



General Information on French School System

The French School System is divided into four different schools:

Maternelle which lasts 3 years from age 3 to 6.

Primaire which lasts 5 years, from age 6 to 10.

Collège which lasts for 4 years, from age 11 to 15)

Lycée which lasts for a further 3 years, for students aged 15 to 18.

Maternelle = Kindergarten

Children in France start school at age 3. The first year is called "Petite Section"; the second year is called "Moyenne Section" and the 3rd year is called "Grand Section".

Primaire = Primary School

Primary School lasts 5 years in France. The first year is called CP (Classe préparatoire). Second year is CE1, Cours Élémentaire 1. The third year is CE2 (or Cours Élémentaire 2). The fourth year is CM1 (Cours Moyen 1); and the final year of Primary school is called CM2 (Cours Moyen 2). There is no state exam at the end of Primary school in France.

Collège

French students start college at age 11. The first year of college is called "Sixième". The second year of college is called "Cinquième" or 5th year. The 3rd year of Collège is "Quatrième" or 4th year. And the final year of Collège is called "Troisième" or 3rd year. The Secondary School system counts down from "sixième" or 6th year right the way through to the final year of lycée. Students in Collège usually have 10 subjects and 2 options. (Core subjects are French, Maths, English, History/Geography combined, Sport, Technology, Art, Science, Physics/Chemistry combined, Civics. Language options vary in each school but English is compulsory. Students can choose one other language (Spanish, German, Italian, Chinese, Latin etc)

In the final year of Collège, all students pass a National exam called the Brevet in which there are only 2 subjects tested: French and Maths.

Lycée

The first year of the Senior Cycle in Lycée is called "Seconde" (2nd year). The second year of Lycée is called "Premier" (1st year) and the final year of Lycée is called "Terminale". The Baccalaureat is the national exam at the end of school which serves as certification for completion of Secondary Education as well as the basis for third level education. A large part of the final grades are based on continuous assessment and oral exams.

Age	Ecole	France	Ireland	Ecole
3 ans	Maternelle 3 ans	Petite Section		Primary School 8 ans
3-4 ans		Moyenne Section	Junior Infants	
4-5 ans		Grande Section	Senior Infants	
5-6 ans	Primaire 5 ans	CP	1 st class	
6-7 ans		CE1	2 nd class	
7-8 ans		CE2	3 rd class	
8-9 ans		CM1	4 th class	
9-10 ans		CM2	5 th class	
10-11 ans	Collège 4 ans	6ème	6 th class	
12-13 ans		5ème	1 st year	
13-14 ans		4ème	2 nd year	
14-15 ans		3ème (Brevet)	3 rd year (Junior Certificate)	
15-16 ans	Lycée 3 ans	Seconde	4 th year = Transition Year	Secondary School 6 ans
16-17 ans		Première	5 th year	
17-18 ans		Terminal (Baccalaureat)	6 th year (Leaving Certificate)	