



Albania

Albania has long served as a bridgehead for various nations and empires seeking conquest abroad due to its location on the Adriatic and Ionian seas. Albanians believe themselves to be descendants of the ancient Illyrians, who migrated in 2000 BC to Albania from central Europe at the beginning of the Bronze Age. In 1912, Albania declared its independence.



Family Life

In Albania, most households consist of parents (or a parent) and their children. Some households have more than one relative living with the family, such as grandparents, aunts, and/or uncles. Typically in Albania, both parents work and are financially responsible for the family. The roles of women and men are also different in Albania. Usually, the father is the head of the family and makes big decisions, while the mother takes care of the children and the house. Both roles are highly respected. Hiring a housekeeper is not common in Albania; however, in the capital of Tirana, some middle and upper income families can now afford to have a housekeeper. In low and middle income families, the mother does the cleaning; children are required to clean up their own room or help their mothers.

Teen Life: Sharing is common in Albanian families. While siblings should ask each other if they can use each other's personal items, children can use any family item without asking. Teenagers usually ask for money for different activities (ex: cinema, theater, coffee, etc.) and parents provide this money; there are also families that give allowances to their teenage children. Due to a lack of jobs, working part-time as a teenager is not possible.

Responsibilities: Usually Albanian parents like their children to focus only on their studies, and they might give specific chores to their children only during the week-ends. Albanian boys are usually treated differently from girls, as girls have to contribute more to the cleanliness of the house. However, changes depending on the family. Parents encourage children to make responsible decisions (and be responsible for any consequences) regarding things such as saving money and thinking about a future career. Ultimately, the final decision is often left with the teenager, although Albanian parents try to influence their child's decisions, especially as they are related to university studies. Teenagers in Albania are primarily dependent on their parents when it comes to finances. However, they may have the opportunity work during the summer, giving them the chance to learn financial responsibility.

Parental Involvement: Albania is small and it is typical for people to know each other. Parents often spend time with their family members and friends, and they try to socialize their children. Meeting with cousins or friends of the family and their children is normal. Depending on the size of the apartment, teenagers will typically spend time alone in their rooms. Many parents in Albania are often actively involved in supporting or helping to arrange their children's extracurricular activities. Albanian parents are often in frequent, direct contact with their children's teachers at school and are kept aware of their academic progress through regular meetings. Schools have a regular meeting with the parents once every two weeks or monthly. Monitoring what children do online is difficult, especially because a lot of parents do not know much about technology. Parents discipline their children in different ways. It is common for parents to confiscate their cell phones, and restrict computer and video games privileges.

Pets: Many Albanian families have pets, most often cats or dogs. Pets are thought of and treated as members of the family, and often are allowed to go anywhere inside the house. Also, due to the high rate of migration, a lot of elderly people spend their time with their pets. Adopting animals from pet shelters is not common.

School



Classes: In Albania, students stay in the same classroom all day with the same group of students, while teachers rotate to different classrooms. Students only change their classroom if they have to go to a biology/physics laboratory. Students in Albania are evaluated on a variety of tasks: daily homework, class participation, and written and oral exams. Students take 12-13 subjects during the year, with classes meeting for a total of either two hours or three to four hours each week. Generally, all students are in the same classes, though some elective subjects allow students to enroll in advanced math or physics courses. While 10th and 11th grade students can only take two or three elective courses, 12th grade students only have five required subjects, leaving them with seven elective courses.

In public and private schools in Albania, students are not seated separately by gender in class; teachers may also assign seats to the students. In religious schools or in some Turkish colleges, boys and girls are seated separately, or are in separate classes completely.

School Relationships: Student-teacher relationships in Albania are more formal than in the U.S. Students address their teachers by calling them "teacher" before the teacher's first name. It is considered rude to call teachers by solely their first name.

Extracurricular Activities: In Albania, sports and art clubs are not overly popular, but students can get involved in these kinds of activities at school. Throughout the year, students must take a physical education class until grade 12. In this class, students typically do physical exercises or play team sports like basketball and volleyball. The teacher might then create a sport team (ex: a basketball team) with selected students based on their ability to play sports. These teams play against each other and, at the end of the year, one group is chosen to represent the school at the national competition. If students want to take art or language classes, they need to find private club or classes that offer these kinds of opportunities.

School Rules and Attire: The use of cell phones is not allowed during classes in Albania. If a teacher sees a student using a cell phone, the cell phone is not immediately confiscated. Depending on the schools, the school principal keeps it in his or her office until the student's parents meet with the teacher and school principal. Fighting is considered very serious in Albania. If a student is caught fighting in the school area, it will lead to suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the event. Additionally, parents in Albania may be required to meet with the school, and the student could be prevented from registering in that school again. Cheating is not allowed, but it has become a widespread issue in Albania. No student will be expelled from school for cheating.

In public and private high schools, wearing school uniforms is mandatory. Although wearing school uniforms is required, students are now allowed to wear make-up, jewelry, tight pants, and high heels. This is a recent change from more traditional uniform rules.

Returning from Exchange: Once YES students return to Albania, the classes they took in the U.S. will be examined for equivalency by the country's Board of Education. If students are missing required classes from their YES year, they must complete them within two months in order to get the required number of credits to graduate and take mandatory national exams. However, if the student is missing more than six subjects worth of credits, the student must repeat the year.

Personal Interactions



Tirana

Mixed Gender Socializing: It is common to see opposite genders socializing together in Albania, both in groups and one-on-one. Students are not judged negatively if they are seen holding hands or having a best friend of the opposite gender.

Friendships: Albanian teenagers usually use the term “friend” for someone they have known for a long time, with whom they might be in the same school, neighborhood, or share the same interests with. Teenagers have been taught since they were little that socializing and making relationships is important. Teachers make an effort to put students into different groups to encourage them socialize and create friendships, and this has resulted in increasing respect for their friends and strong relationships between peers. Some teenagers make friendships that last from the time they are in kindergarten; these kinds of friendship are the ones who last longer. Sharing money is very common amongst friends in Albania. Teenagers sometimes pay for their friends as a way to “treat” them or show that they count on them. However, if a student pays for his/her friend, it is expected that their friend treat them the next time they go out together.

Communication Styles: Parents and elders are highly respected in Albania, and students are taught not to argue with someone older and to listen without questioning. However, there are no specific rules on how the teenager should communicate with their parents or other family members. They have a direct style of communication with their family members and relatives. Nowadays, it is easy for teenagers to sometimes show disrespect towards others, but culturally they are taught to keep negative emotions themselves and not express their negative feelings/thoughts directly to their peers. They try to be careful in the way they express their thought/feelings, especially with people they do not know very well. When it comes best friends and they feel more comfortable showing their true feelings. Teenagers may also have strong relationships with family members, depending how open they are.

Eye Contact: In Albania, making eye contact during a conversation is an important sign of showing respect to anyone older than you, such as parents and teachers, as it shows that you are paying attention to what they are saying. Not making eye contact is considered rude.

Cultural Norms: Albanians are usually a little bit late, although they appreciate when things are on time.

Food and Culture



During the week, it can be difficult for families in Albania to gather together and eat meals at the same time due to busy schedules, but during the weekends or on holidays meals are usually eaten as a family. During meals, family members talk about their day at school or work, or about anything important or special that had happened.

Guest Culture: In Albania, guests should try the food and the drinks offered by hosts, even if in small portions, as it is impolite to decline the food or drinks offered. Even if a guest politely declines, hosts will continue to offer food and drinks, because they likely think that the guest is feeling too shy to take food the first time it's offered. Hosts will continue to give food to their guests as a way of honoring them.

Lunch and Diets: Albania has a Mediterranean cuisine with a strong influence from the Ottoman Empire, as in all Balkan countries. Albanians try to eat healthy food and families spend a lot of money on food, as it is top priority for parents to provide good meals for their children. Dieting has become popular among women and young people, especially before the summer starts. In Albania, Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.

Usually in Albania, parents prepare a bag lunch for their kids. Some parents will also give lunch money for students to buy food at school. Students generally share their food amongst their friends, as it is considered rude to eat in front of others who do not have food without sharing it.

Religion: There is religious harmony amongst Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Catholic Christians, and Bektashi (a Sufi order that is a sect of Islamic mystic tradition) in Albania. However, it is not a very common for Albanians to go to church or mosque, and the majority of Albanians do not attend any religious services, except families who are very religious. Churches and mosques do not play any civic role within the community.

Holidays: Various holidays are celebrated in Albania. March 14 is Spring Day; Albanians celebrate this holiday by buying the traditional dessert “ballokume,” participating in different celebrations in town centers, or going out for lunch with their families and relatives. Independence and Flag Day are the most important holidays in the country. Both holidays are celebrated with festivals, fireworks, and time spent with family at home or together outside the city. New Year is another important celebration. After midnight, everyone goes downtown to watch fireworks and, after having a family dinner at home, youth usually go to clubs to celebrate with their close friends. Another holiday is the Day of Mother Theresa on October 19.

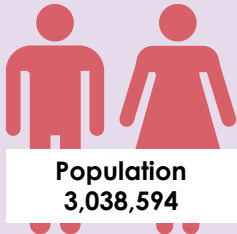
The most important religious celebrations in Albania are Christmas (both Catholic and Orthodox), Easter (both Catholic and Orthodox), Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, and Sultan Nowruz Day (Bektashi). Members of other religions respect each other's beliefs and holidays, but generally religious holidays are celebrated only with families and relatives.

Personal Hygiene



Generally, teenagers take a shower daily (either in the morning or evening), except when they are involved in physical activities. Wearing the same clothes two days in a row is not common and is considered unclean, except in cases where a student needs to wear a school uniform, for which they might wear the same t-shirt two days in a row. Albanians also often iron their clothes.

Generally, Albanian teenagers are not used to or familiar with doing their own laundry. In many Albanian households, all of the dirty clothes are put in a basket together or put next to the washing machine, and then the person who takes care of the house and laundry (usually the mother) washes the family's clothes.



Population
3,038,594



Square Miles
11,100

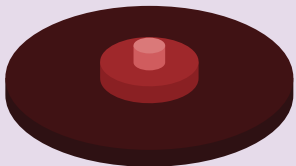


Currency
Albanian Lek

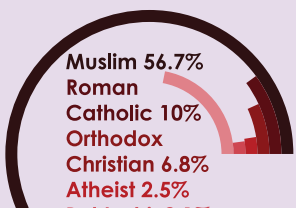


Literacy rate
96.9%

Literacy rate
98.4%



Albanian 82.6%
Greek 0.9%
Unspecified 16.5%





Bahrain

Family Life



In Bahrain, households usually consist of parents, their children, and sometimes grandparents. In some cases, a household includes even more extended family, like uncles and their families living in the same home. Children do not move out of the home even when they are at college or when they start to work. Typically, children only move out of the family home when they are married. In many Bahraini families, mothers do not work. However, if she does, the father is still responsible for supporting his family. Both parents have equal authority,

but in some families most of the authority is with the father. In Bahrain, family members are expected to have time to pursue their own interests, and family members must respect each other's desires. Meals are usually eaten together as a family.

Teen Life: If a Bahraini child owns something, it is generally his or her own and not understood to be the shared property of siblings. This includes clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first. In Bahrain, teenagers are expected to interact respectfully with their parents at all times. However, it is fine to be informal with their siblings.

Responsibilities: It is common for families to employ household help in Bahrain. Boys and girls are generally not used to doing many house chores, however they are open to doing taking up responsibilities. Most teenagers in Bahrain rarely cook for themselves, and they typically do not have part-time jobs until they are in Grade 12 or college, because the concept of working while studying does not exist in Bahrain. Parents are expected to give children monthly allowances.

Parental Involvement: Most teenagers in Bahrain are dependent upon their parents. Bahraini parents are in direct contact with schools and monitor their children's academic progress regularly. Students are expected to be responsible for their academic performance and other school-related issues.

Pets: Nearly all Bahraini homes are pet-free. Bahraini students may initially feel uncomfortable if household pets in the U.S are given "free reign."

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: Having friends of the opposite sex is not acceptable for most in Bahraini society. Teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and some- times one-on-one; both ways are considered appropriate and the choice is left up to the individual. Amongst good friends it is common to share money, but not in casual friendships.

Friendships: In Bahrain, the meaning of friendship differs from one individual to another. Amongst good friends it is common and normal to share money. Having friends of the opposite sex is not acceptable for most Bahraini people.

Communication Styles: There are a variety of communication styles across Bahrain. Personal space and direct versus indirect communication varies across Bahraini culture.


Eye Contact: As a sign of respect, children do not tend to make direct eye contact with adults. Instead, they look towards the ground when they are spoken to by adults.



Manama



Population
1,702,000



Square Miles
295.37



Currency
Bahraini Dinar



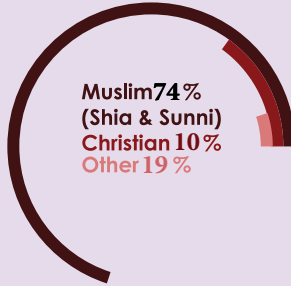
Literacy rate
46.6%



Literacy rate
96.9%



Bahraini 37 %
South Asian 34 %
Other 29 %



Muslim 74 %
(Shia & Sunni)
Christian 10 %
Other 19 %

School



Classes: In Bahrain, students are primarily evaluated on homework, quizzes, community service and midterm and final exams. Class participation does not contribute to a student's grade in the public school system. However, it does in the private school system. In Bahrain, some private schools are co-ed while others are not, and boys and girls are seated apart. In Bahrain, public and Arabic private students remain in the same classroom and teachers rotate to the different rooms. In non-Arabic private schools, students usually take each subject in a different classroom. Students in Bahraini public schools must study six main subjects: Mathematics, Sciences, Social Studies, Islamic Religion, and Arabic and English languages. Both public and private school students are allowed electives.

School Relationships: Students in Bahrain usually use the title "Mr." or "Ms.," with the teacher's first name. Their relationship is friendly, but still formal.

Extracurricular Activities: There are no clubs in public schools in Bahrain. Most parents in Bahrain are not involved in their children's extracurricular activities.

School Rules and Attire: Cell phones are not allowed in class, and phones should be turned off. Schools in Bahrain do have a dress code, but not necessarily uniforms. "Zero tolerance" policies regarding fighting are applied in most Bahraini schools.

Returning from Exchange: Some students from Bahrain do repeat the year after their return from the YES Program. It mainly depends on the Ministry of Education's final decision. However, students from public schools may find it hard upon returning to Bahrain to study their main subjects in Arabic as they used to do before their exchange year in the U.S.

Food and Culture



Religion: Most families encourage their children to attend religious services. Usually boys go to the mosque with their fathers every Friday for the congregational prayer.

Holidays: During Ramadan, students fast from dawn until sunset. Eid is a religious and family event. Parents give money to their children as a gift during Eid. Recognized holidays include Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha along with national holidays. Some of these observances are the same as the U.S. holidays, such as Labor Day, Independence Day, etc.

Guest Culture: People in Bahrain will often offer guests food or drink, but it is not considered rude for a guest to politely decline. People in Bahrain are very hospitable, and offering food to guests is a sign to welcome guests at their homes. This is also a sign to show their love and gratitude towards the guests.

Lunch and Diets: People in Bahrain eat "Halal" meat, and some people follow a vegetarian diet. The main meal in Bahrain is lunch, which is when the family gathers; lunch takes place around 2:00 or 3:00 PM. Portions are usually large in restaurants like in the U.S., and it is common for Bahrainis to ask the restaurant to wrap the uneaten food to take it back home. Teenagers in Bahrain either get lunch from home prepared by their mother or they buy food from school with lunch money given to them by their parents.

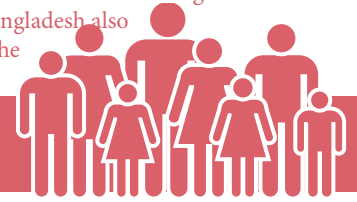
Personal Hygiene



Bahraini teenagers generally take a quick (5-15 minute) shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. In Bahrain, everyone has their own towel, either one or two, to use in the bathroom. Bahraini teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean but not dry after using them. Towels are hung up and hygiene products are put away. It is generally thought to be unclean in Bahrain to wear the same clothes two days in a row. In Bahrain, most teenagers do not change clothes upon entering the house.

Bangladesh

Located in the South-East region of Asia, Bangladesh is bordered by India on the west, north, and east. The Bay of Bengal marks Bangladesh's southern border, and from archaeological discoveries, human habitation in the Bay of Bengal began 20,000 years ago, and remnants of the Copper Age settlements date back 4,000 years. After various invasions by empires, Bangladesh became a sovereign state on December 16, 1971, when it achieved its independence from Pakistan. Bangladesh also non-violently and successfully protested against Pakistan for the right to speak in their native language, Bangla, in 1952.



Family Life

In Bangladesh, most households consist of parents or a parent, and their children. Rarely do grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins live in the same house even if they live in the same town. However, there are some joint families; and sometimes grandparents move in with

the family as they age, but this custom is changing and is becoming less common. Families typically eat together, but it is not unusual to eat apart as schedules demand. Students are accustomed to making small and simple meals for themselves, however most are not accustomed to making full meals for themselves. Many mothers remain at home and fathers are the only earning member; in some families, both parents work and share responsibilities at home as well. Both parents may expect to be seen as equal authority figures in all household decisions, however the father as the head of the family and has a great influence in all decisions. It is considered respectful to allow family members regular, individual time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends, or to simply relax, but minors are expected to ask permission from elders or parents before socializing outside of the house.

Teen Life: In Bangladesh, children ask for permission before they borrow anything. However, sharing, especially cosmetics, food, and means of transportation, is typical. Many things are considered common though, like food, and can be taken/used without asking.

Responsibilities: Generally, house help is employed at home for cleaning rooms and bathrooms, doing laundry, and various chores. Bangladeshi teenagers are generally not given important responsibilities beyond academic performance. It is very rare for a teenager in Bangladesh to think about his or her own 'pocket money.' Students do not take on employment of any kind and are dependent on their parents for financial support. The financial responsibilities of Bangladeshi teenagers vary depending on the family's income; Therefore, only some Bangladeshi teenagers have budgeting experience, specifically in making decisions about commuting or buying food, but most teenagers do not.

Parental Involvement: Bangladeshi parents often monitor what their children do online in the interest of their children's safety. Parents may limit what sites a child visits online, or how much time the child spends on the internet. Many Bangladeshi parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. If teenagers break rules, parents usually scold them and punish them by taking away their entertainment mediums; such as television, gaming console, mobile and computer usage.

Pets: Few families have pets at home, and any household pets will typically be kept outside.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: Boys and girls may socialize together, but group socializing is preferred. Teenagers in Bangladesh are generally not encouraged to have friends of opposite sex. There are several ways to greet people in Bangladesh. For Muslims, it is usually "Assalamualaikum". For Hindus, it is usually "Namaskar". In addition to these, asking "how are you" and asking about family are also common expressions.

Friendships: Parents do not encourage teenagers to share money with friends or peers. Teenagers in Bangladesh have friends but always maintain a certain distance between each other. Parents are conscious about their child's friends. Usually one seeks someone reliable and trustworthy for a friend. It is important to know your friend's personal likes and dislikes, and to be committed to being available when a friend is in need of emotional support or help.

Communication Styles: Parents prefer to have a direct style of communication with their children. Bangladeshis are reserved and feel shy when it comes to displaying negative emotions towards or among their peers and family.

Eye Contact: Bangladeshi youth do not tend to make eye contact when speaking with elders as it is considered rude

School



Dhaka

Classes: In Bangladesh, students remain in the same classroom and teachers rotate to the different rooms. There are both co-ed and same gender schools in Bangladesh. In co-ed schools, boys and girls may sit next to each other in the same class. Yes, students can choose their own classes, except for basic subjects such as Language (Bangla and English) and Mathematics. In the national curriculum, after grade 8 students choose their own subjects, which are categorized into three groups: Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, higher Mathematics), Commerce (Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, Commerce) and Arts (Social Science, Home Economics, Global Culture and History, Agriculture, Religion). Students remain within these subject categories until they finish high school. For schools using the British Curriculum, students can select subjects with a mixture of Science, Commerce and Arts based on their preference. Students are evaluated based on exams, which are the majority of their grades. Assignments and quizzes make up the rest of the evaluation.

School Relationships: Students have a formal relationship with their teachers and address them by “Sir” or “Miss.”

Extracurricular Activities: Students join clubs and other extracurricular activities through school in Bangladesh. Parents do try to give of their time to support their child’s extracurricular activity.

School Rules and Attire: Cell phones are only to be used in an emergency and with the permission of the school authority. All students wear a uniform to school. Students receive punishments ranging from suspension to expulsion depending upon the severity of their behavior.

Returning from Exchange: Bangladeshi students lose an academic year while they are abroad in the U.S.

Food and Culture



Religion: Religious practice is both an individual and family event, but generally not a community event. Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr in Bangladesh is festive and celebratory.

Holidays: There are many major festivals and Bangladeshis celebrate a variety of national holidays, including Eid, Puja, Christmas, Pahela Baishak (1st day of Bengali New year), and Maghi Purnima. Holidays are celebrated with great festivity amidst family members and friends. Eid-Ul-Azha and Eid-Ul-Fitr are two of the biggest Muslim holidays. Durga Pooja and Diwali are two major Hindu holidays. While on program, students usually miss the feasts (similar to Thanksgiving) and family activities. Students are advised to incorporate the celebration into the U.S. host family and celebrate it with them, instead of missing home.

Food and Culture

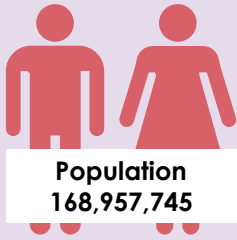
Guest Culture: In Bangladesh, almost all the time, guests are offered food and drink. It is considered rude if the guest does not consume the food offered, even if it is tea. Offering Tea is a common practice. Guests are not expected to partake in any household activities/chores and receive exclusive treatment.

Lunch and Diets: There are no specific dietary restrictions unless someone is vegetarian. For Muslims, pork is restricted, and for Hindus, beef is restricted. The main differences from common American habits are that meals in Bangladesh usually include rice as a main ingredient, and the food is spicy. In Bangladesh, portions are also large, and having leftovers is a common practice. When a student usually takes lunch to school, someone from the household typically prepares it for them. Most students however, prefer lunch money from home to buy lunch from the school cafeteria. Students are accustomed to either arrangement.

Personal Hygiene



Generally, a Bangladeshi teenager will take one 10-15 minute shower once a day. In Bangladesh, each person usually has one towel for their individual use. In urban areas of Bangladesh, it is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row. However, in more rural areas, it is more dependent on the person’s ability to purchase clothes and he or she may rely on cologne and wash their clothes with less frequency.



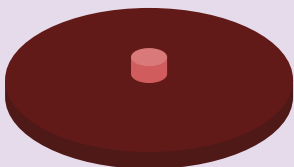
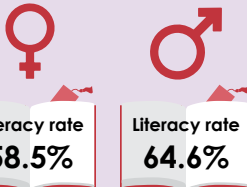
Population
168,957,745



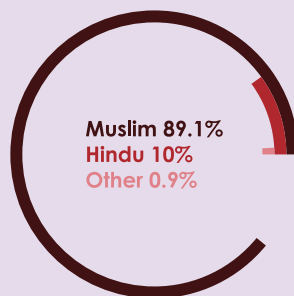
Square Miles
56,977



Currency
Bangladeshi Taka



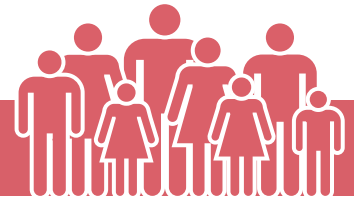
Bengali 98%
Other 2%
(includes tribal groups and non-Bengali Muslims)





Bosnia and Herzegovina

Located within the Balkan Peninsula, the larger area of Bosnia inhabits the northern and central parts of the region, while Herzegovina occupies the south and southwest. These geographical regions do not correspond with the two current, autonomous political entities: Serb-led Republika Srpska, and the Bosniak-Croat Federation. Bosnia has a very rich and varied wildlife, as it is home to Europe's last primeval forest, Perućica. The weather is most like that of the southern Austrian highlands—generally mild, though apt to be bitterly cold in winter.



Family Life

Teen Life: Elders are respected in Bosnian culture and are generally considered as extremely important members of the family. Bosnian culture generally maintains extended family groups, which means that grandparents may live with their adult children and care for the grandchildren while the parents are at work. It is not uncommon for families to live in the same building or neighborhood as their relatives. Bosnian teens are often more formal than is the case in the United States in their interactions with their parents and grandparents.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina often both of the parents are professionals and are financially responsible for the family. However, some traditional values remain where outside of working, mothers are also responsible for taking care of the housework, while the father is not. In Bosnian families, both parents may be seen as equal authority figures in household decisions, although this depends upon an individual family; sometimes in more rural areas, men are still seen as heads of the family. Generally, women tend to be more responsible for household tasks like food shopping, household chores, and care of the children, particularly in the rural areas.

Most families do attempt to have at least one meal per day as a family, but may not be able to because of varied schedules. Most activities are pursued together as a family, and some individual time is considered fine, but spending too much time alone in one's room can lead the family to think that something is wrong.

Teen Life: Bosnian teenagers, particularly in their younger years, tend to rely a lot on their parents when it comes to decision making regarding school, after-school activities, college plans, etc.

Responsibilities: Generally speaking, mothers do most of the household chores in a typical Bosnian home. However, daughters (and less frequently, sons) are expected to help with some chores like vacuuming and dusting. Having a housekeeper is a rare occurrence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, unless the family is particularly wealthy, as Bosnian women tend to take pride in how clean and neat they keep their homes.

Siblings in Bosnia and Herzegovina tend to share clothing, accessories, books and electronics. They typically don't ask first before using these items unless they think the other sibling might need it.

Having a part-time job as a teenager in Bosnia and Herzegovina is very rare. Most teenagers get small allowances from their parents and/or grandparents. Bosnian teenagers are not expected to have any budgetary responsibilities, as their parents tend to pay for their clothing, footwear, school supplies, etc. budgeting experience and knowledge is limited to what their parents teach them. Teenagers in BiH are expected to do well in school and get good grades. Typically, Bosnian parents would expect their child to be responsible, behave properly, and be respectfully towards others.

Parental Involvement: Some families may have a household rule where there is a limit set on how long internet can be used in the home. Generally, though, most Bosnian teens tend to be more knowledgeable about the usage of internet than their parents, and most families do not have such strict rules. It is also typical for Bosnian teens to illegally download content from the internet, which is not considered to be a concern in Bosnia.

Bosnian parents tend to be involved in helping their child decide in which extracurricular activities students will become involved. Parents also finance these activities, which can be costly, as they are not provided by the students' schools. Parents in Bosnia and Herzegovina go every few months to their child's school for parent-teacher meetings and "open doors" nights. Students' grade reports are given to the parents each semester. Forms of punishment include parents not allowing their children to go out and spend time with friends or taking away pocket money.

Pets: Many Bosnian families do own pets, although these pets (cats and dogs) usually stay outside. Some families do keep pets indoors, as well, but this is not overly common. In the more rural communities, keeping dogs inside can be seen by some people as unclean and unsanitary due to cultural and/or religious reasons.

School



General high school in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is known as "gymnasium", but there are also vocational or technical high schools. Depending on the type of school a student attends, students may or may not pick his or her school subjects.

Classes: An average day in a Bosnian high school typically lasts five to seven hours and teaching is organized in 45 minute blocks. Bosnian students tend to stay in the same classroom all day with the same students, while teachers rotate to teach them different subjects. Bosnian students tend to take 13-15 subjects during each year of high school, and these subjects are obligatory.

Students are assigned regular homework and are given both oral and written exams on regular basis in almost all of their classes. Their grades are then averaged out on a three-month basis when students and their parents receive grade updates. At that point, students also get evaluations regarding their behavior during the school year.

The grading system in Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of a five point scale. "1" is the worst possible grade, while "5" is the best. Students enrolled in one of the three schools in the country that offer the International Baccalaureate program follow the standard IB grade scale.

School Relationships: Student-teacher relationships in Bosnia and Herzegovina are more formal than is the case in the U.S. For example, when the teacher enters the classroom, students may be required to stand up as a sign of respect for the teacher. Students also address the teacher formally (Mr./Mrs./Ms. or Prof.), and not by their first name or a nickname. Boys and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina attend classes and sit together in high schools.

In Madrasas, which are specialized high schools where the syllabus is designed by the Riyasat of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and approved by the Ministry of Education of BiH, boys and girls attend separate classes.

Extracurricular Activities: While some private schools do offer after-school activities for students, most public high schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not. However, some special clubs or "sections" can be found in few schools such as an English club, theater groups, debate, Model UN etc. Most students, if they are interested in playing music or sports, go to private institutions or join sport teams in their neighborhoods, sport clubs, or play sports with friends in neighborhood parks and stadiums.

School Rules and Attire: "Zero Tolerance" policies do not exist in Bosnian high schools. Students are allowed to carry cell phones with them to school but are discouraged or not allowed to use them during class. Enforcement of this particular rule depends on an individual teacher and school.

If a student gets in a fight, they would likely not be suspended from school, unless the fight is particularly violent, in which case the student would likely be legally prosecuted. Students caught fighting are typically sent to the principal's or pedagogue's office, their parents are called to the school, and their behavior evaluation at the end of the year is given a "poor/low" grade.

Sarajevo

In public high schools, students typically do not wear school uniforms. There are often dress codes, though, and girls are not allowed to wear short shorts, tube tops or miniskirts. Boys can wear shorts that are below their knees. Generally, teenagers in Bosnia dress similarly to teenagers in the United States. In private schools, students do wear uniforms.

Returning from Exchange: Once YES students return to Bosnia and Herzegovina, they need to take their notarized transcripts to the appropriate Ministry of Education to receive a certification of equivalence. This should make their year in the U.S. on the YES program count towards the student's institutional requirements with no need for them to repeat their year at home. Students who attend vocational schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina may need to catch up on some of the subjects once they return to BiH.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: Bosnian teenagers tend to socialize in groups, and are very social overall because people in Bosnia tend to be generally social and friendly. Bosnian teenagers also freely socialize with friends of the opposite sex.

