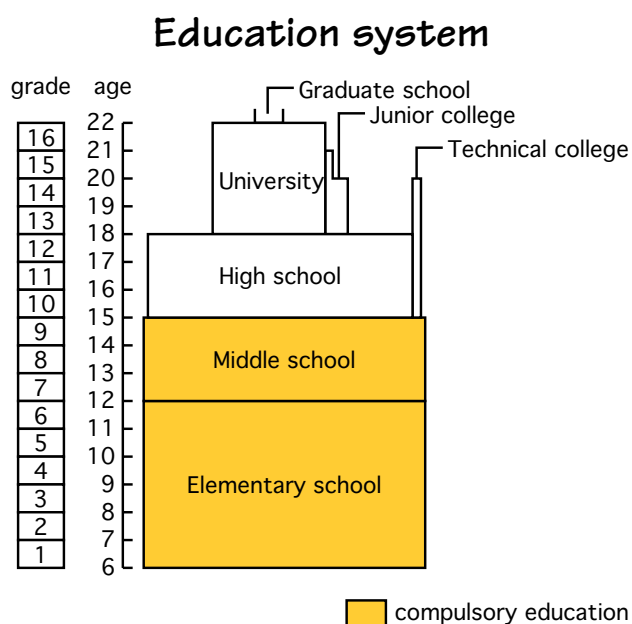


# Japan at a Glance: Schools

**Education system:** Japanese children are required to complete nine years of education (six years of elementary school and three years of middle school). Almost all students (97% in 2002) go on to high school.



## Typical weekly schedule for sixth graders

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Science	Japanese	Home economics	Art	Social studies
2	Science	Math	Math	Art	General studies
3	Physical education	Music	Physical education	Math	Math
4	Math	Social studies	Japanese	Social studies	Japanese
Lunch					
5	Japanese	General studies	Music	Japanese	Ethics
6		General studies		Club and committee meetings	

(Students generally begin learning English in middle school.)

Each elementary school gets to decide how to use the “general studies” period. Some schools use this time slot for English instruction.

## Special days in the life of elementary school students (the Japanese school year starts in April)

Month	School calendar	General calendar for kids
April	Start of new school year School entrance ceremony	
May	School picnics and excursions	Children's Day
June		
July	Start of summer vacation School camp	Tanabata Festival
August	Summer break (6 weeks)	Swimming at the beach; fireworks displays; Bon holidays
September	Start of second trimester Swim meets	
October	School sports day	
November	School festival	Shichi-go-san ceremony
December	Winter break (2 weeks)	Christmas
January	Start of third trimester First writing of the new year contest	New Year
February		Setsubun (bean-throwing ceremony)
March	Graduation Spring break (2 weeks)	Hina Matsuri (Girls' Festival)