

## ITALIAN SCHOOL LIFE

Education in Italy is compulsory from 6 to 16 years old, and is divided into five stages: kindergarten or pre-school education, primary school, lower secondary school, upper secondary school and university. Italy has both public and private education systems. When Italy became a parliamentary republic in 1946, the basis of the schooling system was laid, and there have been changes up to the latest “La Buona Scuola” in 2016 . Compulsory school is tax exented: it means that you don’t need to pay any registration fee, but there is a non-compulsory contribution that is asked to the families. From 16 to 18, a minimal registration fee has to be paid. Even after the end of compulsory school and if they are Italian residents, children who were not born in Italy, receive free public education. Third level education in Italy, just like primary and secondary, is mostly public. Children attending the Italian education system can start with the nursery school, which is non-compulsory, from the age of three. Italian schools don’t require uniforms; only at the kindergarten, children wear a “*grembiule*” (an overall). Lessons usually start around the second week of September and finish around the second week of June, but there are some regional differences. There are school breaks for Christmas, Easter, summer and other less important occasions (students stay at home only for a day or for a couple of days). The school year is usually divided into two terms, called “*quadrimestri*” (not for the kindergarten): the first term starts with the beginning of school (September) and it finish at the end of January; the second term begins in February and runs until the beginning of June. At the end of each term, a report called “*pagella*” is given to students: it has all the grades (normally from 3 to 10). Another feature of the Italian school life is the class of Catholic religion that is usually one hour per week; you can attend these lessons or decide to choose other educational activities, it is the only optional subject.



### Kindergarten / Pre-School

There are *nursery school* for babies up to 3 years old, kindergarten/pre-school education, from 3 to 6 years old, but at this level education is not compulsory yet. Each group has two teachers and pupils play, practicing drawing and socializing.

### Primary

### school

*Primary school* lasts five years. Children starts primary school when they’re 6 years old and it ends when they are 11. The compulsory subjects are: Italian, English, Geography, History, Math, Science, Technology, Music, Art, Physical Education, Information Technology and Religion. In a class there are generally twenty-five students, but there can be also pluriclassi or mixed-level classes. The number of teachers varies from school to school. There are more public primary schools than the ones private, but nothing changes: they both have the same subjects. In the past students had to pass an exam to access lower secondary school; now it’s different because students have to access to the next class to go to “*scuola media*”.



### Lower secondary school

*Lower secondary school* is also known as “*scuola media*”; it lasts three years (roughly from 11 to 14) and has two subjects more than primary school: technology and a language other than English (French, Spanish or seldom German). Pupils must attend at least thirty hours of formal lessons per week. At the end of the three pupils have to do a State exam which includes a test for Math, Italian, English, the second modern language, the INVALSI tests and the oral examination. If they pass this last exam, they receive the “*Licenza di Scuola Media*”. Then they move onto the “*Scuola Secondaria di Secondo Grado*”.

## Upper secondary school

*Upper secondary school*, also known as “*scuola superiore*”, lasts five years (from 14 to 19); there are 3 types of upper secondary school:

1) *Lyceum* (liceo), schools focusing on theoretical learning, specialized, from the third year, in a field of studies such as science, art, languages or humanities. Some examples of “*Liceo*” are: Classical High School (Liceo Classico), Scientific High School (Liceo Scientifico), Fine Arts High School (Liceo Artistico) and Language High School (Liceo Linguistico).

2) *Technical institute* (istituto tecnico), schools focusing on technical skills with a specialization in economy, administration, law and technology. Some examples of technical institute are: Artistic School (Istituto d’Arte) and Technical Institutes (Istituti Tecnici).

3) *Vocational Schools* (istituto professionale), schools focusing on vocational skills – the first three years at the end of which pupils have a leaving examination or they can get on to the two final years turning from vocational to technical. These kind of schools prepare people for specific careers such as secretary, chef, waiter, electrician or mechanic.

At the end of the 5 years of the upper secondary school, pupils must pass an exam to receive the “Diploma di Maturità” (Secondary school diploma). The exam is made up of three written tests and one oral.

## University

Italy has 61 state universities and 15 private ones. The University of Bologna is the oldest in Europe. Structurally they have a primary course of three years to obtain a bachelor degree, a further two years to specialize with a Master's degree and, finally, the possibility to obtain a PhD.

If a student has completed the upper secondary high school, he can attend university: courses of study such as Medicine (6 years), Law (5 years), Architecture and Pharmaceutical sciences. A lot of faculties have the entry test nowadays.



