U.S. community colleges increased by 57 percent.

To learn more about Community Colleges, please see the Electronic Journal: Community Colleges in the United States at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0602/ijse/ijse0602.htm>.

To search for schools, please visit the following web sites:

The American Schools Directory (ASD) provides a comprehensive searchable database of links to public and private schools of different types and levels at www.asd.com

Web 66 provides links to schools participating in the Web 66 program, a national effort to link schools to each other through the Internet Their web site is at <http://web66.coled.umn.edu/>

FUN FACTS

Estimated number of home-schooled students: 1999: 850,000; 2003: 1,096,000

Many public school students in the United States are identified as limited English proficient students. English language learners receiving English language services in 2001-02:

California: 1.5 million (1 in 4 students)
Texas: .5 million (1 in 7 students)

75% of public schools had a website in 2001.

Source: National Center For Education Statistics
<http://nces.ed.gov>

■ The Ivy League

The **Ivy League** is an association of eight Northeastern American universities. The term "Ivy League" has connotations of academic excellence as well as a certain amount of elitism. These schools are also sometimes affectionately referred to as the Ancient Eight.

All of the Ivy League universities share some general characteristics: they are among the most prestigious and selective universities in the U.S.; they rank within the top one percent of the world's universities in terms of financial endowment; and they attract top-tier students and faculty. The Ivies are also among the oldest universities in the United States—all but Cornell University were founded during America's colonial era.

All but one of the Ivy League universities are privately owned and controlled, although many of them receive funding from the federal or state governments to pursue research. One of the eight, Cornell, has four state supported academic units, termed statutory colleges, that are an integral part of the university.

The eight Ivy League universities:

Brown University—www.brown.edu
Columbia University—www.columbia.edu
Cornell University—www.cornell.edu
Dartmouth College—www.dartmouth.edu
Harvard University—www.harvard.edu
Univ. of Pennsylvania—www.upenn.edu
Princeton University—www.princeton.edu
Yale University—www.yale.edu

Source: www.wordiq.com/

Where does the name come from?

Ever wanted to know what ivy exactly is?



Photo courtesy of Cornell University Campus Life.
Photography by Michael D. Darrah.
All rights reserved.



Look at these magnificent Cornell buildings! Their walls are partly covered with ivy.

■ If You Want to Study in the U.S. ■ Financial Assistance

Applying to study in the United States is not a simple process, but there are good resources available to help you understand what to do. The United States Government provides education information centers in nearly every country, and there are also extensive Internet resources.

As you make your plans, the best way to start is to visit the closest U.S. educational advising center. At the center, a well-trained educational adviser and a comprehensive reference collection will help you get familiar with the applications process, select the institution, seek financial aid, and prepare for the required standardized tests (TOEFL, SAT, GRE). You can find centers in Budapest, Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs and Szeged. For a complete list of centers in Hungary, please visit the web site of the Fulbright Educational Advising Center at:

www.fulbright.hu/advising/centers.htm.

■ Some Web Sites to Visit



EducationUSA, a web site by the U.S. Department of State, assists international students with finding, applying, and preparing for study at an accredited U.S. college of university. Topics available include: Undergraduate Study, Graduate Study, Short-Term Study, Predeparture

Information (with Glossary of Terms), Living in the U.S., and Find a School. Visit the site at: www.educationusa.state.gov

Their publication *If You Want to Study in the United States* is also available on-line:

—Undergraduate Study:

www.educationusa.state.gov/undergrad/pubs/iywts1.pdf

—Graduate and Professional Study and Research

www.educationusa.state.gov/graduate/pubs/iywts2.pdf

—Getting Ready to Go: Practical Information for Living and Studying in the United States

www.educationusa.state.gov/predeparture/pubs/iywts4.pdf

Find U.S. universities at:

www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html

International Education Week 2004

“Celebrated worldwide, International Education Week provides an opportunity to highlight the benefits of international education and exchange; to express appreciation for students and scholars who study and teach here; and to commend the millions of people who build and strengthen bridges of international understanding by organizing and participating in exchange programs. ...