Friendships: Bosnian teenagers typically make friends at school or after-school activities. However, the most meaningful and lengthy friendships tend to be made with peers from a student's neighborhood or from elementary school. It is also usual for Bosnian teenagers to be closest with their own siblings and cousins. Friendship in Bosnia tends to be seen as a very close relationship with a select few people that lasts for a lifetime. Bosnians take pride in having close friends, and having strong friendships is an important part of a typical Bosnian teenager's life.

Communication Styles: Bosnian teenagers are very direct when it comes to communicating certain subjects, including day-to-day events, school, politics, religion, interests etc. However, they may also be very timid when it comes to their personal relationships.

In Bosnia, teenagers are very direct when showing their feelings. However, showing negative emotions can be viewed as somewhat culturally inappropriate, particularly in public or in front of people one does not know well.

Eye Contact: Maintaining eye contact is a sign of respect in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Cultural Norms: The concept of personal space is not as important in Bosnian culture as it is in the U.S. People in Bosnia and Herzegovina are very friendly, and tend to show emotions physically (such as hugging or friendly touching), which could be considered an invasion of personal space in the US.

Food and Culture



Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the most diverse countries in former Yugoslavia, and is made up of three major ethnic groups: Bosniak Muslims, Croat Catholics and Orthodox Serbs, as well as a number of minorities. Bosnian Muslims do not consume pork, or pork-by products.

Bosnian cuisine is very rich and is made up of a lot meat, cheese, butter, stewed vegetables and bread. Bosnians also drink a lot of coffee, which is a cultural and frequently a social affair. Fast food is currently not very as popular in Bosnia as it is in the U.S. However, the portions served in Bosnia are often very large.

Guest Culture: Bosnians invite only trusted, close friends or neighbors into their home. Being invited to someone's home in Bosnia is considered an honor, and guests are almost always served with food and drinks. Declining to eat or drink may be considered rude by the hosts. Foreigners that are invited into a Bosnian's home may feel as if they are being "pushed" into eating and drinking by their Bosnian hosts.

Lunch and Diets: Students in Bosnia tend to eat more frequently at home than students in the US; Bosnian teens will eat breakfast before going to school, or they might grab something to eat along the way in one of the local bakeries that are found on almost every street corner. Lunch and dinner are eaten at home, and are hot meals. These meals are typically eaten as a family.

Religion: Religious beliefs in Bosnia are dependent on each family. Some families in Bosnia are religious and go to either a mosque or a church, while others are very secular. Some families are a mix of the two, and parents may each believe a different religion. As in the U.S., religious centers in Bosnia are also considered community centers.

In Bosnia, gifts are given out during major holidays, although these gifts are often simple and not overly expensive or extravagant. Birthdays are marked by gifting each other.

Holidays: Some important holidays in Bosnia and Herzegovina include the Muslim holiday Ramadan, which includes fasting from dawn to sunset. Families usually invite guests to eat together in the evenings when they break their fast during Ramadan. Families then celebrate Eid al-Fitr after 30 days of fasting.

A second major Muslim holiday is Eid al-Adha, which occurs about two months after the first Eid and lasts for three days. This holiday starts with prayers and families visit cemeteries of their relatives and place flowers on the gravesites. Families then gather for meals and spend time together.

Many non-Muslim Bosnians celebrate Christmas on December 25 or the Serb Orthodox Christmas, which occurs on January 7th. Serbs also celebrate a separate new year in mid-January.

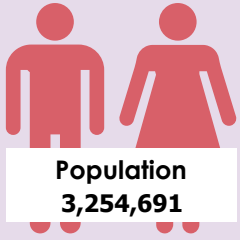
Personal Hygiene



Cleanliness and hygiene generally play a vital role in Bosnian culture. For example, pious Muslims pray five times per day, and prior to each prayer they must wash themselves according to the ritual ablution. However, sometimes due to belief that cold weather may cause one to become sick, parents discourage their kids to take showers in the mornings or go outside without drying their hair, because they believe that it may cause students to become ill or get headaches.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row, although is not uncommon to wear one's jeans two days in a row if they are visibly not dirty.

If Bosnian students are expected to take care of their own clothes, they will need to be taught how to do their own laundry as mothers in Bosnia usually do laundry for the entire family. Also, washing machines in Bosnia are different than those found in the US.



Population
3,254,691



Square Miles
31,812

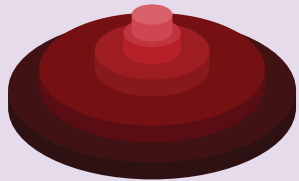


Currency
Bosnian
Convertible Marka

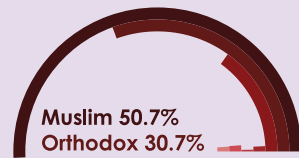


Literacy rate
97.5%

Literacy rate
99.5%



Bosniak 50.1%
Serb 30.8%
Croat 15.4%
Other 2.7%
Not Declared 1%

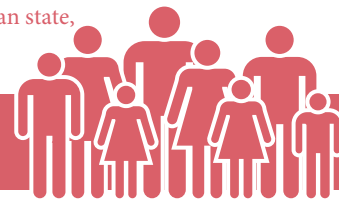


Muslim 50.7%
Orthodox 30.7%
Roman Catholic 15.2%
Atheist 0.8%
Agnostic 0.3%
Other 1.2%
Undeclared 1.1%



Bulgaria

Bulgaria occupies the eastern portion of the Balkan Peninsula. Founded in the 7th century, Bulgaria is one of the oldest states on the European continent. It is intersected by historically important routes from the north and east to the Mediterranean and from the west to the Middle East. Before the creation of the Bulgarian state, the empires of ancient Rome, Greece, and Byzantium were strong presences, and people and goods traveled the land with frequency.



Family Life

Family composition in Bulgaria can be varied but is generally similar to families in U.S. Typically, only the parents and children live in the same household. In some cases, often in rural areas, the grandparent(s) are part of the household, as well. In Bulgaria, it is common for both parents to be professionals, and for both to be financially responsible for the family. Both parents expect to be viewed as equal authority figures in all household decisions. Meals in Bulgaria may be eaten all together as a family, or separately depending on family members' schedules.

Among siblings, possessions of an individual child are treated as their own, and are not understood to be the shared property of siblings; this includes clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first.

Teen Life: In Bulgaria, teenage dependence on parental advice is typically individual and family-specific. Some parents want to play bigger roles in the children's lives, and while others may leave decisions up to their child, while still expressing their opinion.

Teenagers in Bulgaria get allowances from their parents. There are not many options for part-time work for students, except for very rare summer jobs. The availability of this type of work depends on the family and the place where the teenager lives (e.g. if there are any options in their town). Typically, there is a limited focus on teaching teenagers monetary budgeting.

Responsibilities: The types of chores given to high school-aged children in Bulgaria are different depending on each family. In general, there are no chores divided between genders. Teenagers are mostly responsible for taking care of their room. It would be very unusual to have a housekeeper in a Bulgarian home.

Cooking responsibilities are not so much gender related as family specific. Cooking as a hobby is becoming trendy among young people in Bulgaria.

Parental Involvement: To monitor students' academic behavior, schools organize parents meetings. Recently, some schools in Bulgaria have introduced electronic diaries, and parents can check their child's school absences, their grades, etc. However, traditionally Bulgarian parents are rarely involved in their student's extra-curricular activities but there is a tendency in the last years that parents get more involved in this especially if it is connected with future career of the child.

Parents in Bulgaria may not limit how much time the child spends on the internet, but likely do not monitor what their child is doing online. It is very common that Bulgarian teenagers go out during the weekend until very late (2 AM), it is considered cultural tradition and for many parents it might be challenging to introduce a curfew. The most common punishments when the teenagers break the rules consist of: decreasing their pocket money, reducing or prohibiting their time spent on the computer or their smart phones, and limiting their time spent outside for fun or with friends.

Pets: Having pets in Bulgaria is very similar to the U.S. Cats and dogs are most common, but people also keep fish, canary birds, small parrots, and hamsters.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: It is perfectly acceptable for Bulgarian teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them one-on-one.

Teenagers in Bulgaria sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one; both are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual.

Friendships: Bulgarian teenagers often think of peers with whom they are only casually associated as friends, much like teens in the U.S. They don't reserve the term "friend" for someone who is very close, although this can change if the student is from a smaller community.

Students in Bulgaria share expenses when they are out together and don't loan money to each other often. It is very typical for friends to go out for coffee, especially in small towns/villages. Some Bulgarian boys may pay for dates when they go out with a girlfriend.

Friendships are usually made at school or at clubs and extracurricular activities. Neighbors tend to be close friends, since it is likely they have known each other since kindergarten.

Communication Styles: Bulgarians communicate directly. Most teenagers in Bulgaria feel comfortable communicating directly with their parents, and they typically will express emotions, even negative ones, quite freely amongst their peers and family.

Physical space when communicating with another person is not as obvious in Bulgaria as it is in America. This can vary between individuals, depending on the teenager and his/her family. In general, physical space in Bulgaria is much closer than in the U.S. Bulgarians may be very tactile- hugging or kissing is a common way of greeting. For instance, Bulgarian students have no problem giving a friend a big hug in the middle of a school hallway.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is not as important in Bulgarian culture as in other YES countries. However, children are often told by parents or teachers "Look at me", when being reprimanded or when discussing a serious issue. This is to show that a student is paying attention, and is also because it's considered harder to tell a lie when one is looking another straight in the eye.

Cultural Norms: Teenagers in Bulgaria show respect to people who they think deserve respect regardless their age. In general, interactions with elder family members and members of the community are much more informal, and adults are typically addressed by their first name. In Bulgaria, punctuality is valued, but not as respected as it is in the U.S. Being late is not considered an issue, and arriving up to 15 minutes late is excusable.

School



The academic year in Bulgaria starts on September 15th and finishes on June 30th, and is divided into two terms. The bigger schools with many students are usually organized into two shifts – one starts at 7:30 A.M. and finishes around 1:00 P.M., and the second shift starts at 1:30 P.M. and goes until 6:30 P.M. Smaller schools, and those in towns and villages, usually have only the first shift. Schools in Bulgaria are not segregated by gender, and boys and girls attend the same class.

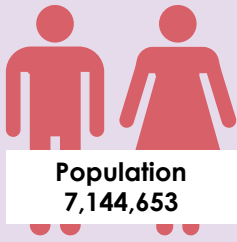
Classes

Classes in Bulgaria are 40 minutes long, with 10 minutes break in between. There is one "big break" of 20 minutes in the middle of the shift.

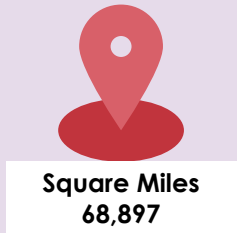
Classes consist of 20-25 students who typically stay in the same group for all of their subjects. However, some classes, like electives that take place in addition to the standard number of classes, may have new groups with some students from the same grade.



Sofia



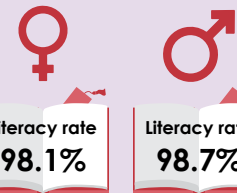
Population
7,144,653



Square Miles
68,897

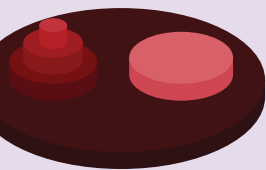


Currency
Bulgarian Lev



Literacy rate
98.1%

Literacy rate
98.7%



Bulgarian 76.9%
Turkish 8%
Roma 4.4%
Other 0.7%
Unknown 10%



Eastern Orthodox 59.4%
Muslim 7.8%
Other 1.7%
None 3.7%
Unspecified 27.4%

Classroom organization in Bulgaria varies from school to school. In some schools, students have an assigned classroom. In other schools, there are “subject” rooms and students move to different rooms based on the subject.

Students in Bulgaria are evaluated in different ways depending on their class and teacher. However, in general, the most common assignments would be: homework, oral and/or written exams, participation in class, and sometimes presentations (individual or group). Written assignments are regularly given at the begging of the academic year, to check the student’s level from the previous year; there may also be a mid-term or an end-of-term assessment. Some schools in Bulgaria follow a certain number of written and oral evaluations per term.

It is very popular for students to participate in competitions and “Olympiads” in various subjects (including Math, Languages, Literature, Physics, Biology, Philosophy, etc.) These competitions are organized on several levels: school, regional, national. The top students in those competitions get an excellent mark if they score well on a regional or national competition. Academic grading in Bulgaria commonly takes on the form of five numerical grades from 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, where “2” is failing grade and “6” is best possible grade. Roughly, the Bulgarian grade system can be equated to the American one as the following: 6=A, 5=B, 4=C, 3=D, and 2=F.

For examinations and tests in Bulgaria, exact grading is often used, and is represented by two positions after the decimal point. Every passing grade at or above the .50 mark is prefixed with the term of the higher grade.

School Relationships

Student – teacher relationships in Bulgaria are quite formal. Bulgarian students are expected to call their teacher by their family name (Mrs./Mr.). Students would also speak to teachers using the “polite form” that exists in their language. It is very rare to have students in Bulgaria address their teachers (or adults, in general) by their first name.

Extracurricular Activities

Some Bulgarian schools are more active and offer activities to their students using various European Union funded programs. If a student’s school offers fewer activities and the student lives in a city or bigger town, students may look for organizations that offer similar activities, but students may have to pay a fee. If the student comes from a small town, they may have limited options.

School Rules and Attire

Rules in Bulgarian schools are very similar to American schools, with the same challenges present in both school systems. Students must be present at school and must be on time for classes. If not, students will receive an “unexcused absence” from class; having 30 “unexcused absences” will cause a student to be expelled from school. If a student is late up to 15 minutes, they will get a “third” of an unexcused absence. If a Bulgarian student feels sick, he or she must get a note from a doctor. Students must have their parents submit notes to the school in order for other absences to be excused.

Students in Bulgaria are generally not supposed to have their cell phones in class, but some teachers find it challenging to enforce this rule (trying to collect them at the beginning of each class and to give back after the class).

School uniforms used to exist in all Bulgaria, but this rule was abolished some time ago. Recently, schools have started reintroducing school uniforms, primarily in very good schools, mainly as a sign of “belonging” to that school. The uniforms differ from school to school, and have a slight variation in the male/female uniforms. The items and colors are usually chosen by the students and the school board.

Returning from Exchange

Upon returning to Bulgaria after their YES year, students face regulations from the Ministry of Education for all students who have spent an academic year abroad. Although some of classes that students may study in the U.S. are accepted by the Ministry of Education, most of Bulgarian students will still have to sit for exams for most of the subjects their peers studied while they were in the U.S. The only option outside of studying for and taking these exams is to choose to continue studying with the students from a lower class. Some Bulgarian YES students choose to repeat a grade in order to have higher grades overall but this happened rather rarely in the past.

Food and Culture



Dietary restrictions in Bulgaria, other than food allergies or medical conditions, are not very common, including vegetarianism. Dietary restrictions based on religious practices are also uncommon.

Guest Culture

If invited to the Bulgarian home, which would only happen if one was considered a trusted and close friend, a guest would be expected to try the food and drinks offered by the host. Foreigners, may feel they are being “pushed” to eat and drink. After trying the food and drink, it is considered polite to decline offers as long as it is doing in a respectful manner. It is considered respectful and positive to bring something when invited to Bulgarian home.

Lunch and Diets

In Bulgaria, lunch at home is usually a hot meal, but cold sandwiches are becoming more popular for lunch eaten outside of the home. At school, Bulgarian students either bring food from home or buy lunch from cafeterias around the schools.

Religion: In general, people in Bulgaria are not very religious. Religious services are not considered a family affair, as they are in other countries. Unlike the U.S., places of worship in Bulgaria are not automatically community gathering places.

Attendance at religious services is more popular in areas with larger Muslim populations, and the vast majority of Bulgarians are quite secular and do not attend religious services. In youth culture, doctrinal religiosity is not considered popular.

Holidays

The majority of Bulgarians are Orthodox Christians, and celebrate the major holidays of Christmas and Easter. These celebrations are family events, and are celebrated similarly to these holidays in the U.S.

There are representatives of other religions in Bulgaria (including Judaism, Islam, and some Catholics and Protestants), and they celebrate some different holidays.

There are several official holidays in the country like Liberation day (March 3); Culture and Literacy Day (May 24); Reunification Day (September 6); and Independence Day (September 22).

Personal Hygiene



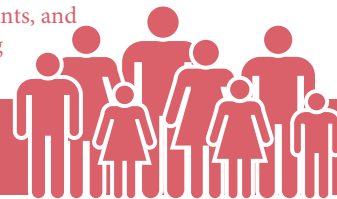
Bathing every day is common practice in Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, bathrooms can be fully tiled, with a drain set in the floor. A student from Bulgaria may have very little experience using a dry bathroom, and may need some guidance upon arrival to learn that shower curtains belong inside the tub and that bathmats are used to keep the rest of the floor dry after stepping out of the shower.

In Bulgaria, some families may have washers and dryers as in the U.S., but in general, students will not be accustomed to doing their own laundry and will need to be taught how to use these machines. Bulgarian teens will usually wear clothes once before they need to be washed.



Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon is located in Central and West Africa between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. Cameroon is slightly larger than California, and is sometimes described as "Africa in miniature" because it contains all major climates and vegetation of the African continent: mountains, deserts, rain forests, savanna grasslands, and the ocean coastland. Home to seven national parks – the most famous has lions, giraffes, elephants, and antelopes. In 1960, Cameroon gained its independence becoming the second of France's colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa to do so.



Family Life

In Cameroon, extended families including parents, children, grandparents, and cousins live together. However, recently, most young couples with enough financial means prefer to live alone with their children. Meals are eaten together as a family or separately depending on each family's schedules. While people will take individual time for themselves, adults are usually involved in all aspects of home life.

Both parents can be professionals, but most of the time the husband is more financially responsible in the household. Both parents have equal authority in the household and for their children, however traditionally the father is the head of the family and often times he will make decisions alone. Teenagers are disciplined in different ways by their natural parents when they break a household rule. For example, some parents will reduce teenager's monthly pocket allowance, assign extra homework, or have a discussion about the issue and rule breaking with the teenager.

Teen Life: Since most families are large, it is rare to find a child with his or her own room and children typically share a bed. Siblings will share some items like clothes, jewelry, or magazines. Respect, especially for the elders, is part of Cameroonian culture. Teenagers may interact freely with all family members but they still respect the elders. Teenagers in Cameroon are not very independent and are mostly dependent on their parents.

Responsibilities: Teenagers in Cameroon are expected to take responsibility for their personal hygiene and academic life, and to also participate in the care of the younger children. In Cameroon, families with high incomes give weekly or monthly pocket allowance to their children. Others try to earn money by doing small jobs during the weekends and holidays. Teenagers typically must budget for buying clothes, magazines, and other small personal items.

In Cameroon, most wealthy households have housekeepers and nannies. In poorer families, the children do most of the household chores. In Cameroon, the mother mostly cooks for everyone and sometimes girls will help. Males rarely participate in the cooking. Families with high incomes provide a weekly or monthly pocket allowance to their children. Some teenagers try to earn money by doing small jobs during the weekends and holidays. Teenagers typically must budget their earnings or allowances to buy clothes, magazines, and other small personal items.

Parental Involvement: The internet is not available everywhere in Cameroon and very few families have internet at home. Students are not accustomed to controlled access or parental monitoring of internet access. In Cameroon, parents are typically not in contact with their children's schools; rather, they wait for children's report cards which arrive at the end of each term.

Pets: In Cameroon, most people have dogs to guard the house and the cat is meant for catching mice. They are not treated like family members and are not typically let inside.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: In Cameroon, youth socialize in groups with their peers. At school, teens make friends with the opposite sex. However, typically, parents don't like to see their children have friends of the opposite sex.

Friendships: Cameroonian teenagers make their friends through common activities and interests. They also make friends with other children of the neighborhood. Cameroonian teenagers think of peers with whom they are casually associated as friends. A teenager may have as many friends as possible. Teenagers in Cameroon sometimes share money with close friends by buying food and eating together.

Communication Styles: In traditional Cameroonian families, there is a gap, or personal space, between the adults and the teenagers. Children cannot freely discuss sensitive topics such as sex. The cultural communication norms for showing negative emotions include: frowning, maintaining silence, dragging ones feet on the floor, crying and shouting. Directly communicating negative emotions is not common and is typically shown through body language.

Eye Contact: In Cameroon, teenagers are not supposed to make eye contact with adults, especially when the adult is angry, as this may be considered a sign of disrespect and rebellion. Youth make eye contact with peers though not all the time with teachers or other elderly persons.

Yaoundé

School



Classes: In Cameroon, students are evaluated mainly on sequential written exams; class participation may count in some instances. All students in a single grade study the same subjects. Students remain in one classroom and teachers rotate between classrooms. Boys and girls study in the same classroom and are not seated separately. Students cannot choose their own classes as they are assigned based on exam results and grades from the previous year.

School Relationships: Cameroonian teenagers have both a friendly and formal relationship with their teachers and can call them by sir/madam. However, it is preferred that students have a formal relationship with the teachers.

Extracurricular Activities: There are few clubs in Cameroonian schools. Extracurricular activities are limited and few clubs exist at school. During the school year there is a week set aside for students to show their talents and abilities in all fields, called "Youth Week." Most parents are not actively involved in their student's extracurricular activities since they don't consider it to be important. However, some encourage their children in activities like music, drawing, and soccer.

School Rules and Attire: The use of cell phones in class is forbidden. All schools, public and private, have a uniform for students. School by-laws are always very strict with regards to bullying and sexual harassment.

Returning from Exchange: Students do/do not repeat the year after their return.

Food and Culture



Religion: Religion is a family event for some, but for others it is an individual event. In Cameroon, Ramadan is observed by fasting, prayers, and abstinence from sex and alcohol. There is fasting that occurs during other Muslim holidays as well.

Holidays: In Cameroon, there are public holidays as well as academic holidays. The two major public holidays are on the 11th of February and 20th of May. The 11th of February is a day set aside for youth, and the 20th of May is the reunification day when southern and eastern Cameroon became united. The academic holidays, wherein students are excused from school, include Christmas, Easter, and summer break.

Guest Culture

Guests are always offered food or drink. It is very rude and not accepted for a guest to refuse food. It is better to have a taste than to completely refuse the food.

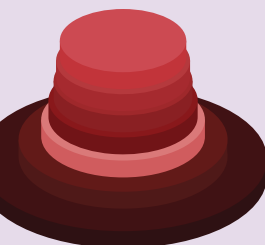
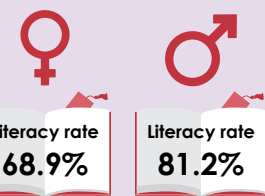
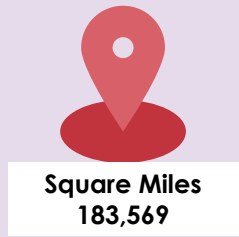
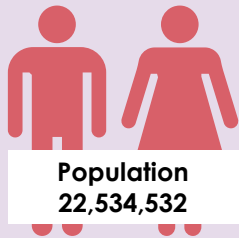
Lunch and Diets: Eating together as a family, especially during dinner as is common in the U.S., is rare in most homes in Cameroon. Everyone eats anytime, anywhere, alone or with the family if they are at home. Dinner is generally around 8pm. In Cameroon, portions are mostly large when cooked at home, and at home, it is ok to keep the food as leftovers. In regards to restaurants, servings are relatively large but it is considered weird to request the restaurant for a to-go box. Teenagers in Cameroon typically go to school with money given to them from their parents to buy lunch.

Personal Hygiene

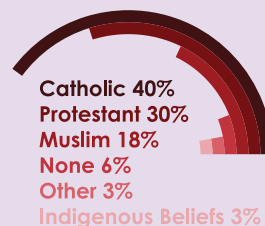


Most of the time, Cameroonian teens bathe twice a day, once in the morning and again in the evening before going to bed. Cameroonian teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them with towels hung up and hygiene products put away. Teenagers usually use one towel to dry their body and face.

In Cameroon, it is common to see people wearing the same clothes two days in a row and they believe that too much washing ruins the clothes. Typically clothes are washed by hand, and most students have never used a washer or dryer. Cameroonian teenagers change their school uniforms upon entering the house.



Cameroon
Highlanders 31%
Equatorial Bantu 19%
Kirdi 11%
Fulani 10%
Northwestern Bantu 8%
Eastern Nigrific 7%
Other African 13%





Egypt

Egypt is located in north-eastern Africa and includes the Sinai Peninsula, the only land bridge between Africa and Asia. Most of Egypt's population inhabits the banks of the Nile River. Egypt is famous for its ancient civilization and some of the world's most stunning ancient monuments, including the Giza Pyramids, Karnak Temple and the Valley of the Kings. Egypt's history is one of the richest, oldest and most varied in the world. Throughout its history, Egypt has been exposed to many great civilizations and many cultures.



Family Life

In Egypt, grandparents may live in the home with the parents and children, and in many cases, extended families live in one building, but separate apartments. In Egypt, the main meal is lunch, not dinner. Meals may be eaten together or separately, but on weekends or holidays most families gather for a meal, often including the extended family. It is common in Egypt for both parents to work; mothers give extra care to the kids. Fathers are the authority figures, especially when it comes to major decisions and they are treated formally and with respect. Mothers are responsible for household and everyday matters and are equally respected, but may be spoken to more informally.

It is common in Egypt for family members to have their own interests, but not keep to themselves for a long time as that behavior could be thought of as inconsiderate. Personal space is not a common concept for Egyptians in general, especially within the family. Family members and close friends are expected to know nearly everything about each other, even very personal information. Also, Egyptians do not keep a distance while talking to someone; the distance between two people talking together is normally tight, especially if they are of the same gender.

Teen Life: Siblings share almost everything in Egypt, like clothes, mobile phones, and toiletries, and they do not necessarily ask for permission. In the U.S., Egyptian students may unintentionally invade the privacy or individual time of their host family based on the assumption that everything in the home is communal. Teenagers in Egypt usually share their plans with their parents and take their parents' opinion into account when making decisions. Generally, Egyptian teens are not very independent and they rely on their parents in most aspects of life. Students may initially seek guidance from their host family when planning their schedules and making daily decisions.

Responsibilities: The responsibility given to a teenager differs from one family to the other. In Egypt, students do not work and parents are responsible for paying for their children's clothes and personal items, as well as for extracurricular activities or hobbies. Many families in Egypt hire help, at least for cleaning. Gender differences play a role in household chores in Egypt. Women and girls take care of the household while men and boys normally take care of the errands outside the house. Most teenagers, regardless of their gender, are generally responsible for tidying up their room and taking care of their personal things. Parents usually provide either a weekly or monthly allowance to their children for snacks and social activities. Teenagers are generally tasked with managing their personal expenses according to their allowance.

Parental Involvement: Parents supervise younger children's internet use, limiting the time spent on the internet, but with a lot of flexibility. Egyptian students may find it difficult to limit their use of the internet in the U.S. Many Egyptian parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. When teens break rules, parents generally talk through the situation first to work things out, and let their child understand right versus wrong or what could have done differently. If the situation is repeated, parents may take disciplinary actions which may include being grounded or having mobile phone privileges taken away for a short period of time.

Pets: Pets are not common in Egypt and few families have cats or birds. Most Muslims do not like having dogs in the place of prayer and animals are generally not allowed in the house.



Personal Interactions

In Egypt, greeting someone you see every day is expected. Girls kiss cheeks, boys shake hands or kiss cheeks. Punctuality is not very important in Egypt. It is acceptable to be late for a meeting. Meetings generally start 10-15 minutes after the stated start time. Being late is not considered rude; 15-30 minutes late is acceptable and usually people won't apologize for being even 30 minutes late.

Mixed Gender Socializing: It is generally considered socially unacceptable for Egyptian teens to have friends of the opposite sex, especially when it comes to close relationships or one-on-one time. It can be acceptable for boys and girls to gather in large mixed groups.

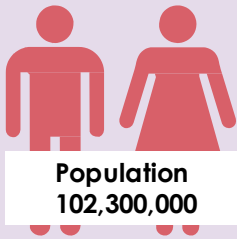
Friendships: Egyptian teenagers sometimes socialize in groups and sometimes one-on-one. Egyptian teens think of peers as friends, the concept of friends is "people you know," and usually teens have from two to five very close friends. Teens make the most of their school or family connections when making friends; they also form friends through common activities. Sometimes Egyptian teenagers share money with each other. Borrowing money from friends is not a sensitive issue and the time allowed to repay the debt can be quite lengthy.

Communication Styles: Egyptians tend to communicate indirectly and are generally not comfortable expressing negative emotions to others. Being direct is considered rude and students tend to express their discomfort in an indirect way. Students may feel offended when people express their negative emotions towards them directly. If it is observed that the student is uncomfortable or is alienating themselves, this might mean that he or she has a problem that they are not talking about.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is not important in Egyptian culture. An Egyptian may or may not make eye contact when speaking with another; either is okay and neither is considered rude.



Cairo



Population
102,300,000



Square Miles
387,048

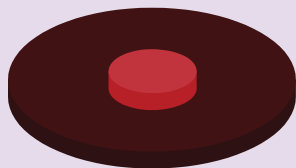


Currency
Egyptian Pound

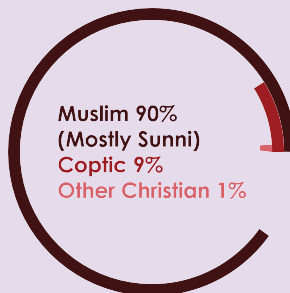


Literacy rate
65.5%

Literacy rate
76.5%



Egyptian 91%
Other 9%



Muslim 90%
(Mostly Sunni)
Coptic 9%
Other Christian 1%

School



Classes: In Egypt, some schools are single-sex and some are co-ed. In co-ed schools, boys sit beside boys, and girls sit beside girls. Students remain in one classroom throughout the day with 35 to 50 students, and teachers rotate classrooms. In the national school system, the number of subjects studied each term varies according by grade level; students cannot choose classes as they are compulsory and assigned by track (literary or scientific). There is also a different daily schedule. Egyptian students are used to long hours of studying and memorization due to national rote learning. Typically, students are evaluated via monthly tests and final exams; class participation only counts for 5% of the final grade and homework is not compulsory.

School Relationships: The relationship between teachers and students is formal in Egypt. Upon the teacher's entrance to the classroom, the students stand up and greet him or her. A student may only call his or her teacher by a title followed by the first name, for example, Miss Sara.

Extracurricular Activities: Students mostly practice sports or personal hobbies in private sports clubs or specialized institutes outside of school; these are costly and not affordable to all.

