

Worksheet | Knowledge is **GREAT**

The UK Education System

In the UK (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England), the law says that all British children must receive an education between the ages of 5 and 16. Education is compulsory for children of these ages and whereas the vast majority of children go to school, some are home-schooled and are taught by their parents.

There are differences between the education systems of the UK countries and more information can be found at the link below.

Before the age of 5, many children receive pre-school education. Sometimes this is called nursery, playschool or playgroup. Some children attend full-time because their parents work and others just go for a few mornings or afternoons so they learn to socialise with other children. It helps stimulate their learning, prevents them from being bored at home and can make them feel less scared when they start proper school.

Primary education begins around the age of 5 and lasts until the ages of 11 or 12. Compulsory subjects include English, Maths, Science, Design and technology, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), History, Geography, Art and design, Music and Physical Education (PE). Schools are also required to teach religious education, though parents are allowed to remove their children from these sessions, if they wish. In addition, schools teach Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship and at least one modern foreign language.

In Wales, England and Northern Ireland, secondary education begins around the ages of 11 and 12 and can be an anxious time as it usually involves changing to a new school. Children continue with all their subjects until they choose the ones they will take for their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams. They take these exams around the ages of 14 to 16.

Tertiary education is optional and begins at 16 after children have taken their GCSEs. Children who want to continue with an academic education and go to university need to study for their A-levels and they take these exams around the age of 18. In order to do this, they can either stay on at school, if their school teaches A-levels, or go to an FE college (a college of Further Education). For children who do not want to go to university and are curious about learning a trade, such as catering, health and beauty or construction, they can also go to an FE college at the age of 16 and this is called a vocational education.

Higher education begins from the age of 18 and there is no upper age limit. Anyone above the age of 18 can go to university providing they have the right qualifications.

Whether children follow an academic or vocational route to employment, they need to be ambitious, studious and industrious in order to achieve their goals. Many people dream of finding a job that makes them excited, as well as paying the bills. Having a good, solid education behind them puts them in a powerful position to achieve this.

To find more detailed information about the UK Education System:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-uk-system-k-12-education.htm>