Please join us in this celebration and share your International Education Week activities on our website <http://exchanges.state.gov/iew/>. The more we learn about and understand each other, the more effective we will be in creating a world of global citizens, and the better our chances of achieving peace in our increasingly interdependent world.”

Excerpts from the statement by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell



The United States government does not provide student assistance to non-citizens except in the limited case of federal exchange programs and some research opportunities for scientists and mid-career professionals. Students who come to the United States to study for diplomas or degrees are expected to be able to pay for their study visits using their own resources plus assistance from their countries or private sources.

The SmartStudent Guide to Studying in the USA

This site helps students calculate college costs, prepare a financial planning worksheet, and provides sources of financial aid, scholarship information and much more.

www.edupass.org/finaid/

Federal Student Aid: International Students

A comprehensive web site by the U.S. Department of Education for international students wishing to study in the United States.

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/intl.jsp>

Paying for School: Financial Aid

Detailed information on where to go to find financial aid for international students. It also provides links to sites with additional useful information, e.g. finding schools, the application process, and standardized tests.

www.foreignborn.com/study_in_us/8-paying4school.htm

■ Do I Need a Visa? — YES!

All Hungarian citizens who wish to study in the USA must apply for a student visa. However, if you are enrolled in a short-term language course, you might qualify for a visitor visa. Please consult with the school to find out if their program requires a student visa.

An applicant for a student visa must be accepted at a school or university in the U.S. The proof of the acceptance is Form I-20. This form is issued by the school, and it must be attached to the visa application.

To learn more about the visa process, please visit the Embassy web site at:

www.usembassy.hu/conseng/non_immigrant.html#student
In Hungarian: www.usembassy.hu/consnivh.htm#stu



Activity Page

Win a Book!

To take part in a drawing for colorful English language booklets about the United States e-mail us the answer to the following question:

Does the United States have a national school system?

Send your answer to:
zoom@usembassy.hu

Please state your name, address, and age.

The deadline is Nov. 30.

Winners will be notified by December 10.

Good Luck!

■ Educational Definitions

The U.S. school system is very different from that of Hungary. Try to match the components of the U.S. school system with their definitions.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Kindergarten | a preschool for children age 4 to 6 to prepare them for elementary school |
| Elementary School | first year student in either high school or college |
| Middle School | an institution of higher learning that grants the bachelor's degree in liberal arts or science or both |
| High School | second year student in either high school or college |
| College | a school for the first six to eight years of a child's formal education, often including kindergarten |
| Graduate Degree | a degree from a university or college, also known as a Bachelor's Degree |
| Undergraduate Degree | an academic degree such as MA (Master of Arts) or PhD conferred by a college or university upon those who complete at least one year of prescribed study beyond the Bachelor's Degree |
| Freshman | third year student in either high school or college |
| Sophomore | fourth year student in either high school or college |
| Junior | a secondary school that usually includes grades 9 or 10 through 12 |
| Senior | a school at a level between elementary and high school, typically including grades seven through nine |

Find Correct **Answers** at: www.usembassy.hu/zoom_key.htm

ZOOM
in on america

Zoom is available online at

www.usembassy.hu/zoom.htm

Please send requests for subscription and comments to:
zoom@usembassy.hu

Regional English Language Office
rel@mail@usembassy.hu

Information Resource Center
infousa@usembassy.hu

Mailing address:
U.S. Embassy
Public Affairs Section
1054 Budapest
Szabadság tér 12.

■ Glossary — All these words and expressions appear right on the first page!

tuition - fee, money paid for instructions
elementary school - the first six to eight years of a child's formal education, also called **grade school, grammar school, primary school**
junior high school - a school generally including the seventh, eighth, and sometimes ninth grades
curriculum - all the courses of study offered by an educational institution
home schooling - being educated at home
liberal arts - academic disciplines, such as languages, literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, and science,
college - an institution of higher learning

■ Match the Expressions with the Institutions

Professor, Principal, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Undergraduate Studies, Freshman, Senior, Tuition, Private, Curriculum, Graduation, Home Schooling
(Some may belong to both categories!)

College: _____

High School: _____