School Rules and Attire: Most schools have a zero tolerance policy for cell phone usage in school and against fighting. High schools in Egypt have uniforms and students change out of their uniforms promptly upon returning home.

Returning from Exchange: The year students miss is a case by case situation, but in all cases students are required to return back with a school transcript stamped by the school and documented by the Egyptian consulate.

Food and Culture



Religion: Attending religious services is not seen as a social event for Egyptian Muslims, but much more religious and focused on prayer. It is only during Ramadan and Eid when there are social aspects to Muslim holidays and usually family gatherings take place. For Egyptian Christians, the social aspect of religion is important, especially when going to church on weekends and for holidays.

Usually Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are occasions that are celebrated nationwide, both religiously and socially. Many family gatherings take place and Egyptian teenagers usually see their extended families several times, or get invited for iftar (meal signifying the end of fasting during Ramadan) by friends. Eid and iftar are important for Egyptian teenagers as they are considered the highlights of the year. Schools in Egypt close earlier during Ramadan so students get the chance to take nap after school.

Holidays: Other major holidays in Egypt include Eid al-Adha, it is a four-day holiday where Egyptians have a specific meal/dish and adult family members give teenagers and children money. Sham El Nessim is an ancient Egyptian holiday celebrating spring when specific dishes are eaten and people color eggs; usually families have contests for who has the most creative egg.

Guest Culture: In Egypt when someone comes to your home to visit it is very important to offer at least something to drink and the visitor should accept and, at a minimum, at least sample the items offered. It is important to offer several times. The guest is not expected to accept the drink or food the first time it is offered.

Lunch and Diets: Each family is different. Some families provide their children with a light meal, which is normally sandwiches upon their departure to school, and most probably this meal is prepared by the mother. Other families provide their children with money to buy something from school, and it will likely be a light meal like sandwiches or some snacks and something to drink. The meat in Egypt is always halal and most families prepare food from scratch, however some families eat packaged food and meals.

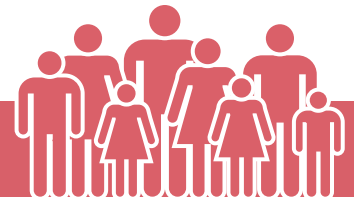
Personal Hygiene



In Egypt, boys take showers daily and girls believe that it is not healthy for their hair to wash it daily, so they might take showers every other day. The showers usually last between 15 to 30 minutes. Teenagers in Egypt leave their bathrooms clean, but not necessarily dry. Teens hang up their towels, however they're used to leaving their hygiene products in the bathroom. It is common for Egyptian teenagers to wear the same clothes for two consecutive days or twice without washing them, and it is not considered unclean.

Ghana

Family Life



In cities, both extended family and nuclear family structures exist. In rural areas, there tend to be more extended family systems. Fathers are the primary bread winners in many families. There are situations where both parents are financial contributors and some in which the mothers are financially responsible for the family. Fathers are the main authority figures in Ghanaian households. Traditional gender roles are generally clear-cut between boys and girls in the family. This is more profound in rural and Muslim communities than in urban communities.

Siblings usually eat from the same bowls in the rural communities when they are younger. Family members do not necessarily have to wait for one another before they eat. Eating may not happen at the dining table and is not necessarily important family time. The communal lifestyle

in Ghana does not encompass the concept of personal space and people are not very fussy about it. Ghanaians are not accustomed to the idea of taking individual or private time at home; spending much time to oneself may indicate there is something amiss.

Teen Life: Siblings sometimes share clothing, shoes and electronic gadgets, and it is not always necessary to ask permission. Most items are considered communal property of the family. Parents give teenagers pocket money. Teenagers usually do not work until after university. However, some teenagers are compelled to work by virtue of tough economic circumstances.

Responsibilities: Families that can afford it sometimes have house help for household chores. Children are generally assigned specific chores to do at home. Generally, there are different roles assigned to the two genders. Cooking is mainly done by the females of the family.

Parental Involvement: A very small percent of households have internet access at home. Many students have access to the internet only in public cafes. Students coming from urban settings may have workable internet skills, but those coming from rural areas will have minimal to no knowledge. There is communication between schools and parents, but to a limited extent. Parents monitor Ghanaian teenagers and parents will often dictate their plans for them.

Pets: Pets are not an integral part of the Ghanaian household. Cats may sometimes live in the house but dogs live in kennels or sleep outside on the compound. Most dogs are guard dogs and are not friendly. In the rural areas, dogs are also used as hunters.



Personal Interactions

Greeting someone is a sign of cordiality and harmony, so not greeting a familiar person is a sign of disharmony. Greetings are sometimes expected to spark off some amount of conversation. Being a little late is not considered rude as the general populace in Ghana is not usually on time. Time is generally referred to in the following increments: early morning, mid-morning, early afternoon, late afternoon, evening, early night, etc. Being even 20 minutes late to an appointment is acceptable.

Mixed Gender Socializing: Parents in Ghanaian society are more comfortable with their children socializing with the opposite sex once they are in their twenties. Some male students on program may not know how to interact appropriately with females in the U.S. They may misunderstand the casual interaction between boys and girls in the U.S. It is advised that male Ghanaian students have a trusted male coordinator or host father to guide them as to how to relate to females in America.

Friendships: Ghanaian teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. Teenagers in Ghana make friends from family, neighborhood, and religious or school activities. It is normal for teenagers to give freely without asking to be paid back. In Ghana, when one is invited out, it is expected that the invitee pays the cost.

Communication Styles: Ghanaians use an indirect form of communication, and body language is as important as verbal communication. People in Ghana are expected to discern and read between the lines during communication. Negative emotions are expressed more modestly and with decorum to avoid hurting or offending people and may not be expressed at all if there is fear that hurting someone is unavoidable.

Eye Contact: Amongst the urban upper middle class and above, it is generally okay to make eye contact with elderly people when speaking with them. In rural areas, that same behavior is considered rude and extremely disrespectful. When a student looks away when responding to questions from elders, it is a sign of respect, and not a sign that the student is hiding something or being dishonest.

School



Accra

Classes: In Ghana, boys and girls study together in the same classrooms. Classes will have between 30 and 40 students, and sometimes more. Students study eight subjects throughout the week, which are repeated three to four times a week, and divided by day. The student stays in the same classroom with the same classmates for 80% of the subjects throughout high school. Students are accustomed to being in class with students of the same grade. Most students are enrolled in boarding school in Ghana and live with their peers at school. Students in Ghana cannot select their own classes. Evaluation is primarily based on exams, and before senior year, exams occur every trimester. During senior year, students take a national exam to obtain valid academic certificates. Homework is usually not graded. Students may not be aware of being scored in subjects like Choir and PE for academic purposes in the U.S. since this would be uncommon in Ghana.

School Relationships: In the Ghanaian school system, the teacher is the main focus in the class. Teachers are referred to by their formal names and title. It is common to address the teacher by “Sir” or “Madam.”

Extracurricular Activities: Schools offer extracurricular activities, like sports, drama, science, or environmental clubs, and clubs with social, cultural, and sports undertones. Some Ghanaian parents are actively involved in supporting or helping to arrange their children’s extracurricular activities.

School Rules and Attire: In Ghana, students wear uniforms and they are expected to look formal in them. Cell phones are not allowed in schools in Ghana. The definition of what constitutes violence is relative. Fighting is frowned upon in schools in Ghana and weapons are never allowed at school.

Returning from Exchange: The school year abroad is not counted in their academic progress, and they will have to repeat the year in Ghana.

Food and Culture



Religion: In Ghana, attending religious services is often a family event, and the social aspect of attending the services is being part of the community. This community aspect is often just as important as the religious aspect.

Holidays: Eid al-Fitr is a national holiday in Ghana. The following are also nationally observed holidays: New Year’s Day; Independence Day (March 6); Easter (3 days); May Day (May1); African Unity Day(May 25); Republic Day (July1); Eid al-Fitr; Eid al-Adhs; Farmers’ Day (first Friday of December); Christmas (December 25); and Boxing day (26 Dec).

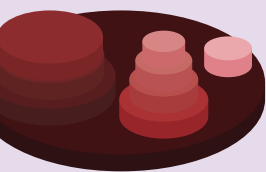
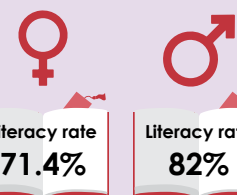
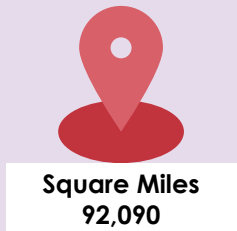
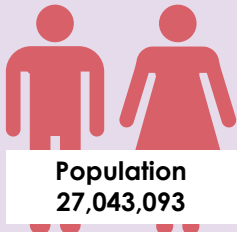
Guest Culture: Guests are treated like celebrities. Ghanaians offer guests food and drinks as many times as possible and guests are given the best of everything and are made to always choose first. Guests are expected to be very polite and accept whatever the host offers even if they do not want what is being offered. Guest can politely decline, but with an explanation. Also guests must always be sensitive to the host’s feelings as respect is paramount.

Lunch and Diets: In Ghana Teenagers are mostly given lunch money to buy hot school lunch, but each family is different. If they are in boarding school, the school provides hot lunch. The meat in Ghana is always halal and most families prepare food from scratch, however some families eat packaged food and meals.

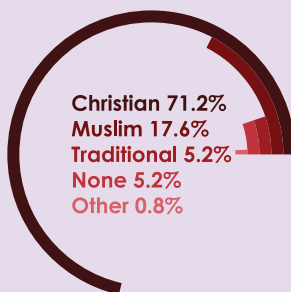
Personal Hygiene



Personal hygiene habits vary from person to person. Ghanaians will typically bathe twice a day. Bathroom styles differ between social and economic groups in Ghana. Students from rural settings will likely not be used to bath tubs or screened off bath areas. Towels are usually aired in the open to dry. Most Ghanaian teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body, hair, and face. It is generally thought to be unclean in Ghana to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear the same clothes twice without washing them. If a student is in a school uniform, church, or party clothes, he or she will change clothes upon returning home.



- Eakan 47.5%
- Mole-Dagbon 16.6%
- Ewe 13.9%
- Ga-Dangme 7.4%
- Gurma 5.7%
- Guan 3.7%
- Grusi 2.5%
- Mande-Busanga 1.1%
- Other 1.6%



Population
27,043,093

Square Miles
92,090

Currency
Ghana Cedi

Literacy rate
71.4%

Literacy rate
82%

Christian 71.2%
Muslim 17.6%
Traditional 5.2%
None 5.2%
Other 0.8%



India

Family Life



Joint family systems are still common in most cities, however there is a nuclear family system in some cities. It is also common for friends or relatives to show up unannounced at each other's homes. It is rare for family members in India to spend time alone or with individual pursuits in the home when other family members are present. While mothers may be home makers or working professionals, fathers are considered financially responsible for the family as the majority of families in India are male-dominated. In nuclear families, both parents may expect to be seen equally as authority figures in all household decisions. In joint families, however, the head of the family makes decisions unilaterally. Initially, students coming to the U.S. may tend to listen to the host mother with casual disregard.

In India, hiring a housekeeper depends on the financial situation of families. Generally, mothers do most of the housework, while students focus on their studies. Most Indian families have dinner together. In joint families, males and children are served first, while women eat their meals last. The mothers of the family do all of the cooking and in rural and small communities, girls are expected to cook as well.

Teen Life: The concept of sharing is very common in India, especially amongst siblings. Siblings and close friends will share clothes, shoes, watches, perfume, and other personal items often without express permission.

Responsibilities: In India, children are supposed to solely focus on their studies. In most families, students rely on their parents for all of their financial needs. Students will likely not be aware of what expenses will need to be covered by their stipend each month. Sons are generally pampered and spoiled, and most are not asked to do house chores. However, in modern, urban families, girls and boys are treated equally and have the same privileges and sometimes even boys are expected to help at home. Boys usually help their parents getting groceries (outdoor chores), whereas girls are expected to help with household chores, such as cleaning and cooking.

Parental Involvement: In India, most parents are not computer savvy and families do not have computers at home. Students will often use the internet while at internet cafes, therefore most parents do not monitor much of their children's internet usage. Parents in India are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress, however in small cities parents take less interest in attending such meetings. Generally, students are very dependent on their parents, especially boys. The student will likely ask for advice and direction from his or her host parents often, and may take that advice as their final decision.

Pets: Pets are not very common in the home in India. However, if a family does have pets, they treat them with love and care.

School



Classes: The Indian education system majorly focuses on theoretical studies. Students study for long hours during the day to score a good rank amongst their peers. Students are evaluated mainly on their quarterly and annual exam performance. You may notice that competition is very tough amongst students to get higher grades. Students in India take five main subjects and usually two optional subjects; all students in the same grade study the same main subjects. Generally, there are 25 students per class. Exams follow various formats, such as essays, short answers, and/or multiple choice questions. Co-ed education is not widely prevalent; either all boy or all girl schools are more common. Students are career conscious and often receive additional tutoring outside of school for more competitive educational tracks.

School Relationships: Students are formal in their interaction with teachers and call them either "sir" or "madam."

Extracurricular Activities: Usually students are more focused on studies and rarely participate extensively in extracurricular activities. Indian parents encourage their children to focus on their studies rather than any out of school activities. However, if students are participating in extracurricular activities, parents are equally as involved as they are with the student's studies.

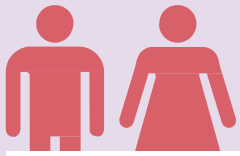
School Rules and Attire: Many Indian high schools have a "zero tolerance" policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe. Students attend classes regularly due to strict attendance rules. Additionally, every student is required to wear their school's uniform. Uniforms vary in print and color from school to school, and often schools have different uniforms for winter and summer. Students are not allowed to accessorize or use nail polish, make-up, or wear fancy shoes, and non-compliance with the dress code is punishable.

Returning from Exchange: When students depart for the U.S., they are required to inform their Indian high school and obtain a school letter indicating that the school is aware that the student will be participating in the YES program. On completion of the program, the student should request copies of their transcripts, attendance sheets, courses, and syllabi from their host school; these documents will be used by the student's Indian high school in deciding the academic grade placement of the student upon their return. Alumni also peak to students to give them tips on re-integrating into the Indian school system.

Personal Interactions



New Delhi



Population
1,398,346,496



Square Miles
1,269,346



Currency
Indian Rupee



Literacy rate
75.3%

Literacy rate
53.7%

Language

Hindi 43.63%
English 0.02%
Bengali 8.03%
Marathi 6.86%
Telugu 6.70%
Tamil 5.70%
Gujarati 4.58%
Urdu 4.19%
Kannada 3.61%
Odia 3.10%
Malayalam 2.88%
Punjabi 2.74%
Assamese 1.26%

Religion

Hindus 80.5%
Muslims 13.4%
Christians 2.3%
Sikhs 1.9%
Buddhists 0.8%
Jains 0.4%
Others 0.6%

Mixed Gender Socializing: The social acceptability of one-on-one relationships with the opposite gender varies by city, state, and whether a student is from a large city or small town. Teens do have friends of the opposite gender from time to time, but it is often not considered good social practice.

Friendships: Most friends are made in school and around the neighborhood. Friendships are generally very casual with no serious commitments. Many teenagers are more invested in family time and relationships. In India, people do not greet people who they don't know.

Communication Styles: In India, teenagers have a formal and indirect form of communication with their elders and family members. Students and family members will discuss matters related to education and study, but not those related to finance. Students may need to be asked repeatedly about certain subjects before they will open up. Indian teenagers aren't comfortable expressing negative emotions to their friends and family.

Eye Contact: Teenagers in India are supposed to look down as a mark of respect when talking with elders.

Cultural Norms: In India it is accepted that males will do the hard, physical tasks, and that females will do gentle tasks and household chores. Even in the families where both parents are working, the woman of the house does the cooking and looks after the children. Males have more financial responsibilities. Children or house maids are expected to help with household chores. In India, the concept of personal space does not exist. Indians are very family oriented and people share rooms and beds. Indians are time conscious, but being 10 or 15 minutes late is considered normal.

Food and Culture



Teenagers give friends and family members gifts for personal events, such as birthdays or anniversaries. During festivals or major holidays, gift giving is only done by elder family members for children. Cooking is a very extensive affair and everything is prepared from scratch.

Guest Culture: A guest is treated like God, even in the poorest of families. It is generally considered impolite or rude to say "no" directly or to decline an invitation, even if you know you cannot accept the invitation. In cultures that are more straightforward this can lead to confusion. On the other hand, it is also considered impolite to appear greedy or desirous of something; when offered a cup of tea or a spontaneous gift, normally an Indian will say: "oh no thank you!" The formality of offering is usually repeated at least three times before a person will say yes, if at all. Often the tea is simply served.

Lunch and Diets: In most of the cases, the student's lunch is packed by their mother, however it differs on case to case bases. Indian lunch boxes have huge varieties, which include sandwiches, Indian breads and pickles, pastas and noodles, poha, dosa and idlis, and fruits to name a few. It may not be necessarily complimented with any drink. Some children even receive lunch money from their parents to buy a hot school lunch. Vending machines in schools are not common and are only available in high end schools in large cities. In India, halal food is readily available for Muslims.

Religion: Attending religious services is often a family event, and the social aspect of attending the services and being part of the community is often just as important as the religious aspect. In India, there is a general tolerance and acceptance towards a variety of religions.

Holidays and Festivals: India is a culturally rich and diverse country and celebrates various holidays and festivals. There are three national holidays in India observed in all states and union territories: Independence Day on 15 August, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on 2 October, and Republic Day on 26 January. Indians celebrate a number of festivals all through the year. Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are celebrated in almost all parts of India, and Eid al-Fitr is a public holiday. The majority of non-Muslim people do not celebrate Eid, but they know when it is celebrated. The major Hindu festivals celebrated in India are: Diwali, Holi, Rakshabandhan.

Personal Hygiene



In India, it is normal to bathe once per day. In the summer, students sometimes bathe twice per day. Students are expected to keep bathrooms clean, but drying the bathroom is not common due to the fact that most bathrooms have drains in the floor. Each person within the family has their own towel. The same towel is used to dry their body, hair, and face. Wearing the same clothes two days in a row or twice without washing them is generally thought to be unclean.



Indonesia

Family Life



Most households consist of parents (or a parent) and children. Some households have one or more relatives living with the family, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins. Live-in house help are also common, even in lower-middle class households. Drivers are common in middle and upper class households. Household chores may not be something students are used to.

Nowadays in Indonesia, both parents usually work out of the house. Traditionally, though, the father is the breadwinner and the ultimate decision maker, and the mother is the “home manager” and general advisor of the family. The mother’s role is highly respected in a family. There is an Indonesian saying that speaks to the immense respect mothers are given: “Heaven lies under a mother’s feet.” In Indonesia, parents and elders are highly respected, and children are taught to listen and obey without question. Children are taught to kiss the back of the elder’s right hand as a sign of respect.

Generally in Indonesia, dinner is eaten together, but this depends on the family schedule. When families do eat together, they don’t linger at the table or engage in lengthy table talk. More likely, the family will eat quietly, even silently, and take conversations elsewhere after the meal. Talking throughout mealtime is considered impolite. Students may be especially uncomfortable when seri-

ous family issues are discussed at mealtime.

Indonesians are very communal, and families tend to do things together. Individual time is rare, if it exists, and is usually reserved for study time in the evening. If an Indonesian family member is found alone, it is a sign that there is something wrong. Generally, teenagers have their free time on the weekend to spend with their friends. The concept of individual pursuit and personal time to one’s self in the U.S. may be surprising and uncomfortable for the student at first. Students might feel left out if a sibling or other family member is taking time to his or her self.

Teen Life: Objects or personal items may be considered as belonging to one individual, but by everyone in the family as the family is viewed as one unit in Indonesia. Clothing articles are often shared between siblings, but when siblings want to borrow they must ask first. Older children are expected to care for younger ones. Sibling rivalry is not prevalent and spats among Indonesian siblings do not happen often.

Responsibilities: Parents usually give an allowance to their children daily or weekly. The allowance covers transportation and meals at school. Children rarely work for pocket money unless parents cannot provide pocket money. The YES stipend amount is approximately equal to 75 to 80% of the average monthly salary of the regional minimum wage in Indonesia. In light of this, Indonesian students may either want to save as much as they can, or conversely may have impulses to spend.

In some families, chores or tasks are divided by gender. It is most common for teenage females to help in the kitchen. Males are usually given more “physical” chores, like tending the garden, repairing things, and sweeping and mopping the floor. Some males may not easily follow instructions from females or feel uncomfortable in a female dominated household. In Indonesian households, the mother or housekeeper prepares the meals. Students may find it challenging to prepare meals for themselves because of unfamiliar kitchen appliances, unfamiliar ingredients, and different ways of cooking or preparing food.

Parental Involvement: In home internet connections are rare in Indonesia, especially in smaller towns, however homes in bigger cities may have it. Students typically use the internet in internet cafes and parents almost never accompany him or her to these places. Parents do not monitor their child’s internet use and a student’s time on the internet is limited in a different way than it is in the U.S. Students now commonly use their cell phones or tablet to access the internet in Indonesia. WhatsApp and Line messaging are the most popular communication platforms. The use of social media platforms among Indonesian students are high. Progress in school in Indonesia is usually reported in mid-semester or semester reports. Rarely do parents keep up with academic progress more than monitoring those semester reports; only if there is something alarming occurring. Teenagers are mostly dependent on their parents. Big decisions have to be discussed with parents and other family members. Schedules are also discussed as a family.

Pets: In most Indonesian Muslim communities, dogs serve as watch dogs not domestic pets. Dogs are generally not allowed in the house and the saliva is considered unclean. Indonesian students may be uncomfortable with or scared of dogs.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: Generally, it is not culturally appropriate for teenage boys and girls to socialize one-on-one, though it is typical for teenagers to hang out in groups of mixed genders. Close friends or best friends would be the same gender, and it would not be uncommon for girls to hold hands with other girls and boys to sit close to other boys. In Indonesia, men and women are not separate, but do not touch each other.

Friendships: Many students in Indonesia are friends from childhood and grow up attending the same school. Groups of friends usually consist of students of the same gender that share common interests. Lending money to friends or family members is common in Indonesia. It is common to repay the money in installments or in a form of treating the friend to small favors or meals. Some confusion or misunderstanding may arise in the U.S. regarding sharing and lending money.

Communication Styles: Indonesians communicate indirectly as Indonesians, in general, avoid confrontation and avoid showing negative feeling as a way of maintaining harmony in society. Everyone is expected to not offend others and to understand unspoken needs. Indonesians may find it very hard to ask for help or to be the bearer of bad news. The student is trying to “save face,” a very important part of Indonesian culture. Children are taught to listen and not to explain or argue with adults, and even older siblings are treated deferentially. Indonesians generally won’t talk about it if they are having problems.

Rather than express emotion, or show it outright, Indonesians may write down their feelings for their own use. Expressions of love are not acceptable in public. In some cases, Indonesians smile when they are nervous or confused. Indonesians only discuss emotional topics with those to whom they feel very close, or “connected.” Indonesians do not feel that they can argue with a parent, so they may feel that it is better to say “yes” and then not comply, than to disagree or argue. To the parent, it may appear that they have said they would do something and then didn’t do it; however, to the student, it is not intended to be deliberately deceptive. If this becomes a problem, ask the student when something will be done, how s/he will do it, and what problems s/he anticipates in doing it. The answers will give you an opportunity to “read between the lines” to see whether “yes” really meant “yes.”

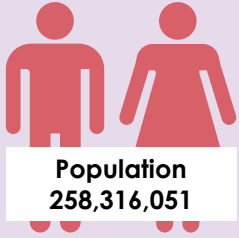
Eye Contact: Direct eye contact with older people is generally considered rude and students may feel uncomfortable with constant direct eye contact while talking. Students from the Jakarta area, however, are accustomed to making eye contact during conversation. Until the discomfort with direct eye contact passes, try looking at the student’s chin, and then back to his or her eyes while speaking.

Cultural Norms: Indonesians usually shake hands when they meet, and may follow a handshake by touching their right palm to their hearts in a show of friendship. When meeting for the first time, Indonesians often bow their heads slightly. This is often followed by small talks that could involve asking how the family is doing or encompass a larger conversation. Being punctual is well regarded, but time is loosely scheduled and more fluid, so it is not important to be on time. It is not common to plan future events. Time and deadlines are sometimes flexible in Indonesia. The Indonesian student may operate on “jam karet,” which translated literally translates from the Bahasa Indonesia language to mean “rubber time,” or “stretch the time and be late.”

School



Jakarta



Population
258,316,051



Square Miles
741,050

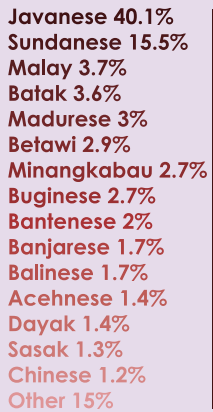


Currency
Indonesian Rupiah



Literacy rate
96.3%

Literacy rate
91.5%



Muslim 87.2%
Christian 9.9%
Hindu 1.7%
Other 1.3%

Classes: In Indonesia, students' subjects are determined by the track that they study throughout high school. Students usually do not take a specific test to determine their tracks but rather it is determined by their grades, their GPA average, their score on the National Exam that they take after completing junior high school (or middle school), and recommendations from their junior high school teachers. The tracks, or "majors," that are currently offered in Indonesian high schools are: natural sciences, social sciences, and language. For students who attend Islamic boarding schools, called Pesantren or Madrasah, they may also choose a Religious Studies track. Indonesian students take 13 to 15 subjects per semester; each subject is scheduled once or twice a week. Students do not study subjects at different levels of difficulty throughout high school. All classes and subjects are taken at the same level and there is a "passing grade" for each subject as a benchmark. Students remain in the same classroom and teachers rotate to the different rooms throughout the day. Depending on the school, one classroom will seat 30 to 48 students. Public schools in Indonesia are co-ed; boys and girls sit in the same classroom. Seats may or may not be assigned by the teacher. In Pesantren, boys and girls are separated by room; these students might find it difficult to adjust to a co-ed environment at first. In Indonesia, students are evaluated through homework, class attendance, special assignments, mid-semester exams and semester exams. Different workloads and expectations on school assignments and homework in U.S. schools may be a challenge for Indonesian students at first.

School Relationships: Students' respect for their teachers is as high as their respect for their natural parents. At school, teachers take on the roles of "parents at school." Because of this respect, students are generally taught to listen and obey their teachers in every way without question. In Pesantren, teachers also act as legal guardians. Students learn to follow and abide by the rules and sayings of their teachers, word for word. In Indonesia, it is not expected to critique or disagree with what the teacher is saying. Formal address is used when speaking to teachers: "Pak" or "Bu" ("Mr." or "Mrs."). To students, an informal relationship with teachers and calling teachers by their first names or nicknames will likely seem rude and out of line.

Extracurricular Activities: In Indonesian schools, extracurricular activities take place on Saturdays in place of regular courses. Schools offer various kinds of opportunities, such as traditional dance and music, journalism, English club, futsal (soccer-like ball game), basketball, and photography. Students in Indonesia often decide upon and arrange for their own extracurricular activities. Parents are involved indirectly in students' extracurricular activities.

School Rules and Attire: Cell phone usage is banned during classes and school hours in Indonesia, and violation of this rule usually results in confiscation of the phone and other penalties. Fighting is considered a severe rule violation and could result in suspension or expulsion. All students in Indonesia must wear a uniform, which varies for private and public schools. Generally, the uniform for male students consists of gray pants, a white shirt, a gray tie, white or black shoes, and a gray cap for ceremonies; male students wear long-sleeved white shirts on Thursdays and Fridays. Uniforms for female students are a white shirt, gray skirt (knee-length or long for students who wear headscarves), white socks, black shoes, a gray tie, and a gray cap for ceremonies; female students wear Batik shirts on Thursdays, and white long shirts and skirts on Fridays. School logos are stitched onto the shirt pocket and upper arm of the shirts, with the student's name stitched on the right chest of the shirts. Students may have difficulty determining what clothes are appropriate for school in the U.S. if uniforms are not required. If the student is wearing a headscarf, she may prefer to wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers, or skirts over trousers, and a jilbab (long coat) or headscarf to school.

Returning from Exchange: When students depart on program, they are considered to be on one year academic leave, which means have not started their 12th grade yet, and will resume the interrupted academic year once they go back to Indonesia. Upon return to Indonesia, students will have to return to the subjects they left off with when they went on their exchange year. The final year of high school is crucial for their eligibility in National Final Exams, which is mandatory for graduating from high school and for University Entrance Exams, a separate exam for entering universities.

Food and Culture



Portions in Indonesia are smaller than in the U.S., so students will typically be overwhelmed by the size of the portions in the first few months on program. Some students might feel guilty for not finishing the large portion even if they are full. It is common in Indonesia for people to ask for the restaurant to wrap any uneaten food.

Guest Culture: People will offer guests food or drink, or directly serve drinks and snacks to guests once they are seated in the living room. Contrary to American culture, it is considered polite to decline the offer at the first or second offer, as a sign of respect (the guest does not want to be troublesome to the host). Guests will, in the end, drink or eat whatever is served.

Lunch and Diets: Students typically buy food at school, both snacks (during short breaks) and lunch (if school finishes after 1 PM). It is rare for students to pack their own lunch. Natural parents give daily or weekly allowance for food and transportation.

Religion: Prayer is an important aspect of the religious life of traditionally practicing Muslims who will generally pray five times each day at specific times that are religiously-dictated. Prayers are mostly done personally, except Friday noon prayers and Eid prayers.

Holidays: Schools are closed on national or religious holidays. Ramadan is considered important. People are expected to respect anyone who fasts during this month; students who fast will do so from dawn to dusk. Eid al-Fitr is a major celebration marking the end of Ramadan, with a week-long holiday and big family gatherings. Schools and all offices are closed for the week. The big day is marked by the Eid prayer in mosques. Students will want to spend part of the evenings during the month of Ramadan reciting tarawih prayers and the Quran. Another important Muslim holiday is Eid al-Adha; Islamic schools have three days of holiday for Eid al-Adha. Christian holidays include Christmas and Easter. An important Balinese Hindu holiday is Nyepi, "day of silence," and an important Buddhist holiday is Vesak.