LEVEL	DURATION
Pre-school education	3 years
Primary school	5 years
Lower secondary school	3 years
Upper secondary school	5 years
Higher education	- <u>Master's degree</u> : 5/6 years - <u>PhD and Superior Graduate Schools</u> : 3,4 or 5 years

Information taken from:

- Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\\_in\\_Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Italy)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher\\_education\\_in\\_Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_education_in_Italy)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary\\_education\\_in\\_Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_education_in_Italy)
- Life in Italy <http://www.lifeinitaly.com/moving/school-system.asp>
- Understanding Italy <http://www.understandingitaly.com/profile-content/education.html>
- Italy Magazine <http://www.italymagazine.com/featured-story/back-school-10-things-you-should-know-about-italian-school-system>

### Education in Italy – some fact files

- Free state education is available to children of all nationalities who live in Italy. Every child is entitled to education.
- By law, Italian schools have to accept all children under the age of 18 even if the necessary documents have not all been provided. In this instance the enrolment is "a temporary enrolment", until the parents or guardian have been able to produce the necessary documentation. During this time, they have to produce a written proof of intention to substitute the missing documents.
- Formal lessons cover a broad range of subjects following a National Curriculum set by the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, MPI (Ministry of Public Education).

by Soukaina Labrigui

Exercise 1 →

*Read the text about "Italian school life" and decide if the sentences are true ( T ) or false ( F ).*

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Education in Italy is compulsory from 6 to 19.                           | T | F |
| 2) Lyceum gives technical and professional skills.                          | T | F |
| 3) Clothing in secondary school isn't bound.                                | T | F |
| 4) Every year at school is divided into 3 terms.                            | T | F |
| 5) Not everyone end upper secondary school in 5 years.                      | T | F |
| 6) The second language at lower secondary school isn't the same everywhere. | T | F |
| 7) University is compulsory in Italy.                                       | T | F |
| 8) There aren't private primary schools in Italy.                           | T | F |
| 9) If a student doesn't follow religion's lessons, he could goes back home. | T | F |

Ex.2 →

*Read the text about "Italian school life" and fill in the missing words.*

Education in Italy is divided into 5 stages: kindergarten, primary school, lower secondary school, (1) ..... and university.

Lessons begin in (2) ..... and finish in (3) .....

Primary school, lower and upper secondary school are (4) .....

There are more public schools than (5) .....

Students haven't to wear a (6) .....

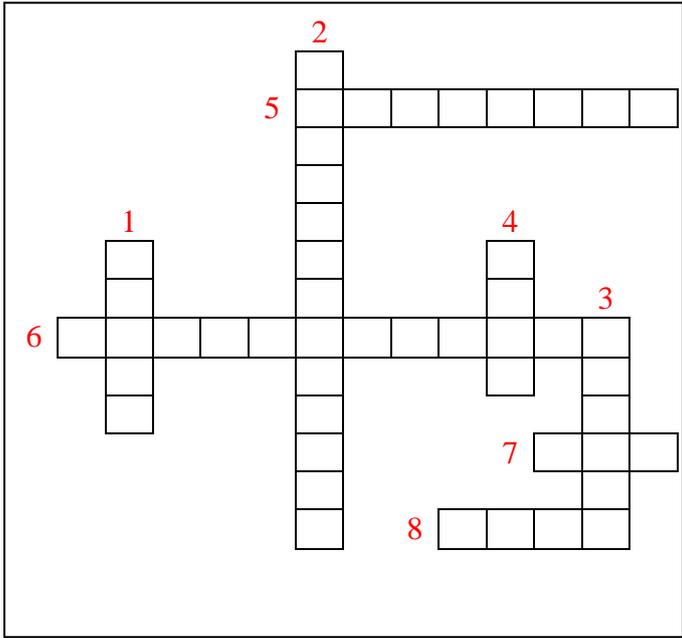
(7) ..... offers specialization and theoretical education, whereas professional institute offers (8) .....

Some universities also organize courses (9) .....

Exercise 2 →

*Complete the crossword.*

- 1) There are two of them in a school year.
- 2) It's the first compulsory school.
- 3) Here you study mainly theory.
- 4) The month when school ends.
- 5) A non-compulsory subject.
- 6) Institute that prepares to work (upper secondary school).
- 7) It has to be paid at the registration.
- 8) The one final for the lower and upper secondary school.



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