

Education – school system in Slovenia

Children usually attend kindergarten any time between the ages of two and seven years, depending on the local custom. Children are taught to develop basic skills through creative play and social interaction

Children first enter primary school at about the age of 6 and finish at about the age of 14. Each group of children born in the same year form one grade (class) which usually lasts until the end of schooling. Each year is divided into 2 terms. Once or twice per term, children have holidays: Autumn, Christmas, winter and May first holidays; each holiday is approximately a week long. At summer time, school ends on 24th June (except in the last/ninth grade, where it ends a week earlier), followed by a holiday of more than two months. The next school year starts on the 1st September.

The 1st Period is the beginning of schooling for every child. From the first to the fourth grade children stay in one classroom and have one class and one teacher which teaches all subjects, except on some occasions, sports, art and music are taught by separate teachers or is supervised by the appropriate teacher. In the beginning of the first year there is always one special pedagogue in the classroom and he or she helps the master teacher lead the younger students into the new system. They start with reading, writing and counting. Children are taught their native language (Slovenian, Hungarian or Italian language, depending on the area of their schooling), mathematics, natural and sociological sciences, music, physical education and art. In the fourth grade they begin to learn their first foreign language, which is usually English.

The 2nd Period of primary schooling starts in the fifth grade when children begin switching classrooms. They still have a master teacher. He or she usually teaches them one or two subjects and all others are taught by other specialized teachers. The Main subjects which they need to attend are maths, the native language, their first foreign language, PE, music and art. Later they start with physics, chemistry, geography, history, biology, craft and housekeeping. In the seventh grade they must choose at least two (the third is not compulsory). The subjects offered are subjects which tend to interest children (usually these are foreign languages, astronomy, fine art, computer science etc.).

At the end of the ninth grade pupils are examined by special state tests in maths, the native language and their first foreign language, although the third subject examined in the ninth grade is decided by the minister. The points acquired by these tests used to be the key factor, when a child wanted to join a particular high school, but with the new system, the points acquired are only used when pupils running for the same school have the same points from their grades.

The grades are the same as in other countries that belonged to Yugoslavia before 1991. In primary school marks start with 1 (insufficient) and is the only failure mark. The second one is 2 (sufficient), the next is 3 (good), then 4 (very good) and the best is 5 (excellent).

In Slovenia, a variety of high-school institutions for secondary education exists one can choose to go with his or her interests, abilities and beliefs. The majority of them are public and government-funded, although there are some upper secondary schools, which are the most elite and has the most difficult high – school programs and a Waldorf upper secondary school, which are private and require tuition to be paid.