National holidays in Indonesia are the following: Independence Day (August 17), New Year, Islamic New Year, and Chinese Lunar New Year. It is very common for extended families to gather in one home to celebrate religious holidays. "Pulang Kampung," literally translated as "going back to your village/hometown," is a tradition that is cherished, and will be missed by students while they are on program.

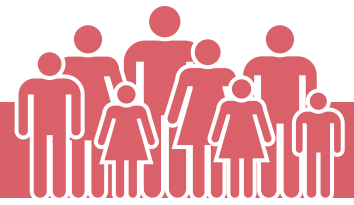
Personal Hygiene



Taking baths twice a day is common practice in Indonesia. Bathrooms are fully tiled with a drain set in the floor. The student may have had very little experience using a dry bathroom and may need a bit of guidance to learn that shower curtains belong inside the tub and that bathmats are used to keep the rest of the floor dry when you've just stepped out of the shower. Muslims also complete a ritual washing before praying; students use water to wash their hands, feet, and face.

Jordan

Family Life



The number of family members living in the same house depends on where the student lives in Jordan. If the student lives in the city, he or she will usually have a small household and some extended family may live in the same building. In rural areas, students will have a larger household, including the grand-father and grandmother and maybe their uncle or aunt. Usually students eat breakfast either before school or during the first break at school. Family lunch is served around 3-4pm and a small family dinner from 8-9pm.

In Jordan, usually both parents work if the student lives in the city. In rural areas, only the father works and the mother will stay at home to take care of the children. Authority is shared in different ways in Jordan. The father typically has primary authority in the family, while the mother usually has authority over the children since she is with them the most.

It is understood that family members need to have their own time and most will take individual time to relax and a short time to do their own activities. Students generally interact informally with their immediate family members in Jordan. If students have a good relationship with their extended family members, like uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews, they interact informally as well.

Teen Life: Teenagers are used to having responsibilities if they are out with their friends or if they are at home alone or babysitting for their younger siblings. However, generally at this age, students rely heavily on their parents, and specifically their mother. Siblings usually share things like clothes, computers, and many other items, and they are expected to ask first.

Responsibilities: Students are expected to take responsibility for their academic performance and other school-related issues. Students are not responsible for household chores. Families may have a housekeeper depending on their financial status or if the mother works. Students are used to having their meals ready and prepared for them. Jordanian boys may have an especially difficult time adapting to doing household chores in the U.S. compared to females. Girls may help their mother cook, but not often. Parents usually give their children a specific amount of money daily. Students don't work in Jordan at this age and do not have any expectations to be able to budget their money.

Parental Involvement: Parents receive their child's grades on a monthly basis in Jordan and have monthly parent-teacher meetings to discuss their child's progress in his or her classes. If any misbehavior or absence occurs, schools will contact the parents directly. As Jordanian teenagers tend to be very dependent on their parents and siblings, most teenagers constantly seek their parents' guidance and advice. Parents generally do not actively monitor what their children do online.

Pets: Some Jordanian families have pets, especially cats. However, pets are not allowed to enter the house, especially bedrooms, bathrooms, and the kitchen.

School



Classes: Students are not allowed to choose their school subjects; the Ministry of Education determines the subjects for students according to their grade level. Students study eight subjects each semester. Secondary education consists of two major streams:

- (a) Comprehensive secondary education stream with a common general educational basis, and specialized academic or vocational education;
- (b) Applied secondary education stream which is based on vocational preparation and training.

The conditions for acceptance into the different tracks are determined in accordance with regulations issued by the Ministry of Education.

Generally, 50% of each student's grade is calculated from homework, participation, and quizzes, while the other 50% is calculated from exams. Students have all of their classes in the same classroom, and each teacher comes to the class to teach their subject.

School Relationships: In Jordan, students must respect their teachers by calling teachers "Teacher," "Mr.," or "Ms." It is disrespectful to call the teachers by their first name, last name, or nickname.

Extracurricular Activities: Students can participate in extracurricular activities in or out of school. Extracurricular options in the public schools are very limited. However, private schools have more options, such as sports, music, and community service or volunteer work. Some students can participate in independent activities by registering in a private sport, music, or other club outside of school, but it depends on the student's economic situation at home. Parents usually get involved in supporting their children in extracurricular activities if they have an event or final game.

School Rules and Attire: Schools have a "zero tolerance" policy regarding fighting, bullying, and sexual harassment. All schools are expected to have an on-site counselor that assists with these types of cases; the schools' principal and teachers also take part in reporting and administering any required disciplinary actions or measures towards the students involved. Schools also have strict rules and penalties for cheating. If a student is caught cheating, their exam will be seized and the student will need to repeat the course. Generally, Jordanian students are not allowed to use their cell phones in school, however restrictions vary between schools.

All public schools are gender segregated in Jordan, while some private schools are co-ed. Girls' public schools require uniforms, while the public schools for boys do not. The uniform for female students includes a short dress with a white shirt and pants; females are also allowed to wear jilbabs (a long garment worn by women along with a head scarf).

Returning from Exchange: As the YES program has approval and support from the Ministry of Education, YES students are not required to repeat the year that they missed when they return from the U.S. Additionally, no specific academic requirements are placed on returning YES students. However, students are asked to take one English, one math and one to two science subjects while in the U.S. Students are asked to bring their U.S transcripts with them to be emailed/mailed to the RO.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: Teenagers usually socialize in groups and rarely one-on-one, depending on family and community expectations. Maintaining friendships with a member of the opposite sex is generally unaccepted. The extent to which families accept friendships between the opposite sexes depends on the families' educational, traditional, and religious background.

Friendships: Teenagers in Jordan make friends through school, activities, and neighborhood connections. Teenagers may have many friends at this age, but they always have at least one or two best friends with whom there is continuous communication and a fair amount of trust. Parents are also conscious about their child's friends. Generally, it is not acceptable to share money with other friends, especially in large amounts.

Communication Styles: Some students are used to direct communication and they find it easier to get straight to the point, while others prefer focusing on the context of a conversation.

Eye Contact: In Jordan, eye contact is an important thing when socializing and talking to others, especially parents. A student's shyness may affect eye contact, especially when communicating with strangers. In some families, looking at the elder in the eye is not preferred.

Cultural Norms: In Jordan, time is perceived in a more event-oriented way rather than time-specific. Jordanians like to live in the present moment. Usually people tend to be more flexible when it comes to appointments and deadlines. In Jordan, everyone is expected to behave according to their age. Adults and elderly people demand respect from teenagers and are required to be polite around them. Jordanian teenagers tend to show negative emotions quite freely amongst their peers and family. The space of interaction between two people is less than the space that U.S. students are used to.

Food and Culture



Religion: Most families encourage their children to attend religious services. Most Christians go to church every Sunday, while some go only on Christmas and Easter. Generally boys go to mosque with their fathers every Friday for prayer; most Muslims also go to mosque on Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and during Ramadan. During Ramadan, students fast from sunrise until sunset. Students break their fast with dates, followed by some soup, and then the main course; some students have sandwiches or yogurt before sunrise. Before Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, students go to buy new clothes. During Eid, some students welcome visitors or go on vacation, and some may receive money from their family members.

Local places of worship, such as mosques and churches, serve as community centers in Jordan. Each member of the community is expected to be engaged in the activities and charity work that their mosque or church organizes.

Holidays: The main observances are Christmas, Easter, Eid al-Adha, and Eid al-Fitr. All schools have holidays between the first and the second semester for two weeks at the end of the year for summer break, which is usually around 3 months long.

Guest Culture: Guests in Jordan are treated with the highest regard as the honoring of a guest stems from Bedouin culture and treatment of guests is viewed as a source of pride for many. It is considered impolite for guests to refuse food as generosity and hospitality are very important; Jordanians will usually offer guests food more than once, even if the guest declines the first time.

Lunch and Diets: Usually one parent is responsible for packing food for their children. Parents also give their children pocket money to buy snacks from school, where there is usually a small kiosk or cafeteria with light lunch options. From how meals are cooked to the times of the day meals are eaten, Jordanian food culture is very different from American food culture. The diet is mainly based on wheat, rice, vegetables, and meat. In Jordan, meals are intimate, social affairs and everyone is expected to eat from the same communal platter. "Fad diets" are not common in Jordan. Most Muslim Jordanians abide by the halal diet (food that meets the Islamic law standard); pork and alcoholic beverages are not permitted. Jordanians usually eat three meals a day - breakfast before school/work, lunch around 2:00-3:00 p.m., and dinner around 8:00-9:00 p.m.. Most food is bread and rice heavy.

Personal Hygiene



Students mostly change their clothes daily, and may wear their clothes twice in one week but not two days in a row. Teenagers are used to changing all of their clothes after taking a shower. Teenagers are used to wearing their clothes until after school, and then they will change into more comfortable clothes when they arrive home, unless they have any outdoor plans or activities. Teenagers must keep their bathrooms clean; generally, they have one large towel and one small towel for their hair and face. Towels are usually replaced every other day. In some areas and/or families, people may take showers every other day due to restricted water access or because of household norms.

Amman

Population
8,185,384

Square Miles
34,495

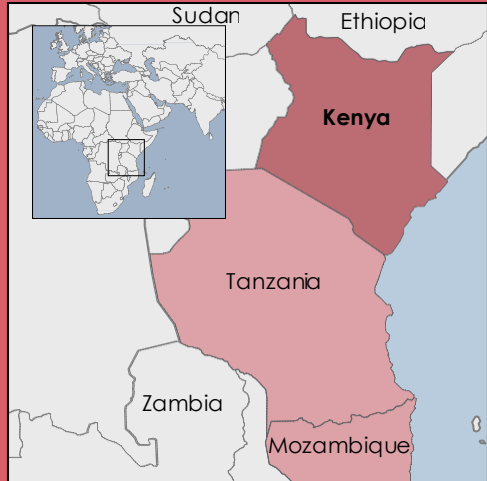
Currency
Jordanian Dinar

Literacy rate
92.9%

Literacy rate
97.7%

Arab 98%
Circassian 1%
Armenian 1%

Muslim 97.2%
Predominantly
Sunni
Christian 2.2%
Other 0.6%



Kenya

Family Life



In Kenya, the composition of the household depends on the type of family, culture, and location of the family, although most households will also include an extended family. Meals may be eaten together or separate, except on weekends or holidays when most families gather for a meal sometimes with the extended family. In some families both parents are financial contributors, but in most cases the father is the breadwinner of the family. In Kenya, the father is the head of the family while mothers are responsible for household and everyday matters.

Teen Life: Siblings share almost everything in Kenya, and not necessarily with permission. Personal space is not considered a big thing in the family since the family members are supposed to be very close to each other.

Responsibilities: Most families in Kenya hire house help for household chores, regardless of the income level of the family. Even very poor families keep household help usually in exchange for room and board. The adult women of the house are responsible for all housework. A student would only help if necessary. In Kenya, it is mainly the females who do the cooking. Females are responsible for light housework whereas boys are responsible for the more intensive hard work. In Kenya, part time jobs for teens are very rare. Often students obtain money from their parents and other family members. Students are not used to budgeting their money.

Parental Involvement: Parents supervise their children in using the internet, and usually monitor websites and limit the time spent on computers. However, most Kenyan families do not have internet access in the home, so students would be used to using a local internet cafe. It may be tempting for students who have never had 24-hour access to internet in the home to remain on the internet for long periods of time and access it with great frequency. In Kenya, parents are a big part of the students' academic life. Generally, Kenyan teenagers are mostly dependent on their parents to make their decisions. Also, parents play a big role in shaping their children's interests as following parents' advice is considered very respectful. However, this varies from family to family, and can depend on the family's status, religious, and cultural beliefs.

Pets: In Kenya, most families have cats as pets, while some will have dogs, which are mainly used as guard dogs. It is very rare for dogs to be kept in the house.

School



Classes: Kenyan students follow a prescribed national curriculum. If students are in private school, there may be some variation to the courses offered, but generally students cannot select their subjects or take courses at different levels of difficulty. Certain classes, such as mathematics and English, meet daily, while others meet at least four times a week. Students stay in the same classroom all day with teachers rotating to each classroom to teach throughout the day. Private schools have approximately 25 students per classroom, while public or government schools have classes of 50-70 students. Students are evaluated according to how they perform on their exams and tests. Homework and class participation are not calculated as part of the final grade and are not compulsory. Schools in Kenya are both co-ed and single gender. Students tend to have the same classmates for all four years of high school.

School Relationships: In Kenya, students mostly refer to their teachers as Mr., Mrs., Sir, or Madam to show respect for the teacher.

Extracurricular Activities: Most schools in Kenya have extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs, although there is not much emphasis put on these activities in comparison to academics. Parents concentrate more on their student's educational activities rather than extracurricular activities.

School Rules and Attire: Cell phones are not allowed to be used on school grounds. If students break schools rules, they can be punished severely with the punishment depending on level of punishable action. For fighting or bullying, the student involved may be given punishment such as cutting the grass of the school grounds and calling in the student's parents for a meeting with the principal. If extensive harm is done, the student may also be expelled from the school. For cheating, a student may lose marks on their exam.

Students also usually wear a uniform to school, which have regional, religious, climatic, and other variations. Both boys and girls wear a shirt, tie, and either a sweater or vest; boys wear pants and girls wear skirts. Uniforms for girls at Muslim schools also include a head covering.

Returning from Exchange: When students return to Kenya, they continue from where they left off. For example, if a student left in August having completed two school terms of Form 1 (equivalent to 9th grade in the U.S. system), then when s/he comes back, s/he will continue with the final 3rd term of Form 1 in the fall. Catching up with the Kenyan educational system upon return becomes quite hard because of these differences in the two education systems.



Personal Interactions

Nairobi

Mixed Gender Socializing: Most of the time, teens socialize with the same gender, but on some rare occasions boys and girls interact.

Friendships: Kenyan teens think of peers as friends because the concept of friends is “people you know.” Usually teens have between two to five very close friends. Most teens have friend groups and also one-on-one friends that they make through family or neighborhood connections, as well as through school and common activities. Lending money is common amongst friends. Most teens use social networks to keep in touch.

Communication Styles: While it is important to always be respectful, many Kenyan teenagers interact informally with all of their family members. The same applies to very close family members however, with older and distant family members, the interaction is very formal. Teenagers in Kenya can express their emotions to their peers, but rarely to their elders.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is not common when communicating and it is considered rude.

Cultural Norms: Greetings are a big part of Kenyan culture and young people usually greet older individuals out of respect. In Kenya, people usually use proverbs and sayings to indirectly communicate their message. Direct communication is considered rude. The Kenyan concept of time is very flexible. People prefer to take their time rather than hurry to be on time. It is acceptable to be up to 30 minutes late for appointments with no explanation for the tardiness.

Food and Culture



Religion: Religion is a huge part of Kenyan families and usually brings about the aspect of family-centered culture. Religious beliefs are very strong particularly for Christian, Muslim and Hindu communities. Religious services are communal and tend to last many hours. For example, for most Christian families Sundays are dedicated to religious service and family members may spend the day in such event. For Muslim families, Friday prayers are an important part of their religious services and everyone at home is expected to dedicate about one hour at midday for this service. Other days also have religious activities and mostly prayers that often take place at home or selected church based places.

The Kenyan population is made up of about 80% Christian (including Catholics, Protestants, and other types of Christians), 12% Muslim, and the remaining 8% is made up of other religions including Hinduism, Baha'i, and traditional beliefs/religions. The Kenya YES cohort takes roughly the same proportion with majority been Christians and the others Muslim

Holidays: Religious holidays that are recognized in the constitutions include: Easter holidays, Muslim Eid celebrations, and Christmas. Sunday is a public holiday. These holidays are considered official holidays and members of the respective religious group dedicate the day in performing religious activities in a communal way.

Guest Culture: Guests are seen as very special and a blessing to the family. Food/drink will certainly be offered at home to a guest. Declining is not an option and may often be considered disrespectful. Family may be very insisting for the guest to take the food/drink even if in a small portion.

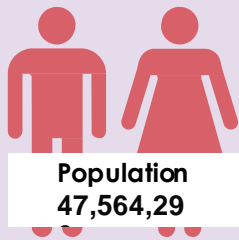
Lunch and Diets: For students in day schools, parents usually prepare and pack lunch for their child. In most cases, the students will be given lunch money to buy lunch at school cafeterias.

As Kenya has many diverse cultural communities, food restrictions depend on cultural and religious customs. For example, Muslim communities have places to purchase halal meats, and most Muslim teenagers will eat food that is halal. Fad diets are not common. Most foods are prepared from scratch.

Personal Hygiene



Kenyan teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. It is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear the same clothes twice without washing them. The bathroom is shared by all family members and teenagers are responsible for taking care of their toiletries. Most Kenyan teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body (and maybe a separate towel to dry their hair or face). Shoes are taken off in the home as a sign of respect and to maintain a clean house.



Population
47,564,29



Square Miles
224,960

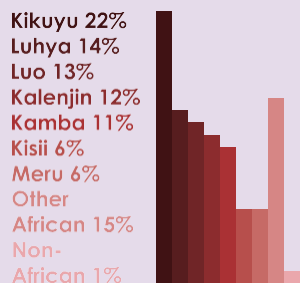


Currency
Kenyan Shilling



Literacy rate
75%

Literacy rate
81%

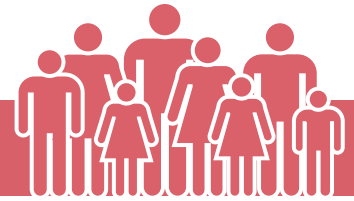


Religion	Percentage
Christian	83%
Muslim	11.2%
Traditionalists	1.7%
None	2.4%
Other	1.8%



Kosovo

Family Life



In Kosovo, it is common for families to consist of parents, children, and grandparents, and more rarely aunts, uncles, or even cousins. It is becoming more common in Kosovo for both parents to work. If both parents are employed and grandparents live in the same house, usually grandparents take care of the children or housework while the parents work. Parents typically share the authority in the household equally, but there are some more traditional families where the father is the authority of the house.

Responsibilities: Part time jobs for teenagers are very rare in Kosovo. Usually, parents give children weekly allowances for personal items and parents purchase items for social activities. Some children get money from parents on a daily basis, depending on the amount needed for school lunch or expenses related to school. Most students don't have any experience cooking, especially boys; it is uncommon for teenagers in Kosovo to cook for themselves. They are expected to clean their room and to take care of their clothes, but usually they do not do laundry or help with cleaning the house. It is more common for girls to help out in the house than it is for boys.

Pets: Pets are common and typically live outside in Kosovo; it is uncommon for pets to be kept inside the house.

Parental Involvement: Parents in Kosovo usually try to monitor what their children do online, including who they socialize with, but this can be difficult especially when they work long hours or the family structure is larger. It is common for parents to let teens have personal time, but evenings are usually family time. Parents are usually not overly involved in teenagers' extra-curricular activities.

As for parental involvement in their children's school, parents in Kosovo are called in to school at least twice a year for a regular meeting by the main professor who acts as the guidance counselor for each student. In case of an emergency they may be called individually or as a group, depending on the issue.

School



Classes: In public high schools in Kosovo, students have one main room where all classes are taught and the teachers rotate. In some private high schools, teachers have a set room and students change classrooms. Students in Kosovo do not choose their classes in public school, but private schools function very similarly to the U.S. and students are allotted class choices. Students are evaluated through homework, class attendance, special assignments (group projects), oral exams, and semester exams. At the end of each schooling level (9th-12th grade, there is a national final exam (known as the matura), and it typically takes place the first Saturday of June.

School Relationships: School relationships in Kosovo are more formal than in the U.S. In public high schools, when a teacher enters the class, all students stand up and greet the teacher. They usually speak by asking for the teacher's permission first, and all students refer to the teacher as 'professor.' Classes are not segregated by gender, so boys and girls study in the same classes.

Extracurricular Activities: These activities are less prevalent in Kosovo than they are in the U.S. Students who are interested in an activity usually make arrangements directly with the teacher who is in charge of that activity. These activities can take place during the school day or after class; sports especially take place after the school day is finished.

School Rules and Attire: The rules regarding cell phones and fighting in Kosovo are not as strict as in the U.S. Tardiness is not tolerated, and if a student enters the classroom after the teacher, they might either not be allowed to attend the class or remain marked as absent. The use of uniforms varies depending on the school and location in Kosovo. Some schools have uniforms, but others have a dress code.

Returning from Exchange: The academic requirements placed on returning YES students depend largely on the school. Some schools give students the option to take the final exams for the classes they did not take while in the U.S., and will allow them to pass on to the next grade if they pass the additional exams. Other schools may require students to repeat a year. The potential outcomes are explained explicitly to students before they come for their YES year.

Personal Interactions



Pristina

Teenagers in Kosovo are expected to inform parents about decisions they want to make. Parents often advise them, but leave the final decisions to their children. However, sometimes children just need to inform parents of what they are doing and not ask for permission.

Mixed Gender Socializing: Kosovar teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. Culturally, it is fine to socialize in mixed gender groups, but this might be an issue for students from rural areas. They might be more shy and withdrawn in this kind of a situation.

Friendships: Teenagers in Kosovo consider peers who they only know casually to be 'acquaintances', and peers they interact beyond just saying 'hello!' to be friends. 'Best friends' are those whom they share more time with or details from their personal life that they wouldn't with other friends. Friends might borrow money from one another, but are expected to return the money borrowed; however, if one forgets, the friend would rarely remind the former about this.

Communication Styles: It is uncommon for parents and their children to talk openly about personal issues in Kosovo, especially feelings. Showing negative emotions depends on the openness of the family. Children are not expected to participate in adult talk and usually are expected to be respectful, especially of elders like grandparents. Maintaining personal space when speaking to another person might be different than what is common in the U.S. Also, sometimes teenagers of the same sex are more physically affectionate than the norm in the U.S.

Eye contact: Eye contact is important in Kosovar culture, as it is a sign of respect for those with whom you are speaking. Teenagers are expected to make eye contact with adults.

Food and Culture



Food in Kosovo can be very traditional. Students from Kosovo are used to hot, usually home-cooked meals for lunch or dinner. Meal times are when families get to spend time together, except for weekday breakfasts, which are usually eaten separately because of different schedules. Although halal diets are not very important or common in Kosovo, pork is not very popular. Muslim families usually do follow a halal diet and do not consume pork.

Guests in Kosovo are usually offered food and drinks, and it is not considered rude if they politely decline, although they might be asked more than once. Teenagers are usually given 'lunch money' as it is uncommon for students to take food with them to school from home.

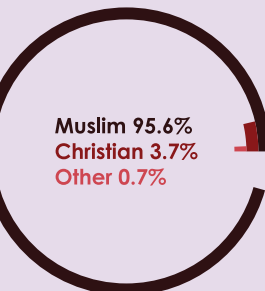
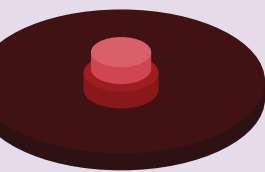
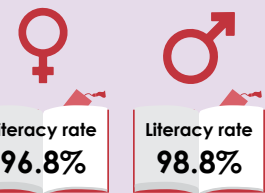
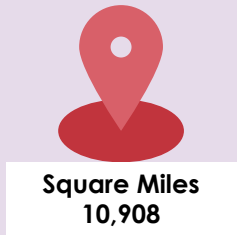
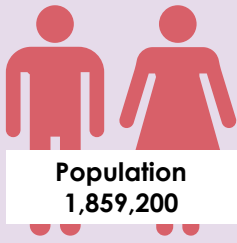
Religion: Attending religious services in Kosovo might differ from common practice in America. Usually Muslim men and women attend separate religious ceremonies, but Christian families may go to church together. However, children and teenagers are often times not required to attend these ceremonies.

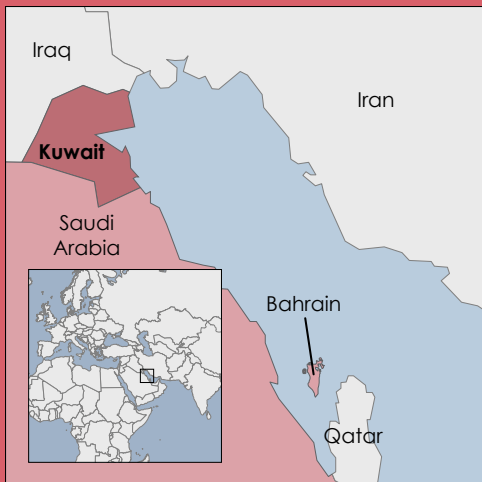
Holidays: Major holidays include Ramadan, Eid-al-Fitr, Eid-al-Adha for Muslims, and Easter and Christmas Eve for Catholics, New Year's Eve, and Kosovo's Independence Day. Usually, there is no school during these one-day holidays and the first day of Ramadan. Holidays are celebrated by family gatherings and visiting relatives, big meals enjoyed together, and going out in the evening.

Personal Hygiene



Teenagers in Kosovo expect to bathe every day or sometimes once in two days. Bathing less frequently usually means longer showers. Teenagers might not be used to keeping the bathroom tidy because their parents clean up after them. Kosovar teenagers generally will not wear the same clothing two days in a row especially if they go to school, but that does not necessarily mean that they will put the previously worn clothes in the hamper for washing. They might just put it away and wear it later unless it is obviously dirty. It is uncommon to wash clothes after just one use, except socks and underwear. Most Kosovar teenagers do not do their own laundry. Usually people change their clothes once they come home from work or school. People in Kosovo do not enter homes with their shoes on.





Kuwait

Family Life



Usually in Kuwait the household consists of parents, their children, and sometimes grandparents. Sometimes the household is very big and also includes uncles and extended family. Children do not leave the house after college, but rather they leave when they have found a job or get married.

In many Kuwaiti families mothers do not work. However, if she does, the father is still considered to hold primary financial responsibility. Both parents may expect to be seen as equal authority figures in all household decisions, but in some families most of the authority goes to the father. In Kuwait, meals are often eaten all together as a family. Family members are expected to have time to pursue to their own interests, and family members must respect each other's desires and wishes.

Teen Life: If a child needs to borrow something from his or her sibling, they must ask first. Teenagers are expected to interact respectfully with their parents at all times. However, it is fine to be informal with their siblings.

Responsibilities: In Kuwait, it is very common for a family to have a housekeeper. Usually boys and girls are not asked to do household chores. Teenagers in Kuwait rarely cook for themselves and they tend to be rather dependent, however they are responsible for managing their studies and cleaning up after themselves. Before coming on program, staff in Kuwait provide students with a cooking workshop to prepare them for the possibility of cooking in the U.S. Most Kuwaiti teenagers do not have part-time jobs because the concept of working while studying does not exist in Kuwait. Rather, parents are expected to give monthly allowances.

Parental Involvement: In Kuwait, it is difficult to monitor what each student does online because most kids have their own phones and they use them in their own rooms, or when they go out to cafes with their friends. However, girls are closely monitored by their parents. Parents are also in direct contact with schools and monitor their children's academic progress regularly. Most teenagers are dependent upon their parents' decisions.

Pets: In Kuwait, some families do enjoy having pets at home. There are also pet cafes and numerous pet shops and even activities on the weekends for owners with pets.

School



Classes: In Kuwait, students are mainly evaluated on homework, quizzes, midterm, and final exams. Class participation does not count in the public school system, but in private schools it does. In Arabic language public and private schools, students are divided into classes and they stay in the same classroom while teachers rotate. In non-Arabic language private schools, students usually have each subject in different classrooms. All public schools in Kuwait are gender segregated; however, some private schools are co-ed. Students in Arabic language public and private schools cannot choose their classes, while some English language schools do allow students to select their courses. Generally, students take seven subjects at one time. English language schools sometimes offer classes at varying levels of difficulty.

School Relationships: In Kuwait, students usually use the title "Mr." or "Ms." with the teacher's first name. Their relationship is friendly, but still formal.

Extracurricular Activities: Schools focus mainly on education and do not offer extracurricular activities; students can participate in extracurricular activities only in formal institutes or sports clubs. Parents in Kuwait are not involved in their kids' extracurricular activities.

School Rules and Attire: The punishment for cell phone usage is not severe, but cell phones are prohibited from classrooms. Additionally, all schools in Kuwait have uniforms. Each private school has its own uniform with different styles and colors. Public schools have a standard uniform; for boys the uniform is grey pants and a white shirt, and for girls the uniform is a long grey dress. Schools in Kuwait have strict policies regarding fighting and bullying. Students would be issued warnings, and potentially suspended or expelled. If students are caught cheating, they will get a zero on their exam and their parents would be called to the school. If the student is caught cheating again, they are either suspended or expelled.



Kuwait City



Population
4,271,000



Square Miles
11,071




Currency
Kuwaiti Dinar

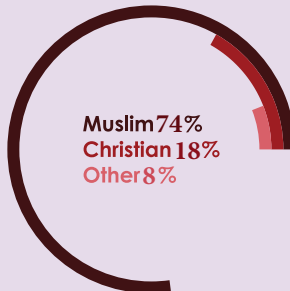


Literacy rate
95.8%

Literacy rate
96.5%



Kuwaiti 32%
Other Arab 40%
South Asian 1%
African 1%
Other 26%



Muslim 74%
Christian 18%
Other 8%

Returning from Exchange: The Ministry of Education requests that all students accepted in to the YES program be placed in the right grade level before coming on program, eliminating the need for students to repeat the year upon their return. As academics in Kuwait are very difficult, students from public schools find it hard to return and study their main subjects in Arabic as they used to before their year in the U.S. Therefore, many of these students end up transferring to an English language school.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: Having friends of the opposite sex is typically not acceptable in Kuwaiti society.

Friendships: The idea of friendship and what defines a friend varies from one person to the other. Kuwaiti teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. Teenagers meet most of their friends through common activities, and not necessarily from family or neighborhood connections. Amongst good friends, it is common and normal to share money. However, this does not exist in weaker relationships. Teens in Kuwait usually spend time together at cafes and malls. Parents are well informed of where their children are spending time.

Communication Styles: Kuwaitis usually communicate directly; this is the norm for all Kuwaitis.

Eye Contact: As a sign of respect, kids do not make direct eye contact with adults. Instead, they tend to look towards the ground when they are spoken to by adults.

Cultural Norms: Kuwaiti teenagers tend to show negative emotions quite freely amongst their peers and family. Personal space varies across Kuwaiti culture and depends on how the student was raised, as well as the environment. Being on time is not important for many people in Kuwait.

Food and Culture



Religion: Most families encourage their kids to attend religious services. Usually boys go to mosque with their fathers every Friday to pray, however usually only adult women go to mosque to pray.

Holidays: During Ramadan, students fast from dawn until sunset. Eid al-Fitr, which occurs after Ramadan, is a religious and family event during which parents give money to their children. Other holidays include Eid al-Adha and national holidays, such as Labor Day and Independence Day.

Guest Culture: In Kuwait, guests are treated nicely and respectfully. Families will offer food multiple times as it is considered impolite to only offer once. The guest may be shy to accept the first time, however after being offered food two or three times, the guest should accept the food offering.

Lunch and Diets: For lunch, students either bring food from home that is prepared by their mothers or they buy food from the school cafeteria. The main meal in Kuwait is lunch, and families gather for the meal between 2-3pm. People in Kuwait only eat halal meat; however, some people follow a vegetarian diet. Additionally, "fad diets" are not popular in Kuwait.

Personal Hygiene



Kuwaiti teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. It is generally thought to be unclean in Kuwait to wear the same clothes two days in a row. In Kuwait, different clothes are worn every day, but jeans may be worn multiple times before a wash. Kuwaiti teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean after using them (towels are hung up, and hygiene products are put away). Students do not pay attention to keeping the bathroom dry. Most teenagers do not change clothes upon entering the house, unless if they are changing out of their school uniform.

Lebanon

Family Life



Lebanese families tend to live in the same area as their relatives. It is not uncommon for families to live in the same building as their relatives. However, most families live by themselves in their own apartment. It is not uncommon for both parents to be professionals and financially responsible for the family in Lebanon, but many families still have a traditional division of labor where the mother is responsible for the housework and the father supports the family financially. In Lebanese families, the father is seen as the head of the family and the authority figure, and all major household decisions are typically made after his approval. Though having a housekeeper or hired help is not uncommon in Lebanon, most household chores and upkeep are delegated to the mother if there is no hired help. Usually mothers cook the meals and female teens start to learn to cook at a certain age, but not in all families. Male teenagers are not expected to cook for themselves or for their families. While all efforts are made to have meals eaten all together as a family in Lebanon, from time to time people will eat separately to accommodate a busy schedule.

Teen Life: Siblings usually share clothing, books, and accessories, and they usually don't ask first before using them unless they think the other might need it. In Lebanon, children are expected to act formally around their grandparents and parents. Lebanese students tend to rely on their parents for support and direction.

Responsibilities: Lebanese families spend a lot of time together and it is rare to spend time by one's self. Some students have felt lonely at times when members of their host family have their "own" time. Allowances may be in daily or weekly sums, but teenagers are not typically expected to budget for the clothes they want to buy or for the activities in which they want to participate. Teens are also expected to take responsibility for their transportation if they are traveling within their own neighborhood. However, if they are going somewhere outside their neighborhood, parents prefer to drop their child off themselves. Additionally, it is common for teenagers to get summer jobs and to travel to their jobs using public transportation.

Parental Involvement: In Lebanon, children know more than their parents about the internet and its usage, hence most parents do not monitor what their children are doing online. Teens are not accustomed to having their internet usage monitored either with regards to time or website restrictions. Parents in Lebanon are not always in direct contact with their children's schools, and some schools might not even require regular teacher meetings. However, the student's report card needs to be signed by their parents to confirm that they have received it. In addition, if a student has failed a class, they cannot receive their report card unless his/her parents visit the school.

Pets: For most Muslim families, pets, especially dogs, are not allowed in the house, although cats may be allowed. A common belief among many Muslims is that dogs are considered "unclean," and therefore if a Muslim touches a dog before prayer, he/she must perform ablution again before praying. Also, if a dog was in a certain area of the house, it is thought that the person cannot pray in that area, as it would be considered unclean.

Economic Collapse: Since October 2019, Lebanon has been facing a major economic recession due to financial and political crisis in the country exacerbated by the COVID pandemic and the August 4th port of Beirut explosion. The Lebanese lira (Lebanese Pound, LBP) exchange rate increased from 1,500 LBP per US\$1 to 21,000 LBP per US\$1. The result has been the official currency has lost 90% of its value as the exchange rate continues to fluctuate. This in turn has affected the poor and middle class whereas of November 2021 78% of the country's population is below the poverty line. Likewise, unemployment is on the rise. Lebanon has witnessed a dramatic shortage in basic sectors, such as food, fuel, and medication. The fuel shortage has led to severe electricity blackouts across the country, lasting almost 22 hours per day which has severely affected health services.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: In Lebanon, teenagers have mixed-gender groups of friends and also socialize one-on-one with the opposite gender. Lebanese students do have friends from school and activities, but a vital support group that all teenagers develop throughout their life is from their extended family and neighborhood friends. People are very sociable and tend to live in the same place throughout their lives, so everyone ends up knowing their neighbors well.

Friendships: In Lebanon, friendship means having someone who is always there for you. Lebanese tend to have their "school friends" and their "neighborhood friends." Lebanese people tend to have stronger relationships with their neighborhood friends that last their lifetime, while school friends are there for them mainly during school hours. Lebanese teenagers tend to socialize in groups as a tight-knit community. Additionally, Lebanese students tend to be generous with their friends. They may buy things or insist on paying, as it is traditional in Lebanese culture. While it may be a polite gesture, it is expected that the other party will either pay for themselves through insisting or that they will pay for the other the next time they go out (also after insisting).

Communication Styles: In Lebanon, the communication style depends upon what is being discussed. For example, students may be very direct when talking about their day and their friends, but if they become involved in a romantic relationship, they will most likely not talk to their parents about it. This can also depend on whether the parents are financially stable and educated.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is important in Lebanon as a way of showing respect.

Cultural Norms: While the cultural norm in Lebanon would be that it is unacceptable to show negative emotions in public or in front of the family, many teenagers still show their emotions. They may do so more with their peers than with their family, but it definitely does happen at home, too. However, teenagers do show a lot of respect towards adults and the elderly. Some Lebanese teenagers are accustomed to having their own personal space both in terms of interaction and physical space. Depending on the educational and financial background of the family, parents may interfere in all of the teenagers' activities. On the other hand, some parents are open-minded and give their children more space. Additionally, people in Lebanon are generally not very punctual. As Lebanese are very sociable, it is not considered rude to talk to someone you don't know.

School



Beirut

Classes: In Lebanon, students do not choose their school subjects, as each grade level has specific classes that all registered students are required to take. Students generally have six to seven classes per day, five days a week; throughout the school year, each student takes 10 or 11 subjects. Students are usually at school for six to seven hours per day, with each subject being taught daily for around 45 minutes. Sometimes students have two sessions of the same subject on the same day.

Grades are equally weighted between performance on assignments and exams. Students are usually assigned homework on each school day of the week, and student participation in class discussion is encouraged. Formatting of exams varies between essays, multiple choice, and short answers based on the teacher's preference. Students also stay in the same classroom all day while teachers rotate to each room. While most schools in Lebanon are co-ed, some public and private schools are for boys or girls only.

School Relationships: Lebanese students address their teacher with a title before the teacher's first or last name; for example: "Mr. Doe," "Mr. John," or simply "teacher."

Extracurricular Activities: Some private schools offer extracurricular activities and clubs; however, the majority of schools in Lebanon do not. The concept of extracurricular activities is not very common among Lebanese families. When students do participate in any activities, parents are usually involved to a very high extent. In most cases, the parents choose the activities in which their child will participate, like music and some sports.

School Rules and Attire: Lebanese high schools do not allow use of cell phones during classes. If a student is caught using their cell phone, their phone is usually taken away and given back at the end of the day. If students get into a fight, they are sent to the principal's office and their parents are called. They can be suspended for a few days or up to a week, depending on the principal's discretion. If a student is caught cheating, they are usually punished with detention and their parents are called.

Most schools have a uniform for students and most Lebanese teenagers dress informally outside of school. The school uniform differs from one school to another, however each school's uniform will include the school's logo. Usually, the uniform consists of long pants and a blouse; girls also have the option of wearing a skirt.

Returning from Exchange: Once the students return to their country, they need to take their U.S. transcripts to the Lebanese Ministry of Education to receive a certification of equivalence to have the year abroad count towards their educational progress. Most students have to catch up on several subjects over the summer that they may not have covered while being in the U.S., such as Arabic and science classes.

Food and Culture



Religion: Students of all religions generally attend regular religious services with their entire family as it is seen as a community activity. However, attendance at religious ceremonies or services are more often and consistent in rural areas.

Holidays: All national and religious holidays are celebrated as a national day off if they fall on a weekday. National holidays include Labor Day, South Liberation Day, New Year, and Independence Day. Christian holidays include Christmas, Armenian Christmas (orthodox), Annunciation Day, All Saints Day, Easter, and Assumption of Virgin Mary Day. Christmas and Armenian Christmas are celebrated indoors with family and friends. Muslim holidays include Eid al-Fitr and Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset for 30 days; families usually invite family and friends to break their fast together. Families also help poor people and orphans during this time. Eid al-Fitr occurs at the end of 30 days of fasting during Ramadan, usually for 3 days. Eid al-Fitr begins with prayers, followed by visiting the cemeteries of their relatives and offering flowers, gathering for lunch, and then visiting relatives and friends. Presents are optional.

Guest Culture: Offering food and drink to a guest is customary in Lebanon. If the guest declines, a Lebanese person will insist that the guest eats or drinks something. As hospitality is important for Lebanese, it is rude not to accept the offer.

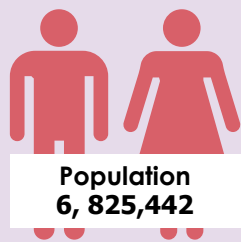
Lunch and Diets: Usually, the student's parents pack a cold sandwich and fruit for their children to have for lunch before coming back home and having a proper lunch. It is also normal for children to get "lunch money" to buy snacks while at school or after school. Most schools do not have vending machines.

Muslims are not allowed to eat pork for religious reasons; additionally, Muslims only eat halal meats. As for eating habits, the most important meal of the day in Lebanon is lunch, which takes place around 2:00pm; often the family gathers together to eat lunch. While previously unpopular, "fad diets" are becoming more common in Lebanon.

Personal Hygiene



Lebanese teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. In general, Lebanese students keep bathrooms clean, however many homes have household help who do this. Muslim students who pray five times a day perform a ritual ablution before each prayer time. It is generally thought to be unclean in Lebanon to wear the same clothes two days in a row. If the clothes are still clean they will wear them twice, but not necessarily two days in a row. Most of the Lebanese teenagers do not change clothes upon returning home.



Population
6, 825,442



Square Miles
6,356

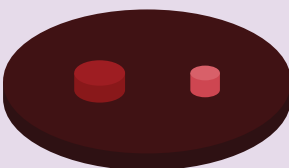


Currency
Lebanese Pound

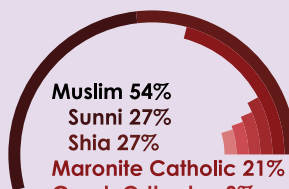


Literacy rate
93%

Literacy rate
97%



Arab 95%
Armenian 4%
Other 1%



Muslim 54%
Sunni 27%
Shia 27%
Maronite Catholic 21%
Greek Orthodox 8%
Greek Catholic 6.5%
Druze 5.6%
Other 4.9%



Liberia

Family Life



The Liberian household consists of members of the immediate and extended family. The number of people living in a typical household varies according to the family's income. There is an average of four to five children per family and in some rural areas, where it is common for men to take on more than one wife, there will be significantly more. Children live with their parents until they are financially independent and move out when they get married. In rural areas, it is common for women to marry as young as 14 or 15, in urban areas it is illegal before the age of 18. Family roles are quite traditional in Liberia. Men are expected to be the

main financial providers and maintain primary authority over the household and family. Women are expected to handle all childcare and household duties. The kitchen is solely the domain of the women. In urban areas, it is becoming more common to have a woman work outside of the home. Rural women are often encouraged to engage in farming and become a housewife early on in life.

Teen Life: Siblings do share everything in common except for under clothes. Teenagers do not normally ask for permission to use family member items if the item is available. The younger brother can use his older brother's item without asking for permission if the older brother is not using it at a given time and vice versa.

Responsibilities: Teenagers are responsible for managing their time between school, activities, jobs, social activities including transportation to any of these functions.

Parental Involvement: Parents are not in frequent contact with their children's teachers but may do so when they have concerns. In most cases, the parent's first line of contact is the school principal or vice principal. A student may have more than 10 teachers teaching different subjects for a given class. The parents only have the opportunity to meet with school staff at the end of every period/semester to receive the child's progress report. Report cards are hand delivered to the parent or guardian during the Parent-Teacher Association meetings, which are normally held at the end of each semester.

Pets: Most families do not have pets. However, dogs are the typical pets as opposed to cats, which many people hate because of the belief that it is an easy conduit for witchcraft. On the average, most dog owners keep their dogs outdoors to keep watch for intruders during the night.

School



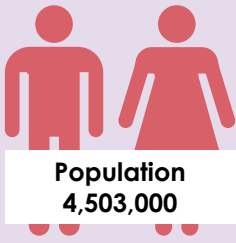
Formal state education begins at age four to five. Generally, students graduate at age 18, but in post war Liberia there is no age limit. Adult education was included for people above 25 to attend night school. In rural areas, boys are likely to attend a more informal 'poro society' school that teaches essential community skills such as typical farming methods and local remedies. Similarly, many young women attend 'Sande Society' schools where they will be taught basic childcare, cooking and household duties. In many cases, knowledge is passed on informally by parents to their children. There are nine government recognized universities that confer Bachelor's and Master's degrees. In addition, there are 14 government recognized community colleges that confer associate degrees and other certificate or diploma programs. Candidates are required to pass the West African Examination Council Exam to graduate from secondary school and to sit for the entrance exams for college admissions.

Classes: Students in Liberia study subjects that are assigned to their grade level and cannot choose their own subject. Depending on the grade level, they take between 8-12 subjects during a year.

Extracurricular Activities: Schools have different clubs that students are encouraged to join. For sports, students with exceptional skills in soccer, kickball, and basketball are vetted to join the teams. Academic team, music, drama, soccer, kickball and basketball are the major extra curriculum activities common among schools in Liberia. Other clubs include Journalism club and Health club. Extracurricular activities are not mandatory but attract students who have interests in specific activities.



Monrovia



Population
4,503,000



Square Miles
43,000

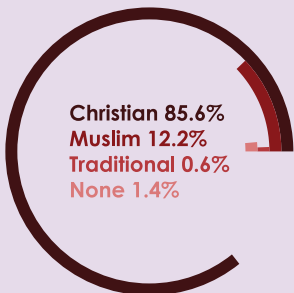
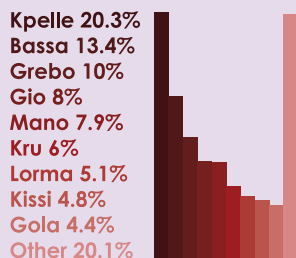


Currency
Liberian Dollar



Literacy rate
42%

Literacy rate
73%



School Relationships: Students in Liberia refer to their teacher as Mr., Ms. or Mrs. They regard teachers as role models and guardians outside of the home. They hold teachers in high esteem and show great respect, especially when having conversation or during instructional period.

School Rules and Attire: Liberian schools have a zero tolerance policy regarding fighting, bullying, and sexual harassment. The repercussions include suspension and expulsion. Students caught cheating are punished with an F grade in the course. In rare cases, students are expelled. Students wear uniforms. Boys wear shirts and pants with matching socks that match the uniform. Boys must tuck their shirt in, wear belts on their pants at all time and wear dress shoes at all time. Similarly, girls wear skirts and blouses, dress shoes and socks that match the uniform.

Returning from Exchange: Liberian school system is similar to the school system in the United States. The students do not have to repeat a year after the exchange year.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: Teenagers in Liberia sometimes socialize in group, and sometimes one on one. They love to go to the soccer field or the movie theater to socialize.

Friendships: It is culturally acceptable for teenage boys to socialize with teenage girls whether one on one or in a group. Teenagers make most of their friends through school or extra-curricular activities, and not necessarily from family or neighborhood connections. Their closest friends are not their cousins or neighbors.

Communication Styles: The community in Liberia is seen as an extension of family. It is considered normal for children to be disciplined by people from outside of the family group. Corporal punishment is an acceptable and common form of punishment. Elders are highly regarded and well respected in Liberian communities. Younger people are not allowed to offer a hand shake to their elders; rather they bow their head and slightly bend their knees as a sign of respect.

Food and Culture



Religion: As Christianity and Islam are the dominant religions, Liberia celebrates holidays like Easter, Christmas, Ramadan and Eid. Many rural dwellers are Africanists who believe in nature and superstitions.

Guest Culture: Guests are often welcomed with food, drinks or Cola nuts depending on the local tradition. A guest may decline food and drinks but will not decline Cola nuts in regions where the offering of Cola nuts to guests is widely practiced. In most instances, a guest is welcomed with only water and it is not a big deal if the guest declines the offer.

Lunch and Diets: Rice is the staple food in Liberia. A typical is rice with fish or meat, and a sauce, often spicy. A typical Liberian is accustomed to one meal per day, specifically around the afternoon period (12-3pm). Most parents will provide a snack of bread for their children before the regular meal. In both rural and urban areas, food is often cooked on top of charcoal or firewood. Only a minority of people from urban areas may have experience using gas or electric cookers. Most fish and meat is smoked, as there are no refrigerators. Most Liberians do not have experience with modern domestic appliances such as microwaves, toasters, stoves, and fridges.

Personal Hygiene

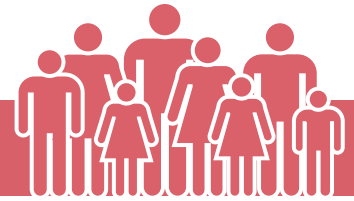


People take baths regularly and brush their teeth daily. Deodorant use is normal. In rural areas, non-Muslims use leaves with deodorizing properties and Muslims tend to use water. Most Liberians may not be accustomed to western modern bathrooms. Clothes are washed by hand or by using a washboard. In villages, clothes are taken to the rivers and washed by hand. Young Liberians are very proud of their appearance. Clothes in good condition and that fit well are highly valued.



Libya

Family Life



In most cases, a household consists of the parents and their children. However, if one of the grandparents is too old to live independently, they would stay with the family. Also, in rare instances, some families share a house (for example, if a family has a very large house, they would give their children a section of the house once they are married). Depending on the family, either fathers or mothers are the sole authority figures in the family; other times, fathers and mothers share a joint authority. As most families in Libya cannot afford to hire help, it is mainly the mother's duty to clean and take care of the house and do the cooking for all the members of the family. Depending on the open-mindedness of the husband or family, some women work while others do not. However, recently that has been changing due to the financial situation in the country, as more women are entering the job

market to contribute to the household income. Most families do not have a problem with women in professional careers. Most families in Libya do not eat breakfast together due to different schedules; however, families do gather together for lunch and dinner if possible.

Teen Life: In most cases, siblings share everything and usually do not ask for permission to use each other's things first, unless their sibling needs the item. Teenagers are mostly dependent upon their parents' decisions, and while some families would encourage their children to express their opinion, in some others it is disrespectful to disagree with their parents.

Responsibilities: Teenagers in Libya are not expected to budget their money and are usually given small allowances on either a daily or weekly basis. As parents pay for their children's clothing, personal shopping, and extracurricular activities, most teens use their allowance for phone credit or fast food. While girls in Libya typically have chores around the house and help their mothers with the cleaning and cooking, boys hardly have any chores around the house, which is due to the cultural notion that boys are superior to girls. This is also why some women in Libya are not permitted to work. In most cases, children never cook, and they are not expected to unless they are the eldest girl amongst their siblings. While the main responsibility of teenagers is to take care of school work, some do need reminders to balance their school and personal lives.

Parental Involvement: Traditional families in Libya tend to spend most of their time together. However, it is becoming quite normal for all of the family members to have some time for themselves to do any activities on their own. Parents are not always in direct contact with their children's schools, and some schools do not require parent-teacher meetings. However, the student's report card needs to be signed by their parents to confirm that they have received it. Also, if a student broke the rules or had failing grades, their parents would be officially summoned to meet with the school administration. Most parents of teenagers in Libya are illiterate when it comes to computers and the internet, so most parents are not aware of the dangers and risks of using the internet.

Pets: The most common types of pets in Libya are cats and birds; however, it is uncommon for most families to have any pets, especially those living in apartments. Given prayer restrictions, dogs in Libya are never allowed into the house. Many Muslims consider a dog's saliva to be unclean, so if the dog drools in an area of the house, it prevents a person from praying in that area. Therefore, people in Libya do not have dogs inside the house. However, overseas staff always tells incoming YES students that if their host family has a dog, they should simply explain to the family that they need a space for prayer in an area of the house where the dog is not allowed.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: Normally, teens in Libya do not have friends of the opposite sex, but they could be friends within groups. One-on-one friendships are usually considered a relationship, but this depends on the family and how the children were raised. Some parents still see friendships with the opposite sex as taboo, while others are very open-minded about it.

Friendships: Teenagers socialize both in groups and one-on-one, but it is normal to find closer one-on-one friendships within the same group. Both ways are considered appropriate in Libya, and the choice is left up to the individual. In most cases, Libyan teenagers make their friends at school and, on a smaller scale, amongst their neighbors and family. In general, Libyans are generous with their friends. They may buy things or insist on paying and treating their friends, as this practice is considered traditional. While it may be a polite gesture, it is expected that the other party will either pay for themselves through insisting or that they will pay for the other the next time they go out (also after insisting).

Communication Styles: In most cases, teenagers in Libya do not communicate how they feel to their parents because it might be considered disrespectful, especially if it is in disagreement. Students generally feel more comfortable expressing themselves and their negative feelings to their peers, friends, and siblings. However, on rare occasions, a family would have an open line of communication where all members are considered equal and capable of voicing their opinion. Even still, there are certain things that children do not feel comfortable sharing with their family, such as having a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is important as it shows respect. However, it is refrained from for religious reasons, especially with members of older generations or more religious people.

Cultural Norms: In Libya, it is normal for people to stand close together without it being awkward. For example, even when talking with someone they do not know, it is not unusual for someone to high five or touch the other person's arm during a conversation. However, it should be noted that while this might be okay for today's teens, it is highly frowned upon by the older generations, which is due in part to religion and in part to culture. For that reason, many people in Libya do not shake hands with the opposite sex. While teenagers would interact informally with their siblings and cousins who are close to them in age, they are supposed to treat and address those older than them with respect.

School



Tripoli

All public schools in Libya are separated by gender, so they are either all-boy or all-girl schools. International and private schools are normally co-ed, but boys and girls do not sit next to each other.

Classes: Libyan students are evaluated on their written and oral exams, behavior and class conduct, attendance, and homework; however, most of the grade is based on written exam scores.

In Libya, each class of students is assigned a room, and the teachers are the ones that rotate between classrooms. Students are required to take a fixed set of subjects each year in order to matriculate to the next grade. In a very limited number of international schools, students are able to take subjects at different levels of difficulty.

School Relationships: Students in Libya address their teachers by “teacher + name” or simply “teacher.” They never call teachers by their first name only.

Extracurricular Activities: Extracurricular activities in Libya are not offered at school, but rather at private institutions and businesses. For this reason, only wealthy families can afford these types of opportunities.

School Rules and Attire: Cell phone usage is prohibited at schools in Libya; however, it is not well controlled, especially at boys’ schools, so most students use their cell phones in class. The punishment for such behavior is usually taking the phone away from the student until their parents come to the school. As for fighting, social workers or the administration at the school will break up a fight, sometimes with the help of school guards, and the students would be suspended.

Most schools require a uniform, though boys’ public schools are less strict in that regard as long as the student is wearing the required school colors. At all girls’ public schools, girls are required to wear a grey suit with a white scarf for the uniform. International schools do not require a uniform, while some private schools do.

Returning from Exchange: Given frequent changes in Libya’s Ministry of Education, the situation for returning YES students also changes from year to year. If students are able to get their American transcripts stamped by the Libyan Embassy in Washington, DC, they can submit their transcriptions to the Ministry of Education for review upon their return to Libya. The Ministry of Education decides whether or not the year spent in the U.S. counts towards the student’s graduation. If the Ministry of Education decides that the transcript from the U.S. is not valid, the student will be required to repeat the year.

Food and Culture



Religion: In Libya, there is a religious service that is held once a week on Friday for Muslims, and men and boys have to attend that on a weekly basis. Other than that, Muslims in Libya would choose whether to perform their prayers at home or at a mosque during the rest of the week. Some Muslims also go to mosque on a daily basis during the month of Ramadan. Many girls wear the hijab (headscarf) as a part of their religion, and they are not supposed to uncover their hair in front of men who are not their fathers, uncles, nephews, or brothers.

Holidays: Muslims observe the holy month of Ramadan, during which they fast from dawn to sunset; the purpose of Ramadan is for Muslims to understand how those in need feel when they do not have enough to eat or drink. During Ramadan, families sometimes invite their families and friends to eat together. People will also help the poor and orphans during this time. Eid al-Fitr occurs for three days after the 30 days of fasting for Ramadan. Eid al-Fitr begins with prayers, and then the family gathers for lunch and to visit relatives and friends. Eid al-Adha falls three months and ten days after Eid al-Fitr and lasts for four days. During Eid al-Adha, each family is supposed to slaughter a sheep, if they are financially capable, and donate a fourth of it to the poor. Another important holiday is the anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, Mawlid an-Nabi. This holiday is usually celebrated with a traditional dish called “Aseeda” for breakfast, and fireworks at night.

Guest Culture: It is considered rude for a guest to decline eating or drinking at a host’s home in Libya, and a guest should accept at least one thing offered by the hosts. It is also customary for hosts to offer food to their guests more than once. In general, the host has to show the guest that they are happy to have them and show their generosity, otherwise it is considered rude. Even if the guest has a reason for declining (perhaps because they are fasting or cannot chew for example), they should accept the offering anyways, rather than saying anything, because then the host would feel pressured to offer something that the guest likes.

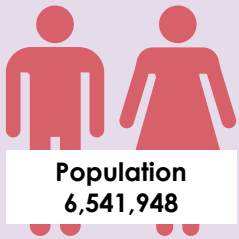
Lunch and Diets: As Libya is a Muslim country, the main food restrictions are mainly alcohol and pork. Additionally, Muslims keep a halal diet, which means that the meat (sheep, cow, camel) has been slaughtered in the Islamic way. It is also common in Libya for a family to eat from the same bowl. Some traditional dishes are only eaten by hand rather than with utensils. For lunch, students either bring their own food from home or buy lunch with money from their parents depending on personal preference or financial ability.

Personal Hygiene



Teenagers in Libya generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. Teenagers will also perform a ritual ablution before each prayer (five times a day). It is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row; however, if the clothes are still clean, students will wear them twice, but not two days in a row.

Also, Libyan teenagers are never expected to do their own laundry, hence they do not know how to use the washing machine or the dryer; usually their mothers or older sisters would take care of laundry. Teenagers have one towel in their bathroom. Girls also have a separate towel for their hair and face. They may use the same towel more than once before washing it. It is also customary for teenagers to change their clothes upon returning home into something more comfortable.



Population
6,541,948



Square Miles
679,362

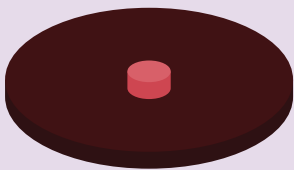


Currency
Libyan Dinar

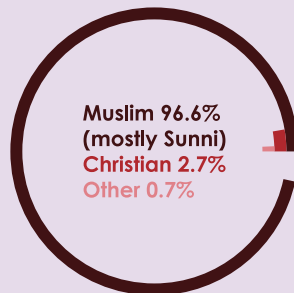


Literacy rate
85.6%

Literacy rate
96.7%



Berber and Arab 97%
Other 3%

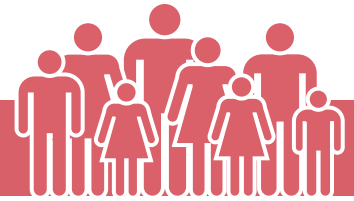


Muslim 96.6%
(mostly Sunni)
Christian 2.7%
Other 0.7%



Mali

Family Life



In Mali, most households have parents, grandparents, children, aunts, uncles or cousins living in the same house. Most of the time, men are financially responsible for the family, but women contribute whenever necessary. From the outside it may be perceived as though it is the father who has the authority to make decisions, however, the mother is also behind all the important decisions in the family. In the urban areas of Mali where many students are from, meals may be eaten all together as a family, or separately depending on family members' schedules. In the rural areas, families eat together during all the three meals of the day. In

Mali, it is considered respectful to allow family members to spend time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, to socialize with friends or to simply relax.

Teen Life: Most of the time, siblings and friends share clothes, shoes, and games. Depending on the relationship, they may or not ask permission to use other items. Teenagers are generally dependent upon their parents.

Responsibilities: Students are responsible for keeping track of extracurricular activities, keeping up with academics, taking care of the family courtyard, and his or her bedroom. Financially, they are expected to budget their money for social activities and for buying personal items. In the capital city of Mali, most families have housekeepers. Girls help mothers with household activities and boys help fathers with the outdoor activities and chores. In rural areas women do most of the work and men are responsible financially and for ensuring there is enough food. Generally, students obtain money from parents or relatives, but some do work or sell small items to get extra money. Boys generally don't cook nor do they do their own laundry.

Parental Involvement: Malian parents do not get involved with their students extracurricular activities. Many Malian parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. Generally in Mali, children know more about new technology than parents, but parents do their best to protect their children. Most students don't have a computer at home. It may be possible that if Malian students are put in an environment where they have easy access to a computer, they may be tempted to use computer privileges to an excess. Overall, children normally use mobile devices for internet browsing. Very few parents control their children's usage of computer/mobile/Internet.

Pets: A lot of families have pets. They are normally kept outside. Malians usually have dogs and cats for pets and sometimes pigeons.

School



In Mali, students generally have weekly tests, but each teacher also has the ability to test any student at any time to assess his or her level and to provide opportunities to advance independently.

Classes: Students stay in the same classroom and teachers move from class to class. Boys and girls study in the same classes in Mali and are not seated apart in class. There are however, special Catholic schools for girls only and the merdersa (also known as 'madrasa' or school) for Arabic language learning students where boys and girls are separated. Students do not have an opportunity to study subjects at different levels of difficulty or to choose their school subjects.

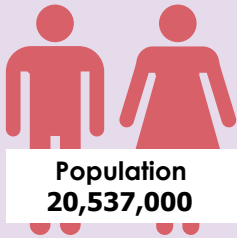
School Relationships: Students show respect by addressing their teachers as "Sir" or "Mrs."

Extracurricular Activities: Most of the time, students participate in extracurricular activities through the community. Extracurricular activities can also be found at school, though typically only through private Catholic schools. Sports like soccer and gymnastics, and clubs are available for the students.

School Rules and Attire: Schools prohibit the use of cell phones and fighting is not allowed. Most private schools have a uniform. Students from public schools do not have a specific uniform. They just need to dress decently. Those from private schools have various uniforms; normally a dress for girls and a shirt and pants for boys.



Bamako



Population
20,537,000



Square Miles
478,839

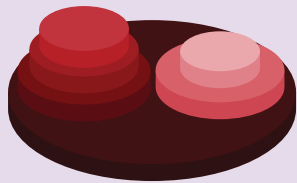


Currency
West African
CFA Franc

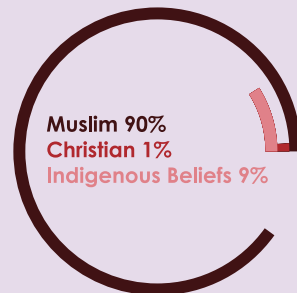


Literacy rate
22%

Literacy rate
45%



Mande 50%
(Bambara, Malinke,
Soninke)
Fula 17%
Voltaic 12%
Songhai 6%
Tuareg and Moor 10%
Other 5%



Returning from Exchange: Students normally pass to the next class after their exchange year. However, some parents prefer that their children repeat the year. Those who do their senior year in America have 3 options:

Option 1: They prepare to do the baccalaureate exam while in the United States because they usually return in time for the exam.

Option 2: Some look for admission in American universities before coming back. Therefore, they go back to the USA once they have their visa.

Option 3: Others prefer to repeat the year to take the baccalaureate exam



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: In most Malian families, it is not acceptable for girls and boys to socialize with the opposite sex. However, there are families who accept it.

Friendships: Malian teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate and the choice is left up to the individual. Malian teenagers make most of their friends through common activities, and not necessarily from family or neighborhood connections. The concept of sharing money depends on the relationship; close friends share money or borrow from each other. Friendship means mutual support, sharing the same interests, hanging out together, etc.

Eye Contact: In Mali, eye contact with an elder is considered disrespectful.

Food and Culture



Religion: Amongst most families in Mali, going to the mosque is an individual activity. However, you will find families who consider it a family activity. Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, are celebrated with family. It is considered very important to be with family during celebrations. Many Malians return to family villages to celebrate important holidays.

Holidays: In Mali they celebrate Christmas, New Year and all the important holidays linked to African history and at international level such as Labor Day which is May 1st and African Day is May 25th. Holidays are celebrated with family. During the two major Islamic feasts, people will visit relatives to make wishes and have fun.

Guest Culture: Guests normally accept food or drink offered to them because refusing it could be considered rude. If the food or drink can cause health problems, the person will just explain that.

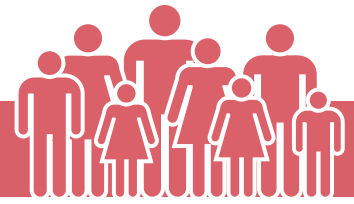
Lunch and Diets: Food portions are large in Mali. Eating leftovers is a common practice too. Students normally go home for lunch, but some buy food from the school restaurant and others pack a cold lunch. However, Malians prefer hot meals.

Personal Hygiene



It is typical for Malian teens to shower two to three times per day. It is acceptable to wear the same clothes two days in a row and to wear the same clothes twice before washing. Malians typically do morning greetings after washing their faces and mouths. The U.S. concept of bathroom hygiene is quite different than that in Mali. Malians like to wear shoes in the restroom rather than being barefoot, which is more common in the U.S. Leaving the bathroom floor or walls wet is common in Mali, and occurs when Muslims do ablutions before prayer. Some students face challenges adapting to the cleanliness of the bathroom in the U.S. Most Malian teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use. Malians typically change clothes upon entering the house after work or school.

Morocco



Family Life



In Morocco, it is not uncommon for family members from multiple generations to live together in one house. Many mothers stay home and do not work. Much of this depends on the arrangements between the parents, and it is very acceptable for mothers to work, as well. In most of the cases, the father makes final decisions in the Moroccan family, but it is all based on consultation with the mother. In Morocco, girls help their mothers with the daily household chores. Boys are also asked to clean their rooms. Meals in Morocco are often eaten communally. In Morocco, members of the family are entitled to have their own time and privacy. In their free time, family members can practice their individual

activities but must respect family rules, like curfews.

Teen Life: If a Moroccan child owns something, it is generally his or her own, and not understood to be the shared property of siblings. This includes clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first. In Morocco, teenagers cannot work or have part-time jobs. Teenagers receive their allowances from their parents and spending is monitored by parents. Moroccan teenagers are expected to show respect to their parents with formality. However, informality is very common between siblings.

Responsibilities: In Morocco, the responsibility of cooking falls primarily to the mother, and sometimes to the teenage daughter, but very rarely to boys.

Parental Involvement: In Morocco, parents monitor internet use and how much time their children spend online, as well as what students search for when they go online. Internet usage is seen as a privilege.

Not all Moroccan parents are in direct contact with their children's schools. However, many parents do monitor the performance of their children at school very closely. Moroccan teenagers are dependent on their parents in almost every aspect of their lives.

Pets: Most Moroccan families do not have pets. Some families may have cats and few might have dogs. It is uncommon for pets to be allowed inside the home in Morocco.

School



Classes: In Morocco, students are evaluated on in-class exams, regional exams, and exams at the national level. Attendance and homework are also a big portion of student evaluations and final grades. In some high schools, students remain in one classroom while teachers rotate, while in others, students take classes in different classrooms. Almost all of the Moroccan high schools are co-ed. Boys and girls are not separated in the classroom.

In Morocco, students do not get to choose classes they want. However, students are able to choose the track they would like to study (i.e. sciences, economics, or humanities), which must be approved by the school administration. Once students are on a particular track, there is a list of classes that they must take. Students again are unable to choose these courses but all students study the same subjects with peers enrolled in the same track.

School Relationships: In most cases, the relationship between Moroccan students and their teachers is very formal. Students call their teachers by their last names and use formal titles like Mr. or Mrs.

Extracurricular Activities: Most, if not all of Moroccan high schools, do not offer extracurricular activities. In general, very few extracurricular activities are offered by the schools. Students must belong to private sports clubs or other clubs to participate in activities. Because Moroccan high schools do not have extracurricular activities, very few parents are involved in their children's activities.

School Rules and Attire: Fighting and other behavioral issues lead to warnings, probations, and sometimes dismissal from the school. Some schools require students to have some type of uniform, but this is not the case for all schools in Morocco.

Returning from Exchange: When they return home, Moroccan YES students are often more accustomed to the American school system of education and find it very difficult to readjust to the Moroccan school system. Students will often repeat a year after their exchange.

Rabat

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: It is acceptable for Moroccan teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually.

Friendships: Moroccan teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. In Morocco, teenagers make their friends through school, neighbors, and extended family members. It is uncommon for Moroccan teenagers to share money with each other.

Communication Styles: Moroccan teenagers tend to be indirect when communicating with their elders. The use of body language and other forms of communication are more common. Communicating negative emotions directly to an elder is uncommon, but students may communicate negative feelings to siblings.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is important in Morocco and depends on the gender of the person being addressed.

Food and Culture



Religion: Teenagers are required to attend religious events and participate in all activities. Ramadan is a good opportunity to exchange visits with family members.

Holidays: Among celebrated holidays in Morocco are New Year, Muharram (Islamic New Year), Independence Manifesto Day, Mawlid an-Nabi, Eid al-Fitr, Ramadan, Green March, Moroccan Independence Day, and Eid al-Adha. Moroccans usually have a day off for both national and religious holidays. For religious holidays, Moroccans exchange visits between families and friends. It is also common to go to mosque for the Eid prayers.

When students are in the US, the most important religious celebration that they will miss is Eid al-Adha. During this holiday, Muslims in Morocco sacrifice a sheep which honors Abaraham who was going to sacrifice hi son.

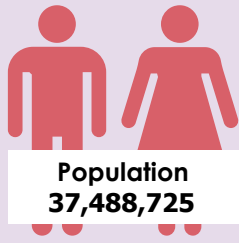
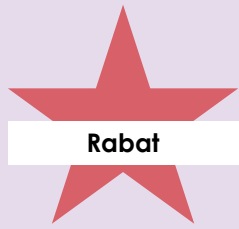
Guest Culture: Hospitality is one of the main values in Moroccan culture, and guests are treated very well. People will often offer guests food or drink, but it is not considered rude for a guest to politely decline. Americans will often take this response at face-value, and might not offer more than once or twice.

Lunch and Diets: Food portions are not very large in Morocco. Moroccans typically eat from the same dish. On Morocco, people may also eat leftovers, especially for dinner which is still considered to be a much smaller meal compared to lunch. Students are mostly accustomed to hot lunches but understand that cold lunches are popular in the U.S.

Personal Hygiene



Most Moroccans will shower once per day. It is generally thought to be unclean in Morocco to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear the same clothes twice without washing them. Moroccan teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them-towels are hung up and hygiene products are put away. In Morocco, each member of the family has his/her own towel, and sometimes has more than one. Teenagers change into house clothes when they return from school.



Population
37,488,725



Square Miles
172,413

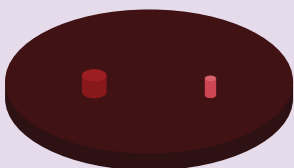


Currency
Moroccan Dirham

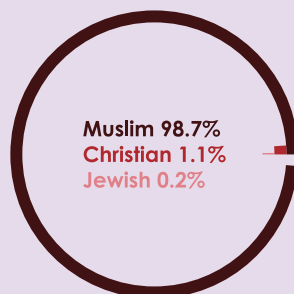


Literacy rate
62%

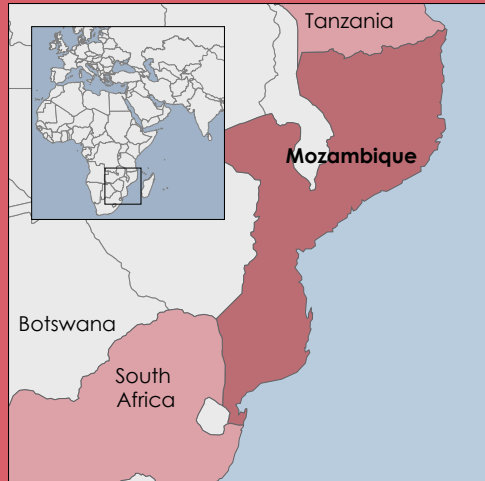
Literacy rate
78.6%



Arab-Berber 99.1%
Other 0.7%
Jewish 0.2%



Muslim 98.7%
Christian 1.1%
Jewish 0.2%



Mozambique



Family Life

In Mozambique, students are accustomed to living in large households composed of parents, children, grandparents and sometimes uncles and cousins. Mozambican teens interact formally with their family members. It is rare for a Mozambican family to have a housekeeper or hired help. Students are expected to clean their room, bathroom, do their own laundry and contribute to the upkeep of the house as well. Both parents are professionals and financially responsible for the family; they exert equal authority in all household decisions. Family members are allowed to do their own activities and socialize with their friends or to relax, as long as they respect their curfew. In Mozambique, meals are eaten all together as a

family.

Teen Life: In Mozambique, it is common for siblings to borrow clothes and electronics with permission from the owner. Mozambican students value respect, and permission is typically granted for most requests. Teens in Mozambique are mostly dependent upon their parents.

Responsibilities: Mozambican students rarely work even part-time or small jobs. Whenever they are given some money from their parents it is expected to be used for transportation to and from school. The money may be given daily, weekly, or monthly. In Mozambican families, it is not uncommon for teenagers, both boys and girls, to have to cook for either themselves or for their family.

Parental Involvement: Few families in Mozambique have access to the internet at home. Students may be very happy to have 24/7 internet access in the U.S. and may have difficulty in limiting access on their own. Mozambican parents are in contact with their children's schools through their student. Periodically, the parents are invited to have a meeting with their children's school to share their academic progress.

Pets: In Mozambique pets stay mostly outside and are not allowed to go anywhere inside the house.

School



In Mozambique, there are two types of schools – general and technical-professional. In the technical-professional schools, students have different classmates in each of their classes, while in the general schools, students have the same classmates in each of their classes and teachers rotate to the different classrooms. Boys and girls study in the same classrooms in Mozambique and are not seated apart in class.

Classes: In Mozambique, students generally take six to nine subjects at a time and each class occurs every other day. Mozambican high school classes generally have around 40 to 50 students. In Mozambique, students are evaluated through homework, class participation, periodic written and oral exams, and sometimes on classroom behavior. Subjects in Mozambique are taught with the same level of difficulty, there are no remedial or AP courses available. There is a set of subjects to be taken in each grade and they all have the same level of difficulty. Students are only allowed to choose subjects in 11th grade.

School Relationships: Students in Mozambique show their respect to their teachers by using the formal titles “Mr.” or “Mrs.”

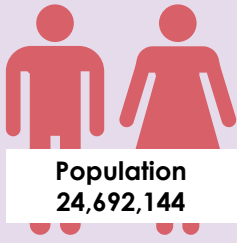
Extracurricular Activities: Schools in Mozambique do not offer extracurricular activities. Students can join local private sports clubs or find other community offerings at their own expense. Parents in Mozambique support and help their children in extracurricular activities, but the initiative to participate in the activity must always come from him or her; parents rarely arrange activities for their kids. Activities normally include soccer, netball, dance, athletics, basketball, English, and debate clubs

School Rules and Attire: Many Mozambican high schools have a “zero tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe. Students have uniforms or dress formally for school. This generally depends on which school the student attends. In public schools, students have to wear uniform in the colors stipulated by the government for all public schools in the country. The colors for public school uniforms are dark blue for trousers, skirts and ties, and white for shirts. There is no specification for shoes. Private schools, however, are free to pick whichever color they find suitable for their uniforms.

Returning from Exchange: The year in the U.S. does not count towards the students’ academic progress. This depends on the grade in which the student was when they left for the US and their academic performance while they are away. In some instances, students return home and are able to proceed to university using their US high school diploma. In others, students have to write their grade 12 exams at an external testing center in order to get high school diploma while those needing to go onto twelfth grade can do so without having to repeat grade 11. It is very rare that a student has to repeat a grade after returning from program.



Maputo



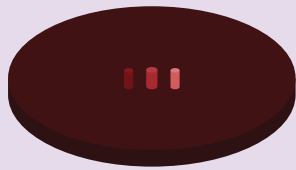
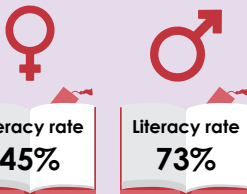
Population
24,692,144



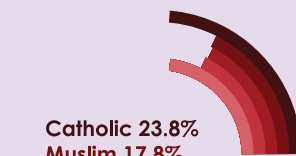
Square Miles
309,496



Currency
Mozambican
Metical



African 99.66%
(Makhuwa, Tsonga, Lomwe, Sena, and others)
Europeans 0.06%
Euro-Africans 0.2%
Indians 0.08%



Catholic 23.8%
Muslim 17.8%
Zionist Christian 17.5%
Other 17.8%
None 23.1%

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: Mozambican teens socialize in groups and one-on-one, and both are considered appropriate. It is also acceptable for teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually.

Friendships: Mozambican teens make most of their friends through their neighborhood connections as well as their common activities. Friendship means brotherhood or sisterhood, people with whom they feel comfortable and who share common interest and activities. In Mozambique, greeting someone every day is expected and it involves shaking hands, kissing cheeks, hugs, and a small conversation. It is uncommon for Mozambican students to share their money with each other.

Communication Styles: Mozambicans tend to communicate indirectly. Negative emotions are considered personal in Mozambique and are not to be expressed to their friends or family. In terms of personal space, Mozambicans share the same living space and are very close with friends. They typically want to discuss everything with each other and assume that they are invited to participate in all family and friend activities. Mozambicans try to be punctual, but arriving 15 minutes after the agreed upon meeting time is still considered "on time."

Eye Contact: Making eye contact is considered disrespectful in Mozambique, especially between youth and elders.

Cultural Norms: In Mozambique, girls typically do the cooking and boys may do the gardening. It may be difficult at first for a boy to feel comfortable doing chores in the U.S. that are considered female chores back home.

Food and Culture



Religion: In Mozambique, attending religious services is often a family event, and the social aspect of attending the services, being part of the community, is often just as important as the religious aspect.

Holidays: Mozambicans are very outgoing people who enjoy socializing. This makes holidays in the country extremely vibrant. Families usually come together to celebrate public holidays. Religious holidays are often celebrated at churches and mosques, with activities typically lasting 1 or 2 days. It is also normal for people to dress up in religious costume to mark certain holidays. In addition, national holidays are celebrated with specific themes declared by the government. Special capulana (sarong typically worn by women) designs are launched around special days on the national calendar. It is also normal for all citizens to gather at places such as the Heroes Square to pay tribute to those who fought for the independence of Mozambique. It is possible that students will miss these vibrant gatherings with family and friends, the festive meals, and the opportunity to get new clothes made from capulanas in celebration of a national holiday. Among the most celebrated holidays are: Heroes Day (February 3rd), Women's Day (April 7th), Independence Day (June 25th), Day of Peace (October 4th); Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are nationally celebrated

Guest Culture: Mozambicans generally offer guests food and will do so more than twice if necessary. However, politely declining is not seen as rude.

Lunch and Diets: Halal meat is easily found everywhere in Mozambique and meals are always prepared from scratch. Food portions in Mozambique can be considered average when compared to American ones. It is normal for people to eat leftovers for breakfast or even lunch. Students will generally pack their own lunch or buy food from school tuck-shops or street vendors depending on their family background and preferences – they are accustomed to both cold and hot lunches.

Personal Hygiene

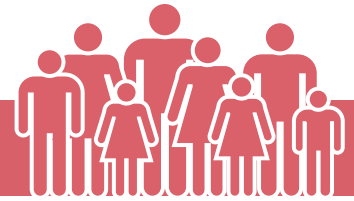


In Mozambique, it is normal to wear clothes two days in a row if they do not show any outward signs of being dirty. All clothes washing is done by hand in Mozambique, so students will need to learn about using washing machines and dryers and understand that frequent washing will not hurt clothes. It is normal in Mozambique to take a shower and change clothes when returning from school or work. Mozambican teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them (towels are hung up and hygiene products are put away). Most Mozambican teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body, and maybe a separate towel to dry their hair or face.



Nigeria

Family Life



Most households are composed of a mother, father and children, and many include grandparents, uncles, and aunts as well. Many houses are compound houses with people of different tribes and religions living there. This is more common among the less privileged families of Nigerian society. In most cases the father has the primary responsibility for care of the whole family in Nigeria. In some instances, working mothers in Nigeria supplement the family income. Typically the mother cares for the children and the home while the father works outside the house. Decision making authority is held by the father in Nigeria. In some less

traditional households, mothers may have more authority when the father is not around. Women cook for the family in Nigeria. In some families boys may cook occasionally. In most families in Nigeria, children eat separately from the adults. The wealthy and even lower to middle class families hire house help as labor is very inexpensive in Nigeria

Teen Life: Teens are accustomed to enjoying free time and individual time to themselves. Many parents are not made aware of what their children are doing, or where they are in their free time. In Nigeria, formal interaction with parents is expected in the home. Teens are at ease amongst each other and with their mothers however, the father is generally feared. In less traditional families, fathers interact much more easily with all family members. Teens may be informal amongst their siblings. Sharing is common with many small items, and in many instances no permission is required to use something belonging to another.

Responsibilities: Students receive an allowance to be spent on necessities like books and food at school and clothing. Families with very low incomes will not give pocket money to their children. Some students sell items on behalf of the family to contribute to family income.

Parental Involvement: Some less traditional Nigerian parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress however many do not take great interest. Internet use is not often monitored by parents in Nigeria and teens enjoy unrestricted access at the internet cafes. Most parents allow their children to plan their own activities and will provide spending money for these activities if needed. Parents have the final say on all decisions involving their children, and teens take advice given as their final course of action. Corporal punishment is common in Nigerian homes

Pets: Some Nigerian families keep pets such as cats and dogs however, most do not. If a family does have pets they are typically kept outside. It is more common for dogs to be either wild dogs or used as guard dogs.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: It is generally frowned upon by Nigerian parents if their children socialize with the opposite gender, especially one-on-one. Some less traditional parents will allow it, but with a warning to avoid anything that may cause a disgrace.

Friendships: Nigerian teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. Students make friends at school, through common activities and in the neighborhood. Friendship is taken very seriously in Nigeria and students will typically have one or two very close or intimate friends and a few others that are very casual. It is not common to share money amongst friends in Nigeria, but some do share when the friendship is very close.

Communication Styles: Communication is indirect in Nigeria and parents often have to question their children many times before the true nature of a situation or concern is discovered. Teens will sometimes hide negative emotions from their parents out of fear of punishment because it is seen as disrespectful to display anger or dissent.

Eye Contact: Teenagers do not make eye contact with elders in Nigeria as it is considered as a sign of disrespect.

Abuja

School



Classes: Student grades in Nigeria are assessed through homework, in-class tests and exams. Students remain in one classroom while teachers rotate. While some schools are all boy or all girl schools, the majority are co-ed and girls and boys are not seated apart. Students in the same class take the same predetermined subjects. Students are posted to Science, Commerce or Arts classes based on their strengths during junior secondary school (Jr High). Subject choice is mostly done by school authorities. Some science students that are very good in mathematics are allowed to offer additional/further mathematics as a choice.

School Relationships: Students have a formal relationship with their teachers in Nigeria. Students address teachers as Sir or Ma. Students do not say the name of their teacher.

Extracurricular Activities: Some schools have extracurricular opportunities for their students, and many friends are made through these activities. Extracurricular activities include: sports, reading club, debating society, music club, drama group, etc.

School Rules and Attire: No cell phones are allowed in school and fighting attracts severe punishment or suspension from school. Corporal punishment in school is common and accepted. Students wear uniforms to school. Type of uniform varies from school to school and from region to region. In Islamic areas, girls are required to wear hijab. For boys, it is mostly a shirt or kaftan (traditional long robe) and pants. In some schools, boys wear caps as part of their uniform. These may be berets or traditional hats, but not baseball caps. Uniforms for girls could be skirts or pants with shirts. In some schools, girls also may wear berets.

Returning from Exchange: Students rarely repeat a class after the exchange year. They move on to SS3, which is the equivalent of Grade 12.

Food and Culture



Religion: Attending religious services is a family and community event in Nigeria and is important among both Muslim and Christian families. Eid is a public holiday and is celebrated with feasting and visits to relatives. Muslim students fast during Ramadan.

Holidays: The following holidays are celebrated: Eid al-Fitr, Kabir, Mawlid an-Nabi, Christmas, Easter, New Year, Independence Day, Workers Day, Children's Day, Democracy Day

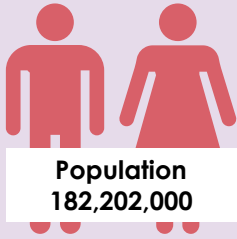
Guest Culture: Guests are expected to accept food or drink offer. Such offers may be done several times until the person accepts.

Lunch and Diets: Portions are large for Men and boys because they are considered to be physically active and engage in strenuous activities and therefore assumed to need more food. Eating of leftover meals is common. Students are used to hot or cold lunches. Most boys are not used to packing their own lunch.

Personal Hygiene



Typically in Nigeria students take one or two quick showers a day. In Nigeria, students generally aren't responsible for cleaning or tidying the bathroom after they've used it. Many students in Nigeria do not have towels and simply air dry. It is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row however it is not uncommon amongst poorer families. Clothes may be worn twice without washing them as long as they are not visibly dirty.



Population
182,202,000



Square Miles
356,667

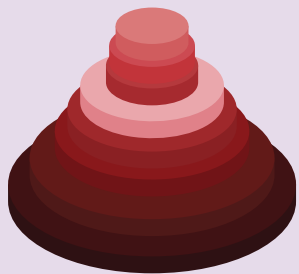


Currency
Naira

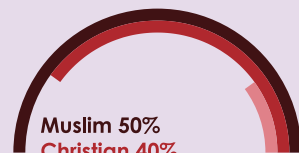


Literacy rate
49.7%

Literacy rate
69.2%



Hausa and Fulani 29%
Yoruba 21%
Igbo (Ibo) 18%
Ijaw 10%
Kanuri 4%
Ibibio 3.5%
Tiv 2.5%
Other 12%





North Macedonia



Family Life

It is common for Macedonian families to include parents, their children, and sometimes grandparents. Usually, both parents work and have the same monetary responsibilities for the family. The authority figure in “more modern families” could be either parent or both, but there are families where the father remains the lead authority and his opinion is the most respected. Most activities are pursued together as a family. Some individual time is considered fine, but when a family member spends too much time alone (staying in their room, for example), it can lead the family to think that something is wrong.

Teen Life: Siblings in North Macedonia tend to share most things, like clothing, accessories, books, and electronics. They usually do not ask first before using these items, unless they think the other might need it. Macedonian students get a small amount of money every day to purchase food at school. It is very rare for Macedonian teens to have a job.

Responsibilities: Macedonian teenagers are expected by their parents to do well in school and get good grades. Typical Macedonian parents would expect their child to be responsible, and behave properly and respectfully towards others. It is uncommon for children to do chores or have tasks that help out around the house. It is also uncommon for Macedonian families to have a housekeeper or hired help. Usually the mother does most of the domestic labor like laundry, cooking, etc. Female teenagers sometimes help, and are probably able to prepare meals by themselves, unlike male teenagers, who are generally not taught to cook.

Parental Involvement: The most common way parents are involved in their children’s school activities are through parent-teacher meetings. These meetings occur four times per year (two per semester). Very interested parents can go to the school in between these meetings and ask about their student’s progress.

Some families in North Macedonia may have a household rule that limits how long a child can stay on the internet at home. However, most Macedonian teens tend to be more knowledgeable about the usage of internet than their parents, and most families do not have such strict rules.

Pets: A lot of Macedonian families do own pets, although usually these pets (cats and dogs) stay outside. Some families do keep pets indoors, though this is less common.

Personal Interactions



Teenagers in North Macedonia do not tend to make independent decisions but instead rely on their parents to make important decisions for them. Macedonian teenagers have a very direct style of communication, especially with their parents and other family members. They usually verbalize their feelings and opinions.

Mixed Gender Socializing: As in the U.S., Macedonian teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. It is perfectly acceptable for Macedonian teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them one-on-one.

Friendships: Friendship in North Macedonia is seen as a very close relationship with select few people that last for a lifetime. Macedonians take pride in having close friends and having strong friendships is an important part of a typical teenager’s life. Most teenagers make most of their friends through common activities, and not necessarily from family/neighborhood connections. Their closest friends might not be their cousins or neighbors but rather classmates or teammates. Macedonian teenagers tend to be generous and may buy or insist on paying for a coffee or a meal for their friends. This is a typical gesture, and friends tend to pay for one another when they go out together. Lending money to friends is also common.

Communication Styles: Students in North Macedonia are similar to students in the U.S. in the way they communicate, but may be a slightly more formal with parents and grandparents. In North Macedonia, teenagers are very direct when it comes to showing their feelings. However, showing negative emotions can be viewed as somewhat culturally inappropriate, particularly in public or in front of people one does not know well. The American concept of personal space is not common. People are very friendly in North Macedonia, and may sometimes show emotions physically (like by hugging and kissing on the cheeks).

Eye contact: Maintaining eye contact is a sign of respect in North Macedonia.

School



Skopje

Classes: An average day in a Macedonian high school lasts five to seven hours, and teaching is organized in 45 minute blocks. Students not only stay with the same classmates for all four years of high school, but they also stay in the same classroom all day while teachers rotate. Depending on the school, some class groups stay in the same room for all four years of high school.

Macedonian students have 13-15 classes per year, and all of them are obligatory. Usually students can choose if they want to take an extra class, but there are few options. Examples of extra classes include Latin or computer. Students have tests and oral exams throughout the year, or whenever the teacher feels it is necessary. The tests are not prescheduled, but most fall at the end of each quarter. A different grading system than the U.S. consisting of a five point scale, is used in North Macedonia, where 1 is the lowest grade and 5 is the highest.

School Relationships: In North Macedonia, students see their teachers only during class, and the teacher/student relationship is professional and formal. Outside of class, the teacher does not provide or oversee extracurricular activities nor are teachers friendly with students. The students address teachers formally as 'teacher' or Mr./Ms. Macedonian classrooms are not separated by gender and sharing spaces with the opposite gender is culturally acceptable.

Extracurricular Activities: While some private schools do offer after school activities for students, most public high schools in North Macedonia do not. However, some special clubs or "sections" can be found in a few schools such as an English club, theater group, etc. Most students, if they are interested in playing music or sports, go to private institutions or join sport teams in their neighborhoods or sport clubs, or simply play sports with friends in neighborhood parks and stadiums recreationally. There are no sports or clubs that are sponsored by the school. Students often participate in these sorts of private, afterschool activities.

School Rules and Attire: In North Macedonia, policies regarding cell phone usage or fighting do not exist. Students can use their cell phones at any time, even during class. U.S. schools' rules on cell phone use will be new for students from North Macedonia.

Generally, teenagers in North Macedonia dress similarly to American teenagers. In public high schools, students don't wear uniforms, though there are often dress codes. In private schools, students wear uniforms.

Returning from Exchange: After completing the YES program, students come back to North Macedonia and have to go to the Ministry of Education (MoE) to submit documents. This review allows their YES year in the U.S. count towards the student's institutional requirements with no need to repeat a school year at home. The most important document students must submit to the MoE is the transcript from their year in the U.S. with an "apostille stamp" (golden dry stamp). Without this stamp, the Ministry will not recognize the student's U.S. academic year.

Food and Culture



In North Macedonia, meals may be eaten all together as a family or separately, depending on family members' schedules. Other than food allergies or medical conditions, dietary restrictions are not very common. Some Macedonian families follow the Muslim religion's prohibition of not eating pork.

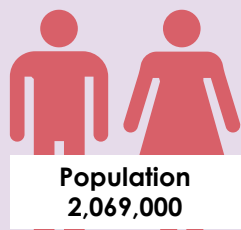
Religion: Some families in North Macedonia are religious, and go to either a mosque or a church, while others are secular. Elderly people attend services more often, like on holidays or every Sunday. Among Macedonian youth, attending services at either a church or mosque is not typical, even for holiday services

Holidays: Muslim families celebrate Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, which include fasting from sunrise to sunset; these families will usually invite guests to eat together in the evenings when they break their fasts. Many non-Muslim families celebrate Christmas and Easter. Eid al-Fitr, Christmas and Easter are recognized as national holidays.

Personal Hygiene



Cleanliness is very important for Macedonian teenagers, who typically shower daily. It is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row, although is not uncommon to wear one's jeans two days in a row for example if they are not visibly dirty. Usually in North Macedonia, mothers tend to do laundry for the entire family and this is not a teenager's responsibility.



Population
2,069,000



Square Miles
9,779

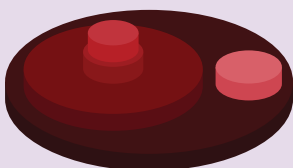


Currency
Macedonian
Denar

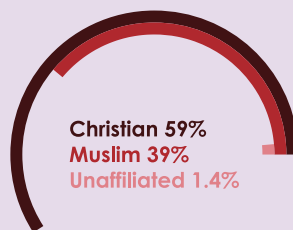


Literacy rate
46.6%

Literacy rate
69.7%



Macedonians 64%
Albanians 25%
Turks 3.8%
Romani 2.7%
Other 4.5%

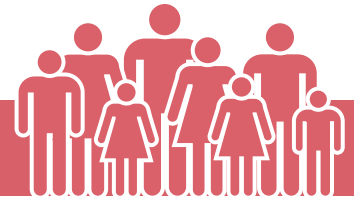


Christian 59%
Muslim 39%
Unaffiliated 1.4%



Pakistan

Family Life



Pakistani society holds on to extended family systems very tightly and family composition generally includes members of the extended family living in the home. There are nuclear families in the urban areas however it is not common. Families usually eat together. Pakistani families give each other space and family members usually have some things to do on their own. There is both family time and there is personal time. In Pakistan, women generally stay at home as homemakers. Even if they are professionals they take part in home chores. Decision making which affects the entire family is generally made by the father 90% of the time and by the mother 10%.

Teen Life: Teens maintain respectful behavior with parents and other adults of the family. Siblings are informal with each other. Teenagers are responsible for cleaning their own room, taking care of their belongings and helping the family with household work. No financial responsibility is expected from teenage children unless it is needed. Usually siblings share clothes with each other like party wear or work clothes. They are also used to sharing books, stationary, food items and jewelry. Things like food and books are at times kept in common areas for them to share, but whatever they share they need to ask for each other's permission.

Responsibilities: Depending on the family's financial situation, maids and helpers work in most middle class households. Girls also attend to house chores while boys generally do not. In Pakistan, it is uncommon for male teenagers to cook for themselves or for their family. Teenagers are dependent on their parents for allowance. Some manage their budgets regularly while others take allowances on a daily or weekly basis. In Pakistan, it is common to share money and is considered a good practice, especially between siblings to share money.

Parental Involvement: Parent Teacher Meetings are held in Pakistan, but not necessarily regularly except in some of the better schools. Most other schools send report cards home and parents are not as directly involved. Pakistani mothers generally attend to their children's educational needs. Usually Pakistani parents do not monitor or restrict what their children do online or the amount of time they spend online.

Pets: In Pakistan, pets are not common but some families do keep dogs, cats or birds. Dogs will typically be kept outside of the house.

School



The Pakistani educational system varies across the country. Evaluation is based on final exams once a year. As a result of these examinations, students are either allowed to move on to the next grade level or not. Homework assignments and periodic assessments are given, but final exams are the most important and exams are given daily.

Classes: In Pakistan, students usually have homerooms and students stay in that room while teachers rotate through the classrooms. Students often have the same teacher for more than one subject area. There are both gender-specific and co-educational schools in Pakistan. However, in co-ed schools, distance is generally maintained between boys and girls.

School Relationships: Pakistani culture requires students to have very formal behavior with teachers. A teacher in the classroom means that there are no jokes, no slacking off and no non-curricular discussions. Teachers are addressed by a title, Sir or Madam, and students show respect by standing up when the teacher walks in and they even stop walking if the teacher passes by.

Extracurricular Activities: Most schools have sports teams that students can participate in as well as drama clubs, event organizing committees and other opportunities. Social relationships and friendships are developed from co-curricular activities. Although Pakistani parents often visit schools to see their child participate in sports and co-curricular activities, they may not be very involved overall.

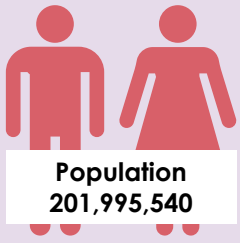
School Rules and Attire: Cell phone usage is generally not allowed at all in school in Pakistan. Fighting is also prohibited, however, many YES students may not grasp the severity of the consequences of verbal threats, fighting or breaking the rules in American high schools. Uniforms are mandatory in schools. In Pakistan, students wear uniform when they go to school. For girls, it is shalwar, kameez and dupatta, whereas boys wear trousers and shirt. Some schools prefer hijab for girls as well.

Returning from Exchange: Most students continue on with what would be the next class before going to the U.S. and taking exams. The year in the U.S. does not count in the Pakistani school system.

Personal Interactions



Islamabad



Population
201,995,540



Square Miles
340,509

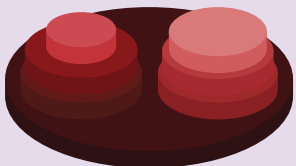


Currency
Pakistani Rupee



Literacy rate
42%

Literacy rate
69%



Punjabi 44.68%
Pashtun (Pathan) 15.42%
Sindhi 14.1%
Sariaki 8.38%
Muhajirs 7.57%
Balochi 3.57%
Other 6.28%

Muslim 95%
Sunni 75%
Shia 20%
Other 5%
(includes Christian and Hindu)

Mixed Gender Socializing: Pakistani parents prefer same gender social gatherings for their teenagers to socialize. Mixed gatherings may be avoided by parents. Students studying in a co-educational system may go out for lunches or trips together but most students do not socialize with the opposite gender. It is culturally acceptable for boys to hug, shake hands or jest with each other but not with girls. It is the same case with girls.

Friendships: In Pakistan, friendships are initiated in school. Family gatherings and neighborhood connections also play a vital part in establishing long term friendships. The primary mode of socializing for Pakistani teenagers is family gatherings. Boys usually socialize with their class fellows after school and play cricket or football matches with their neighboring friends. Girls visit each other or go out shopping. Some teenagers socialize in same-gender groups and go to restaurants.

Communication Styles: Pakistani students are not usually open about personal issues with their parents. They usually approach the same gender parent in order to communicate a personal issue that needs to be discussed. In the U.S., Pakistani students are generally comfortable with their same gender host siblings and find them to be helpful in communicating their concerns to host parents. The Pakistani family discipline system is very strong and children pay respect to their parents and don't argue with them. If they wish to express their opinions, they cannot yell at their parents, but rather try to communicate with them openly. This is also the same with friendships.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is one of the basic principles of communication and it is highly regarded in Pakistani culture. However, it is considered a symbol of respect by the youth to not maintain eye contact while talking to grandparents and respected elders.

Food and Culture



Religion: For Muslims, there are religious gatherings and processions that are attended by many people. Usually men go to mosques for performing prayers five times a day and women stay at home to perform prayers. Friday prayers hold a great significance as it is a congregational prayer and attendance at the mosque is higher.

Holidays: Ramadan is the month of the Islamic calendar in which it is obligatory for most Muslim adults and teenagers to fast daily from dawn till dusk for the entire month without food or drink. There are many traditions during Ramadan in Pakistan. The fast is broken at sunset usually with a sweet fruit or food, often dates. The family usually eats an early morning breakfast at dawn, known as sehri, prays and then follows their regular daily routine. At sunset they break the fast together and pray. Ramadan lasts either 29 or 30 days depending on when the new moon is sighted which begins the Eid al-Fitr holiday. Eid prayers are attended by men in the mosque while women perform Eid prayers at home. Eid al-Fitr is celebrated with new clothes; people visit each other, exchange gifts, cook sweet dishes, especially sheer khorma, baked noodles and milk. Ramadan is also a time of spiritual contemplation and practicing personal good behavior. Pakistani holidays include, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Eid Milad Alnabbi (Prophet Muhammad's Birthday) Shab-e-Baraat (Night of Emancipation) Shab-e-Mairaj (Night of the Journey and Ascension) and Ashura (the 9th and 10th of the Islamic month of Muharram). People in Pakistan celebrate holidays with great enthusiasm. They try to rejoice every moment with family, and friends. Some special foods and dishes associated with these holidays are cooked. These holidays are the time for family reunions and all family members are invited for dinners to enjoy these special dishes. The YES students would miss the family time, the special food dishes and the shared moments of joy people have on these festivities.

Guest Culture: People in Pakistan are quite hospitable. This hospitality is a part of the culture and people do a lot to treat their guests with different food and drink. It's a tradition that even if a guest says 'no', people will insist and make them eat something. This is one way to make them feel welcome. Sometimes, the host invites them to join for dinner as well.

Lunch and Diets: Usually there is less control over the food portions in Pakistan. The 'leftover' food is either consumed by family members the next day or handed over to house maids. Mothers try to cook fresh food daily and kids are mostly accustomed to eating hot lunch daily. A very few of them pack their lunches by themselves. They again need their mother's assistance to get their lunch box ready for school.

Personal Hygiene



It is customary to shower once or twice a day. It is generally thought to be unclean in Pakistan to wear the same clothes two days in a row. Girls generally wear clothing made of silk and do not wash them every time they are worn. Since schools and colleges have uniforms, the students have a habit of changing clothes immediately after they come from school and may take shower at that time as well. Most Pakistani homes have domestic help who keep the bathrooms clean and dry after use. Pakistanis usually use one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body and maybe a separate towel to dry their hair or face.



Philippines

Family Life



The common household in the Philippines is a one or two parent family with extended family members living in the same house. Same-gender parent families, while not uncommon, are also not the typical family type. Students' natural parents may not both be professionals and households may have a one-parent income. Fathers generally are the head of the family in terms of being the financial provider and making life-changing decisions for the entire family. However, mothers exert great influence over the daily behavior and discipline of their children. Filipino students may be hesitant to engage parents in open dialogue about decisions concerning themselves. They may be seen as indecisive as they are not used to making personal choices.

Teen Life: In terms of life-changing decision making that will impact the future of students, parents make the decisions. In terms of decision making related to money, students are totally dependent on their parents. In regards to school involvement, students have greater independence. Students are not used to making decisions without consulting their parents. During pre-departure orientation, staff explains to students that it is okay to participate in school and other social activities as long as they inform their host family about when, where, how, why, and with whom they will be with. Sharing things with siblings is a case-to-case basis. If a student wants to borrow things from their siblings, they have to ask for permission and get approval. Siblings can share to some extent different things like clothes, shoes, and school apparel. Some siblings can be very attached to their belongings, especially to clothes. Some siblings don't like their brothers and sisters to be wearing their clothes. It's a very common practice in the household that teenagers have to ask permission from parents or older siblings of things that they want to use.

Responsibilities: Traditionally in the Philippines, mothers or elder female extended family members take on the household chores. Many families, even lower class families, often have household help. Many students do not have their own bedroom or bathroom to clean. Chores such as common bathroom cleaning, washing dishes, and laundering and pressing clothes is usually done by the household help. The older siblings in the family may know how to cook, but if they have domestic help at home, they may not have cooking skills. If they cook, cleaning up is usually done by the help. They are unlikely to have a microwave oven, dishwasher or washing machine.

Parental Involvement: Although a lot of Filipino students do not have their own personal computers, they are still knowledgeable about the internet and gaming through internet cafes outside of the home. Most teenagers have their own mobile phones which can access the internet through Wi-Fi; because parents usually work, parents generally have little to no time to monitor their children's internet usage. In the Philippines, students share rooms, school items and often clothing with siblings. Asking for permission is needed but sometimes it is taken for granted. In general, students do not have time for part-time work. All allowances and spending money for school, transportation, projects, snacks, socializing and personal items in the Philippines are requested from the parents. Some parents are very involved in their child's school life, while others are not. In general, natural parents will be more concerned with how well students are doing in school and with school-related projects. Filipino students may call elder family members with honorary titles such as Ate (Big Sister), Kuya (Big Brother), Aunt, Uncle, Lola (Grandma), Lolo (Grandpa), etc. and maintain a more formal relationship.

Pets: Dogs in the Philippines are kept in a kennel located outside of the house. Students often request and prefer to have pet-free bedrooms.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: One-on-one exclusive friendships with the opposite sex is generally frowned upon while still in high school, but it depends on whether the student is open about the relationship with his or her parent, as well as parental acceptance, tolerance and open-mindedness in general. Parents are more accepting of "barkada," the usual group of close friends and schoolmates that their child socializes with.

Friendships: The majority of friends are made in school, not through extracurricular activities. Filipinos consider friendships by measured degrees of closeness: best friend (share secrets), close friend (good and trusted friend), "barkada" usual group mates (good friends, most of the time seen together at school and even out of school), classmate (friend in class), schoolmate (seen in hallways and school activities). Students may loan money to help close friends and payment of the loan is expected.

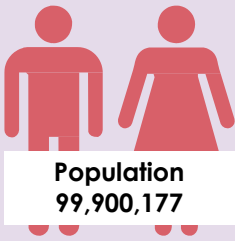
Communication Styles: Communication is generally indirect in the Philippines. It is not the norm to express negative feelings or perceptions immediately nor openly as this is seen to be unbecoming and rude behavior. Filipinos rely on non-verbal physical cues as part of communication. Students may withdraw and generally display unsocial behavior rather than say what they feel. In general, parents and elders do not ask about feelings and emotions so students are not used to being expressive and may not have the breadth and depth of vocabulary to say what they really feel and mean.

Eye Contact: In classroom and normal school situations, eye contact is expected. In regular family conversations, eye contact is not always expected. However, students are not expected to make eye contact in cases of disciplinary conversations when maintaining eye contact with elders and persons of authority will be seen as disrespectful and challenging authority.

Cultural Norms: In general, the concept of personal space in Filipino culture is small, crowded or limited and so students feel more accepted if personal space is closer (closer than Americans are typically comfortable with). If the space is distant, and probably just appropriate by American concepts, this may be interpreted as rejection or distrust. Filipinos demonstrate acceptance and connection by touch that might seem excessive to Americans, such as hugging, back tapping, and literally rubbing shoulders and elbows often with family and close or trusted friends. The cultural concept of time is that it is not acceptable to be late in school or in business. However, the Filipino concept of tardiness is not seen to be as highly disrespectful as it is in the U.S. Being late by 10-20 minutes without reason may be acceptable, but after half an hour, a good reason should accompany the apology. Filipinos will generally be tardy by as much as an hour in social appointments. In the Philippines, greeting someone you see every day is generally expected, but the greetings themselves are not necessarily invitations to a larger conversation. Another, traditional, greeting comes at the end of the day when the child says "mano po" then touches an elder's right hand knuckles to his/her own forehead, but this practice is quickly being replaced by "beso" kiss on the cheek.



Manila



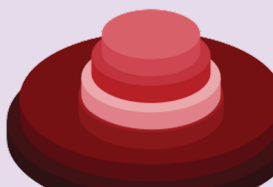
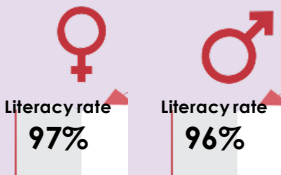
Population
99,900,177



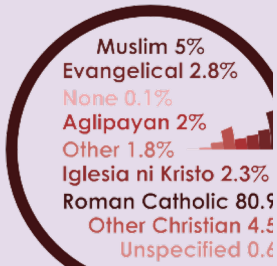
Square Miles
115,830



Currency
Philippine Peso



Visayan 33.8
 Tagalog 28.1
 Ilocano 9%
 Bicolano 6.8
 Moro 5.1%



School



Classes: In the Philippines, high school students generally take 10 subjects per school year which are mandated by the Department of Education for all high schools. Elective subjects are not the norm in public schools. Typical school days are from 7:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Classrooms average about 50 students (boys and girls together), and students remain in one classroom and teachers come in to teach different subjects. In the Philippines, students are rarely asked how they personally feel about a topic or are requested to expand learning and investigate topics on their own. Students are not familiar with receiving immediate feedback and one-to-one consultations about academic performance; they usually wait for comments on their report cards at the end of the grading quarter. Student-teacher consultations are rare and parent-teacher consultations are the norm.

School Relationships: Students must address elders, teachers and other persons of authority as Miss, Ma'am, Sir, or Teacher X, and it is considered disrespectful not to use an honorary title for an elder person even in informal and very casual situations. Students will stand to greet a teacher who enters the room and again when he or she leaves the room. Students must greet a teacher in the hallway and offer to help if they see a need such as helping the teacher carry items.

Extracurricular Activities: Many students are not familiar with school-based extracurricular activities as they come from communities with little access to, or few facilities and equipment, for sports and music. Students must ask permission for all activities including school-related extracurricular activity or going out with friends. Parents are involved with their children's extracurricular activities, however, students are more mobile and do not need to be transported to and from extracurricular activities as cheap public transportation is widely available.

School Rules and Attire: Cell phones are not allowed in class in the Philippines and phones should be turned off or put on silent or vibrate mode. School uniforms in the Philippines are officially required in public and private schools, especially in secondary institutions. In some schools, however, such as international and private universities and colleges, there are specified days when students can wear civilian clothing. In more progressive schools, there is no uniform except for required physical education classes or practicum/internship. Uniforms for public high schools and private schools vary widely in pattern and color. Most are the official colors of the school, but usually consist of cotton material for the warm weather with white socks, black leather shoes.

Returning from Exchange: Upon return, Filipino students are offered to take the Philippine Educational Placement Test (PEPT) for grade level accreditation. If a student passes the PEPT, his/her year in the U.S. will be accredited and she will be upgraded to the next year level. The Department of Education's Bureau of Secondary Education administers the PEPT. Students may come from families with limited resources and they may worry about finances and possible scholarships that would enable them to continue on to the next level of education. While there are no requirements for supplemental classes outside of high school, there are review classes or centers for students who are preparing to take university entrance exams.

Food and Culture



Religion: The Philippines proudly boasts to be the only Christian nation in Asia. More than 80% of the population is Roman Catholic, 6% belong to various nationalized Christian cults, and another 2% belong to well over 100 Protestant denominations. In addition to the Christian majority, there is a strong 5% Muslim minority, concentrated on the southern islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan. Scattered in isolated mountainous regions, the remaining 2% follow non-Western, indigenous beliefs and practices. The Chinese minority, although statistically insignificant, has been culturally influential in coloring Filipino Catholicism with many of the beliefs and practices of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

Holidays: Ramadan, or Hari Raya Puasa as it is known in the Philippines, Eid al-Fitr (at the end of Ramadan), and Eid al-Adha (after the Hajj or pilgrimage) are all nationally celebrated and recognized as significant Islamic holidays in the Philippines. Muslim families eagerly prepare for the celebrations and students enjoy Iftar (dinner meal for the breaking of fast) with their families.

Other major holidays and observances include: Christmas season, which unofficially begins in September and ends on the first Saturday of January of the following year and is celebrated nationally; Chinese New Year is celebrated nationally; Lent and Holy Week (Ash Wednesday up to Easter Sunday) are celebrated nationally; Mother's Day is the second Sunday of May; Father's Day is the third Sunday of June. There is always a fiesta (festival) going on somewhere in the Philippines as every city and barrio (neighborhood) holds at least one each year. The fiesta is usually to honor the local Roman Catholic patron saint and pay homage to the barrio's namesake for good harvest and health. It is a mixture of both pagan and Catholic beliefs. Feasting and celebration of holy mass, music, dance and song mark these fiestas.

Guest Culture: Hospitality is a trait displayed by every Filipino, characterized by heart-warming generosity and friendliness exhibited to foreigners and locals alike. Filipinos receive guests, even strangers, in a warm and pleasant way, often going out of their way to make the visitor comfortable. It is a trait not confined to the upper class and can be found among the poorest members of society. The Filipinos best show their hospitality in their homes. Any guest, invited or uninvited is treated equally to be like royals in the home of the Filipino. Upon arriving, you are going to experience the very warm welcome by the members of the household shaking your hand or patting your shoulder as they usher you inside. Even though slippers or shoes are usually removed outside the house, you as the visitor will be prohibited from doing so. Most of the time, a new meal is prepared to the liking of the visitor. In most cases, even if you arrive any time of the day, you will be really given "merienda" (i.e. bread, banana cue, cookies, flakes etc.) to eat and soda or juice to drink. It is unusual for guests to refuse to eat. Filipinos show appreciation by eating the food or taking it home. However, it is not rude if you decline the food offer, you just have to give them reasons like "I just ate" or "I am still full" etc.

Lunch and Diets: For Muslims in the Philippines, halal (religiously appropriate) meat and chicken is hard to find, except in communities with large population of Muslim residents where halal food supplies can be obtained. Large food manufacturers are now producing halal-certified foods that are widely available in supermarkets and grocery shops. In the Philippines, the three main meals are generally cooked from scratch and students are unfamiliar with prepared meals. There is usually some type of protein and veggies with rice. It is pretty common to eat leftovers from dinner during breakfast. Leftover food is stored in the refrigerator. The family then reheats the leftovers. Students are accustomed to eating hot foods at every meal. They will not be accustomed to eating cold lunches. Additionally, some parents pack lunch for their students, while others do not.

Personal Hygiene



It is normal to shower twice daily; once before leaving the house and the second before bedtime. It is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear the same clothes twice without washing them. Most students are used to school uniforms and change from school uniform to house clothes (t-shirt & shorts) upon arriving at home. Bathrooms in the Philippines are tiled and water is left to air dry. Towels are hung in the bedrooms or outside the house to dry in the sun. Each family member has his or her own towel to use for the face and body and this may be laundered weekly. Hygiene products are seldom put away as some may be shared among family members. Students may be used to using a pail and dipper for bathing, as it is rare in a Filipino home to have hot water from a shower or bathtub.



Saudi Arabia

Family Life



Rarely do grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins live in the same house, even if they live in the same town, though the youngest child of a family will house the grandparents. In Saudi Arabia it is common for the father to be professional and financially responsible for the family, but not the mother. Parents are likely to have different authority over household decisions, and it varies by household, but authority is shared. Respect is shown to elder family and community members by the youth and a formal relationship is maintained. In Saudi Arabia,

generally lunch and dinner are eaten all together as a family, unless parents work late. It is considered respectful to allow family members to regular, individual time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax. Saudi teenagers are not accustomed to gender equality amongst peers or family when it comes to division of tasks or chores. Chores are divided along strict gender lines with women responsible for most household activity, including cooking and cleaning. Men are responsible for life outside of the home and for more laborious tasks.

Teen Life: If a Saudi child has something, it is generally his or her own, and not understood to be the shared property of siblings, including clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first.

Responsibilities: Saudi household members are rarely given specific tasks or chores, although in many cases the female and male members help in specific areas. It is, however, very common for each household to have a housekeeper. Typically both male and female students will not have experience preparing meals. Saudi parents give allowances to their teenage children in regular, fixed amounts. It is rare for a Saudi student to work, even part-time. Saudi teenagers are not accustomed to planning daily routines independently, yet they are not necessarily reliant on their parents either.

Parental Involvement: Some Saudi parents monitor their children's online activities, while others do not. Generally, though, students are accustomed to unlimited usage or access to the internet. Many Saudi parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress.

Pets: It is not common to have pets in Saudi homes.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: It is not traditionally acceptable for Saudi teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually, however, it is still done and it is becoming more and more acceptable.

Friendships: Saudi teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. Saudi teenagers make friends through common activities and interests, as well as family and neighborhood connections. It is common for Saudi teenagers to share money with each other. Saudi teenagers don't often think of peers with whom they are only casually associated as friends, rather they are considered acquaintances. In Saudi Arabia, greetings are easily dragged to larger conversations, although this is mostly true for adults rather than teenagers.

Communication Styles: Saudi teenagers are generally not comfortable expressing negative emotions to their friends and family. Saudis tend to communicate indirectly out of humility.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is not important in the Saudi culture and looking down is more of a sign of respect.

Cultural Norms: Saudis tend to expect a large amount of personal space, both in terms of living space and during personal interactions. Punctuality is respected in Saudi Arabia; however, lack of punctuality is not considered a grave sign of disrespect. Being a little bit late to an appointment can go unnoticed or even be expected.

Riyadh

School



Classes: Saudi schools are segregated by gender. Saudi high school classes generally have around 25 students, though this could vary from school to school. Saudi schools generally grade with more weight given to examinations than day to day assignments and participation. Students in Saudi Arabia remain in one classroom during the day and teachers rotate to different rooms. They follow a standard high school curriculum and cannot choose to study or not study certain subjects.

School Relationships: Students in Saudi Arabia generally have formal relationships with their teachers and use formal titles when addressing them (Miss/Mr.; Dr., if credentials warrant it).

Extracurricular Activities: Saudi high schools generally do not have a variety of extracurricular activities, if any at all. If a student participates in a private club sport or other activity, Saudi parents involvement in that activity may vary.

School Rules and Attire: Saudi high schools have a “zero tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage, and fighting. These are not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe. Saudi students are accustomed to school uniforms (thoubs – long white robes, for males). Girls wear long-sleeved shirt, covered by sleeveless jumper, colors vary based on the grade level.

Returning from Exchange: Students must submit their U.S. school documents to the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Washington, D.C. prior to returning home for validation; AFS provides these instructions at the end of the academic year to students. Without this validation, Saudi schools will not accept the U.S. school documents; with the validation, they will likely get credit for their work done in the U.S., though it may depend on the quality of the work and grade level in which they are placed.

Food and Culture



Religion: Generally Saudi males are expected to attend the Friday prayer at the mosque.

Holidays: School, work, and marketplace hours change during Ramadan. There are increased family and friend visits and gatherings as well. Eid al-Fitr is celebrated amongst families. Major holidays in Saudi Arabia include Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, national day, and spring holiday.

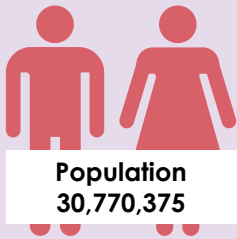
Guest Culture: In Saudi Arabia, guests, especially those whom the host does not see very often, get a very special treatment when they visit someone. A guest is most of the times someone the host knows, though this is not always the case. A guest can be anyone and will be welcomed and treated well at any time, day or night, no matter what their reason is for the visit. This culture is inherited from Arabian traditions and from the Islamic teachings as well. Hosts frequently offer coffee or tea, and possibly a full meal.

Lunch and Diets: It is very easy for Saudis to find halal meat at home in Saudi Arabia. Most Saudi families prepare meals from scratch. Eating leftovers is normal, because the religion demands to respect what Allah gives, so Saudis believe that they should not leave any food or throw it away.

Personal Hygiene



Saudi teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes maybe twice if they are involved in physical activities. However, it is possible that they are accustomed to longer showers if they are of middle-class or higher. Most Saudis rely on the household maid to keep bathrooms clean and dry. It is generally thought to be unclean in Saudi Arabia to wear the same clothes two days in a row or twice without washing them. Saudis usually change clothes upon entering the house, especially females since they wear uniforms at school. Saudi students will have a choice whether to keep clothes on or change them upon entering the house depending on their activities.



Population
30,770,375



Square Miles
830,000

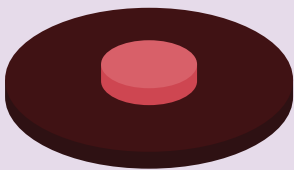


Currency
Saudi Riyal

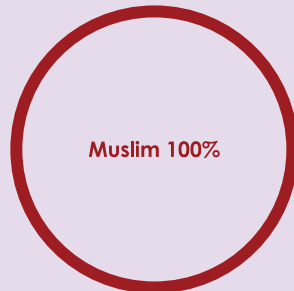


Literacy rate
92%

Literacy rate
97%



Arab 90%
Afro-Asian 10%

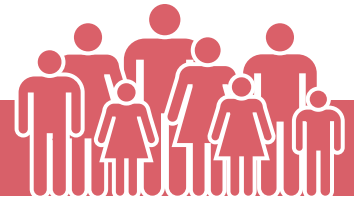


Muslim 100%



Senegal

Family Life



The Senegalese household is typically comprised of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and children. It is becoming more common for both parents to work outside of the home in Senegal, however traditionally it is the man who is the main financial provider for the family. Traditionally, the father has the primary authority in the home; however, it is becoming more common for both parents to share the authority.

Teen Life: If a Senegalese teen has something, it is generally his or her own, and not understood to be the shared property of siblings. This includes clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first. Teens are not given allowances however their expenses are covered by an adult member of the family. While it is important to always be respectful, many Senegalese teenagers interact informally with all of their family members.

Responsibilities: In Senegal, it is considered respectful to allow family members, individual time for themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax. Teens participate in household chores, mostly girls who cook and clean. Families in Senegal typically eat together out of one dish and most meals are presented and shared on the floor. Meals are cooked for the entire family by the women of the house.

Parental Involvement: Internet at homes depends on where students live. In the capitol Dakar most teens would have Internet. Teens depend on and learn from their peers more so than US teens. Parents are typically in direct contact with their teen's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. Teens in Senegal are largely dependent on their parents.

Pets: Families have animals for more utilitarian reasons: guard dogs, cats to deal with rodents, sheep to keep for Eid al-Fitr celebration, etc. Most Muslim families will not keep dogs in the house.

School



Classes: In Senegal, students are evaluated on written assignments and exams in addition to oral exams for languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German) for the national exams. At high school students can choose language class between Spanish, Arabic, German, Russian, Portuguese (English is mandatory) otherwise it is a standardized curriculum and everyone across all high school classes in the country take the same classes. Students remain in one classroom throughout the school day and the teachers rotate. The majority of schools in Senegal are mixed gender and boys and girls can sit side by side.

School Relationships: In Senegal it is a formal relationship. The teacher is called Mr. or Mrs. and students "are not friends with their teachers' but see teachers as an authority.

Extracurricular Activities: There are clubs at school such as English Club, Spanish Club, Science Club, (that is, academic clubs). There are state wide academic contests such as, general knowledge; scrabble; essay; English speaking club; presentation and plays. There is soccer, basketball and track, but the games are played between classes at the school, not with other schools. With respect to making friends, neighborhoods organize soccer matches between neighborhood teams. Generally students make friends in class, as unlike in the US, the students stay with the same class during the academic year and it is up to the teacher to change rooms, not the students. There are exceptions such as the for international private schools such as, International School of Dakar and the Dakar Academy and the American Track at the Senegalese-American Bi-lingual School (SABS).

School Rules and Attire: Many Senegalese high schools have a "zero tolerance" policy regarding cell phone usage, and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them vary by school. In general, students wear school uniforms.

Returning from Exchange: In Senegal, generally students do not repeat a class, as parents expect their children to continue with their studies. The social pressure is great and thus students take "reinforcement classes" (summer school) when they return to make up for the year they missed. This is stressful and challenging for students but until now all YES alumni have been successful in continuing onto the next class.



Personal Interactions

Dakar

Mixed Gender Socializing: Mixed gender socializing is generally frowned upon in Senegalese culture except at school during classes and occasionally as a group

Friendships: Teenagers socialize in groups and one-on-one, generally by the same gender. Senegalese teenagers meet most of their friends through common activities, and from family/neighborhood connections. It is not uncommon for teens to share money with each other when they have it. Friendship is very important in Senegalese culture, and the bonds between friends are strong.

Communication Styles: Senegalese culture is active listening, that is its indirect communication with the responsibility on the listener to understand the message; unlike in US culture where the onus is on the portrayer of information. Therefore, subtle cues are utilized as direct communication, especially to an elder, is considered impolite.

Eye Contact: In Senegalese culture, eye contact with an elder is not encouraged, even between younger and older adults.

Cultural Norms: With the peers, teenagers speak freely and directly, with parents and other elders in the family they will generally not be frank and direct about negative feelings. A teenager in Senegal would be quite bothered and uncomfortable calling an elder by their first name. In Senegal a formal title is given to a relationship with an adult, where aunt, uncle to all those older or Madame and Monsieur. Age is of utmost importance in Senegal and a meaning distinction deserving more respect the older you are.

Food and Culture



Religion: Attending religious services is often a family event in Senegal, and the community aspect of the service is often very important in addition to the religious aspect.

Holidays: In Senegal, both Christian and Senegalese holidays are observed and shared between the two religions. That is, during Eid al-Fitr, Senegalese Muslims will bring their traditional meal to their Christian neighbors and vice versa during Christian holidays. The most important holiday in Senegal is Tabaski (Eid el-Kabir), this is the holiday that students will most likely miss the most, as sheep are sacrificed and shared with the community. Celebrations can last up to three days. New clothes are bought and families visit their neighbors, other family members, etc.

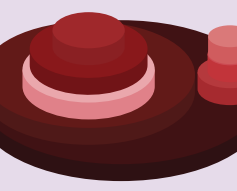
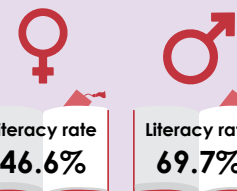
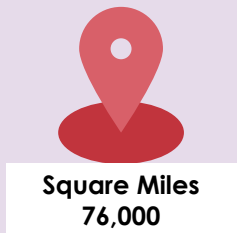
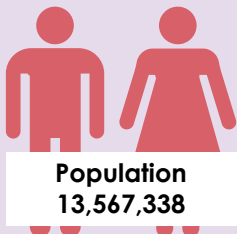
Guest Culture: It is expected that a guest decline at least 3-4 times before saying yes to food or drink. However, the guest is usually not asked and as soon as they arrive the host brings food and drink to the guest, without asking and with an expectation that the guest will partake in what is provided to them.

Lunch and Diets: Generally Senegalese eat around the bowl, so depending on how many people are at the bowl and how much food is available will determine how much someone will eat. Depending on the school, where students live, and what grade level (primary school students always go home for lunch), students will eat at school (at high school level) but there is no formal cafeteria, there are small boutiques that sell sandwiches and drinks that students can buy. Students do not bring lunch to school, as it appears to be socially unacceptable. Eating leftovers is not common but Senegalese do eat left over food between immediate family members.

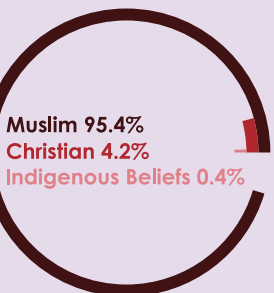
Personal Hygiene



Senegalese teenagers generally take a quick (5 minute) shower twice a day and as Muslims wash before praying. Teenagers in Senegal are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them (towels are hung up, and hygiene products are put away). It is generally thought to be unclean in Senegal to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear them twice before washing, however the income level of a family can impact this.



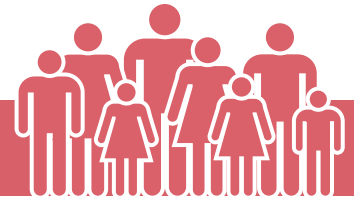
Wolof 43.3%
Pular 23.8%
Serer 14.7%
Jola 3.7%
Mandinka 3%
Soninke 1.1%
European and Lebanese 1%
Other 9.4%





Sierra Leone

Family Life



In Sierra Leone, the typical household encompasses the extended family, with parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins all living in one home. It's usually the financially strongest family member who takes up the rest of the family financial responsibility. It could be either the mother or the father, grandparents, aunt, uncle or the older children. Husbands make decisions in consultation with their wives.

Every individual eats their meals on their own time, and most houses do not have dining area. It is not common in Sierra Leone to allow family members to regular, individual time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax. Time is typically spent all together as a family and there is very little time spent alone.

Teen Life: Most children in Sierra Leone do not have access to a computer, even at school. In most Sierra Leonean homes, almost everything is shared by siblings without any permission, except for underwear and toothbrushes, which people own individually and do not share. Using family items is common and does not require permission in most homes.

Teenagers in Sierra Leone are largely dependent upon their parents. Teenagers do not get allowances from their parents nor do they have part time jobs. Sierra Leonean students interact more with their mothers and rarely sit and talk with their fathers.

Sierra Leonean students may make independent decisions, but it is considered rude and bad behavior. The culture says children should not make decisions on their own until they become adults.

Responsibilities: It is not common in Sierra Leone to have housekeepers. Typically the mother is responsible for housekeeping. In Sierra Leone, it is common for female teenagers to cook for themselves and their families but not common for male teenagers to cook. Sierra Leonean students are expected to be responsible for studying, attending school, and looking after their clothes.

Parental Involvement: Many Sierra Leonean parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress.

Pets: Generally, people in Sierra Leone do not have pets at home, especially cats. Some families keep dogs, but they are not allowed inside the home.

Personal Interactions



In Sierra Leone, students are evaluated on daily homework, class participation, and periodic written exams. To maintain a good grade, students must turn in daily homework, participate in class regularly, and perform well on exams.

Classes: In Sierra Leone, students remain in one classroom while teachers rotate. There are mixed schools and schools for just boys and just girls in Sierra Leone. In co-ed schools, boys and girls may be seated next to each other.

In Sierra Leone, tests and exams are a combination of multiple-choice questions, essays, and short answers depending on the exam students are taking (National Exams or school exams). Group discussions, where student interpretation/input is encouraged, does not exist in Sierra Leone. Students are expected to write what their teacher wrote for them on the blackboard, and studying consists of memorization.

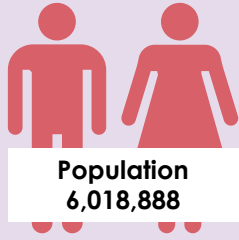
Students in Sierra Leone take between 12-15 subjects in "junior school" (Grade 7 – 9) for two years, and are required to pass eight of those subjects in grade 9. Students in "senior school" (Grade 10-13) study eight subjects but are required to pass five as the university requirement.

In Sierra Leone, students have compulsory subjects with limited choices. They are allowed to choose four classes in grade 9. In senior school they do not have any choice subjects. Instead, they choose an area of study that they follow for the rest of their academic career. Areas of study include: Arts, Commerce, and Science.

School Relationships: Sierra Leonean culture does not allow younger people to call elders by their first names, and students call their teachers by their last names with a formal title.



Freetown



Population
6,018,888



Square Miles
44,577

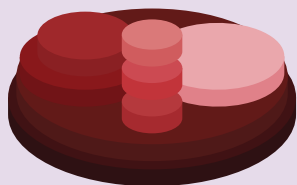


Currency
Sierra Leonean
Leone

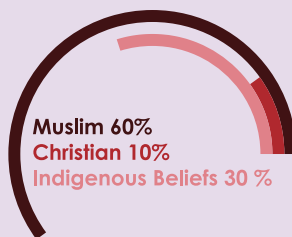


Literacy rate
37.7%

Literacy rate
58.7%



Temne 35%
Mende 31%
Limba 8%
Kono 5%
Kriole 2%
Mandingo 2%
Loko 2%
Other 15%



Extracurricular Activities: In Sierra Leone, most parents do not want their kids to be involved in extra-curricular activities because parents believe extra activities are distractions to students. Most students normally play football (soccer), practice music, and engage in other extracurricular activities without the knowledge of their parents.

School Rules and Attire: Sierra Leone high schools have a “zero tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school, and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe.

Cheating is not allowed in Sierra Leone, and disciplinary action is similar to that in the U.S. with added penalties. Students caught cheating can have an incomplete in the course, and may be asked to leave the class or the exam hall, which results in a zero grade.

Most schools in Sierra Leone require school uniforms, typically including black and brown shoes and white socks.

Returning from Exchange: Only Grade 10 and 11 students can apply for the YES Program in Sierra Leone, and are not required to repeat classes upon their return to Sierra Leone.



School

Mixed Gender Socializing: Culturally, in Sierra Leone teenage boys and girls are allowed to socialize together in groups, but seldom one-on-one.

Friendships: Sierra Leonean students socialize in groups and sometimes one-on-one. They make most of their friends in school, through activities and from family or neighborhood connections. It is uncommon for Sierra Leonean teenagers to share money with each other, but they may share food. In Sierra Leone, friendship means someone teens feel confident with at all times and whom they trust deeply.

Communication Styles: Sierra Leonean teenagers show negative emotions quite freely amongst their peers but not amongst family. Direct communication is shared only between close friends.

Eye Contact: In Sierra Leone it is not culturally acceptable to make eye contact with elders when they are talking, as a sign of respect.

Cultural Norms: Family time is most important and personal space or time for individual pursuits is rare. Being late is very common in Sierra Leone but it is not acceptable for school or places of work.

Food and Culture



Religion: Attending religious services is often a family and community affair. Muslims go to pray as a large group in open fields, share food with friends and families, and visit each other.

Holidays: The main holidays celebrated in Sierra Leone are: Christmas, New Year, Easter, Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Independence Day.

Christmas is a major holiday and is celebrated regardless of religion or tribe. People in coastal towns go to the beach with food, drinks, and music. People in inland towns go to nearby mountains, rivers, or smaller traditional villages. It is usually a very noisy setting with everyone socializing, dancing, swimming and playing. People visit with neighbors and family members. Adults bring gifts of food and money for kids.

Personal Hygiene

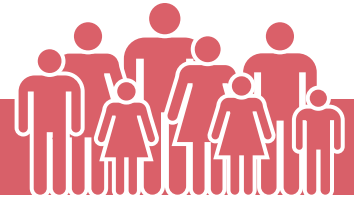


In Sierra Leone, teens shower twice a day. It is generally thought to be unclean in Sierra Leone to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear them twice without washing. Teenagers in Sierra Leone will change their clothes immediately when they get home from school, or formal events. Sierra Leonean teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean after using them. Many Sierra Leonean teenagers have only one towel to dry their body, face and hands.

Students usually wash their own clothes by hand. They will most likely not know how to use American style washing and drying machines, as they may have never seen one.



South Africa



Family Life

In South Africa, most households consist of parents, or a parent, and their children.

Rarely do grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins live in the same house, but extended relatives may come to stay if the financial situation requires it. While it is important to always be respectful, many South African teenagers interact informally with all of their family members.

It is common in South Africa for the father to be the primary financial provider of the family; however, this is changing in modern families where many mothers work as well. In most cultures within South Africa the mother is the main authoritative figure when it comes to household decisions.

In South Africa, meals may be eaten all together as a family, or separately depending on family members' schedules. Often both boys and girls will have to cook for themselves when they get home from school.

It is normal for family members to be allowed time to pursue individual interests; it is, however, important and also considered respectful that the rest of the family is informed of these activities. It is also expected that these activities do not interfere with family activities.

Teen Life: Regarding belongings, if a South African child owns something, it is generally considered his or her own, and not understood to be the shared property of siblings, including clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is typically understood that they must ask first. In most cases, the parents would also need to be consulted.

Responsibilities: South African teenagers do not generally divide tasks or responsibilities based on gender, either amongst their peers or amongst their family. South African household members, including children, are often given specific tasks or chores. The chores may include cleaning one's own room or bathroom, doing their own laundry, and generally contributing to the upkeep of the house. It is also common for households to have a maid come in twice a week or so to do cleaning.

Students are required to take responsibility for their school work, doing the dishes, and generally cleaning up after themselves. Students do not receive pocket money on a regular basis and ask their parents for what they need and the specific amount.

South African teenagers are often expected to plan their daily routines with their parents at least two days in advance, and then work out a course of action with their parents about how they will get to where they need to be.

Parental Involvement: Schools in South Africa keep parents aware of their children's academic progress at all times. In South Africa, parents often monitor what their children do online in the interest of their children's safety. Parents also may limit what sites a child may visit online, or how much time the child spends on the internet. However, most homes in South Africa do not have internet connectivity, and students often surf the web at school or at an internet café where there is no parent observation.

Pets: Many South African families have pets, often cats or dogs. Pets are not thought of as members of the family, and are typically not allowed inside the house.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: It is perfectly acceptable for South African teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually; however, most are aware of cultural boundaries depending on the rules of the family. For instance, a boy is not allowed to go into a girl's room and vice-versa, as families see this as a sign of great disrespect.

Friendships: South African teenagers socialize in groups and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate and the choice is left up to the individual. Most teenagers make their friends through neighborhood connections and school connections, and family also plays a big role in determining with whom a student socializes. Teens often spend a lot of time with their cousins. South African teenagers often think of peers with whom they are only casually associated as friends. Friends are also confidants, and are therefore trusted with personal information. It is uncommon for South African teenagers to share money with each other.

Communication Styles: In South Africa, greeting someone you see every day is generally expected, but the greetings are not necessarily invitations to a larger conversation. South Africans communicate very indirectly and often hide their opinions, especially if it is a negative one about an elder. Teenagers are generally comfortable expressing negative emotions to a friend, but with family they are often more cautious, especially if the family member is an authoritative member of the family or an elder. A South African YES student may be uncomfortable with sharing their feelings with authority figures.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is race-dependent in South Africa; in the black cultures, it is regarded as disrespectful to look an elder in the eye, in white cultures it is considered disrespectful not to look an elder in the eye.

Cultural Norms: Students do spend a lot of time in the week with family, but may expect to spend a Saturday with their friends. Personal space is relative and individual time alone is rare.

South Africans are punctual. Being on time is considered a sign of respect, and being even a little bit late to an appointment is noticed, but a grace period of 10 minutes is usually given depending on the situation.

School



Pretoria

Classes: In South Africa, students generally take six to nine subjects at a time, and each class meets either every day or for extended sessions every other day. Students are evaluated on daily homework, class participation, and periodic written exams. Boys and girls study in the same classes and are not seated apart in class. The class sizes vary depending on the school or subject.

The South African curriculum is different in private and public schools. Students studying at public schools all study at the same level of difficulty from grade 8 to grade 10. From grade 10 to grade 12, students are allowed to pick their subjects based on their chosen career path. Additionally, in grade 10 students have the option of choosing between mathematics literacy, which is aimed at teaching students the basics principles of mathematics, and pure mathematics, which allows students to engage with the more complex aspects of mathematics.

School Relationships: School is very formal and students are always expected to address school staff by the surnames with the prefix Mr. or Mrs.

Extracurricular Activities: South African high school students are often very involved in school-based extracurricular activities, and these activities are where most students develop their friendships. South Africans have freedom to participate in which ever extracurricular activities that they like.

School Rules and Attire: South African high schools have a “zero tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in these activities are often severe, and in some cases, will include expulsion.

Returning from Exchange: Returning YES students typically repeat their school year, but this decision is usually made by the student, their parents, and school. In most cases, this decision is made dependent on the students’ academic performance while on program.

Food and Culture



Religion: In South Africa, Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are not celebrated nationally although many people do know about them because of the Muslim population and often great respect is shown to Muslims on these days.

One of the things that most South African families do together is attend religious services, especially on days like, Christmas, Eid al-Fitr, Diwali, and Easter. Most places of worship are also used by the community for other activities.

For major holidays, such as Christmas or birthdays, South African teenagers are expected to give gifts to family members and close friends, but not necessarily to all of their friends.

Holidays: South Africa has a very rich history, and because of this there are many public holidays. On these days, the country as a whole usually commemorates what happened on that day in history. Because of this diversity, the country also celebrates a number of religious holidays. One of the most celebrated holidays is Heritage Day. On Heritage Day, the country celebrates their rich cultures and traditions. Most people dress in their traditional attire on this day and sometimes for the whole month of September. During this time, people will also take traditional dishes to work and school, and share them with friends who also do the same. Other holidays include: Eid al-Fitr, Diwali, Christmas, Easter, and Human Rights Day (21 March).

Guest Culture: Guests are considered to be a blessing and are very important in most South African homes. Hosts are expected to treat guests with respect and show appreciation. The guests are also expected to be appreciative and respectful towards their hosts.

Lunch and Diets: Different schools have different lunch policies. However, most students pack their own lunch. Food portions in South Africa are considered average when compared to American portions, but this is also dependent on individuals. If a serving is large, most people in South African will have leftovers later; the same principle applies when eating out, it is normal for people to take a “doggy bag.”

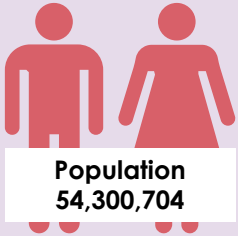
In South Africa, Halal meat is easy to find and very accessible. South African mothers cook every night with carry-out food is considered a treat once or twice a week.

Personal Hygiene



The cost of electricity and water is high in South Africa, so teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. It is generally thought to be unclean in South Africa to wear the same clothes two days in a row or without washing. South African teenagers are expected to keep the bathroom clean and dry. After showering, towels are hung up to dry and hygiene products are put away.

Teenagers in most South African households have chores, and at times these chores include washing their own clothes. Some households have washing machines and driers, but most households do their washing by hand and as such, most teenagers will not know how to use America style appliances.



Population
54,300,704



Square Miles
757, 507

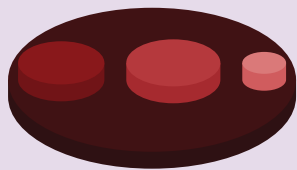


Currency
South African Rand



Literacy rate
93.1%

Literacy rate
95.5%



Black African 80%
White 8%
Mixed Race 9%
Indian/Asian 2.5%



Protestant 36.6%
Catholic 7.1%
Muslim 1.5%
Other Christian 36%
Other 2.3%
Unspecified 1.4%

Suriname



Family Life



A typical family has a mother, father, grandparents living in the same house in the same town. The average number of children per family is 3. In Suriname, the man is the primary financial provider and holds the most authority in the home. Meals in Suriname may be eaten all together as a family, or separately depending on family members' schedules.

While it is important to always be respectful, many Surinamese teenagers interact informally with all of their family members.

Teen Life: According to Surinamese culture, teens always ask permission before borrowing something from friends or family members.

Some teenagers get a stipend from their parents, while some have part time jobs after school. Surinamese teenagers usually spend money on fast food, phone calling cards, and sometimes they buy clothes. Many teenagers in Suriname may not be used to managing their own finances, and may need assistance with budgeting while on program.

Responsibilities: Surinamese teenagers usually help their parents at home, washing the dishes, sweeping, and cleaning up. Most teenagers do not cook but they do know the basics of cooking.

Parental Involvement: Many Surinamese parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress.

With regards to monitoring students' computer usage, not all parents in Suriname are computer savvy, so many parents are not actively involved in this process.

Pets: It is not common for a family to have pets in the home in Suriname.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: In school in Suriname, teenage boys and girls socialize together, but they remain separate outside of school.

Friendships: Most students in Suriname make friends at school, in the neighborhood, and through family. Friendship means a lot to Surinamese teenagers. This is not a common practice, but they do share when a friend is in need of money.

Communication Styles: Respect is very important in Suriname. Teenagers will not interact informally with their elders. In Suriname, parents are very strict and communication is very indirect and formal. Students do not typically express their own opinions to their elders. It is common to show negative emotions to their peers, but teens in Suriname will not display negative emotions to elders.

Eye Contact: Traditionally, Surinamese youth would look down when talking with elders. However, today most teenagers will make eye contact when talking, even to elders.

Cultural Norms: Surinamese households tend to be quite full, and family time is very important. Students are not accustomed to spending time alone or to pursuing individual interests.

Time and punctuality are two main problems with students from Suriname it is common for people to be late and have a flexible concept of time.

Paramaribo

School



The primary method of academic evaluation in Suriname is via written and oral tests. Some subjects do also factor in homework or group assignments. Students in Suriname are expected to do their daily homework and they must participate actively in class.

Classes: In high school, there are different students in classes taught by different teachers. Boys and girls both attend the same classes and can be seated next to each other.

Students have eight subjects in school, and attend classes five days a week from 7.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Each subject has a session of 90 minutes. All students take the same mandatory courses. The subjects in secondary school (grades 7 to 10) are mandatory.

School Relationships: Students in Suriname have a strict formal relationship with teachers. They must call them by their last name.

Extracurricular Activities: There are few, if any, extracurricular activities offered through school in Suriname. Most students will join community sports clubs for their extracurriculars. Most friendships are established through school, and not through participation in activities.

School Rules and Attire: All schools have mandatory school uniforms.

Policies in Suriname regarding cell phone use or fighting in school carry similar consequences. Fighting leads to suspension and cellphones are not allowed in class. Cheating means disqualification, so a student would get an 'F' grade.

Returning from Exchange: Returning YES Suriname students can move on to the next grade if the Ministry of Education has evaluated that the subjects they studied in the U.S. had similarities with those of Suriname, and that the necessary learning goals have been met.

Food and Culture



Religion: In Suriname, religious events are family and often community affairs.

Holidays: Holidays are large events in Suriname, and are precious moments of family gatherings. Students from Suriname will especially miss festivities around Christmas and New Year's. The most common holidays in Suriname are:

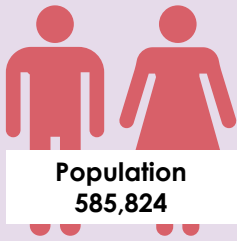
- New Year (Jan 1)
- Christmas (Dec 25/26) Easter (April)
- Eid al-Fitr (Muslim)
- Phagwa (Hindu)
- Independence Day (Nov 25)
- Labor Day (May 1)
- Day of the Emancipation (July 1) – abolition of slavery

Personal Hygiene



Typically in Suriname, students shower twice a day. Students are not accustomed to household chores including keeping the bathroom clean and dry.

It is common to wear a shirt and pants two days in a row without washing. Students will typically change into house clothes when returning home from an outside activity. Students from Suriname should know how to use American style washers, as they have washing machines in Suriname.



Population
585,824



Square Miles
101,793

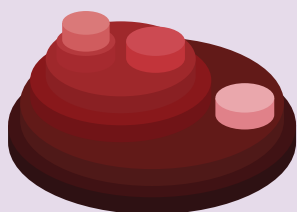


Currency
Surinamese Dollar



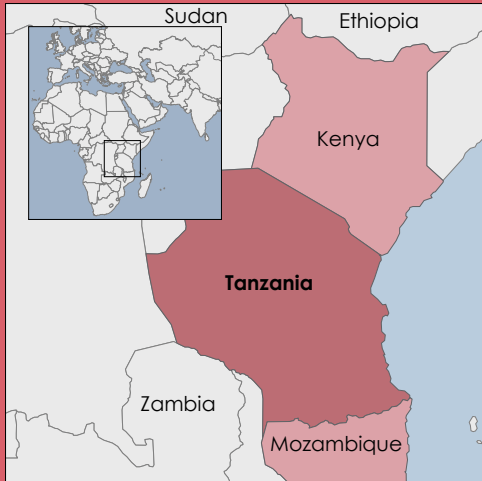
Literacy rate
95%

Literacy rate
96.1%



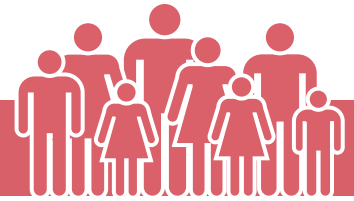
Hindustani 37%
 Creole 31%
 Javanese 15%
 Maroons 10%
 Amerindian 2%
 Chinese 2%
 White 1%
 Other 2%

Hindu 27.4%
 Protestant 25.2%
 Roman Catholic 22.8%
 Muslim 19.6%
 Indigenous Beliefs 5%



Tanzania

Family Life



In Tanzania, both the nuclear and the extended family live in the same house. It is very rare to have a household composed of just the parents and their children. In urban areas, both parents may work and may be mutually responsible financially for the support of their family. However, as a general rule, in most families the man works outside the home and the woman is a homemaker. The father has primary authority in the Tanzanian family. In urban areas, or less traditional families, the mother may comment on family issues, but the final say on many matters comes from the father.

Families usually eat together in Tanzania, however sometimes the father is served the best food before others are served. Teenage girls sometimes cook for themselves and for the family, but boys are generally not allowed in the kitchen and would not be allowed to cook.

Teen Life: In Tanzania, sharing is encouraged amongst teens, as resources in most families are scarce. It is not always necessary for teens to ask before using another's belongings. Individuals are encouraged to pursue their own activities in Tanzania, but tribal customs and the importance of family mean that students will typically spend the majority of time with their family and contributing to family activities. Teenagers socialize in social clubs in the school, as well as debate and other clubs. Parents are not involved much and are rarely aware of their student's activities, especially when it involves school clubs.

Responsibilities: Some families in Tanzania assign duties to members of the family including the children, but not all. A lot of the work at home is done by a housekeeper or guard, and the mother does most other work. Very few men do any family chores.

Parental Involvement: Teens in Tanzania tend to be very dependent on their parents. Most teenagers get their money from their parents and a very few teenagers earn their own money from petty trade. Some YES Tanzanian students are not used to managing their own money, and often struggle with budgeting.

Most parents cannot monitor what the children do on the computer, as they are not computer literate and very few families have an internet connection in their homes. Most students access internet services in internet cafes.

Pets: Very few families in Tanzania keep dogs and cats, and they are not allowed into the house. Animals are fed outside the house and not close to people. Dogs are primarily used as guard dogs.

School



Tanzanian schools evaluate student grades based on performance on tests and exams. While homework may be given, it is not compulsory for the student and it will not contribute to the overall grade.

Classes: In Tanzanian schools, students remain in one classroom throughout the day while the teachers rotate. Class participation is not encouraged nor regarded when grades are calculated.

Muslim schools separate girls from boys, while Christian schools tend to be co-ed. Many Tanzanian parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress.

Students are allowed to study subjects at different levels of difficulty; however, students have limited choices of their school subjects. After Grade 10, students typically must choose between a Science, Art, or Business track, with coursework focused primarily on those subjects.

School Relationships: Students in Tanzania have a friendly, but formal relationship with their teachers, and address them using a title and last name.

Extracurricular Activities: Tanzanian schools may have a few extracurricular activities, and students will participate and often make friends through these activities. Common athletic extracurricular activities include: soccer, netball, and basketball. Other activities may include: needlework, cooking, art, environmental clubs, swimming, English language clubs, and gardening clubs. These clubs are most often conducted outside of the regular school day, and separate from the school.

School Rules and Attire: In Tanzania, there is a "no cell phone policy" in schools, but the policy is not well enforced. Fighting is prohibited and punishment is strictly enforced. There are also rules regarding cheating, and students who cheat are reported to their parents. In some cases, students caught cheating are sent away from school for a period of time. If the cheating is severe, students may be expelled from school.

Returning from Exchange: Returning YES Tanzanian students may have to take their national exam within four months after their return. Students from Tanzania will need their U.S transcripts to bring home with them, in order to prove they were studying in the U.S. The transcripts also help in the registration of their Final Form 4 examination with the Tanzanian Board of Examinations.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: Girls and boys are kept apart in schools and mosques in Tanzanian Muslim culture. Co-ed socializing is accepted in Christian culture. As a general rule, though, students tend to socialize with students of the same sex.

Friendships: Tanzanian teenagers make many friends through families, schools, and religious meetings. Sharing is encouraged, and students even lend each other pocket money. Even a casual acquaintance may be considered a friend.

Communication Styles: Communication is typically indirect in Tanzania. Students often will not show negative feelings to their parents, but are more open around their peers. Teenagers sometimes communicate to their mother through aunts, uncles and grandparents, but typically not directly. Communication to their fathers may occur through their mothers.

Eye Contact: Eye contact in Tanzania is considered rude and disrespectful, other than for some few modern families.

Cultural Norms: People in Tanzania are not very concerned with punctuality, and feel there is plenty of time for everything. YES students from Tanzania may need some time to adjust to more strict schedules while in the U.S.

Food and Culture



Large portions of food are common in Tanzania. Eating leftover is also common practice.

Guest Culture: In Tanzania, guests are welcomed in to the home and are offered at least small food and drinks. It is expected that guests will try at least some of what is offered, but it is not taken as offense if the guest does not finish the food or drink.

Lunch and Diets: Students in Tanzania are accustomed to hot lunches, and cold food is normally reheated. Students rarely pack their own lunches, as this is normally done by the mother or a maid.

Religion: Religious events can be a family and community event, or a personal one. It is not uncommon for family members to belong to different denominations or religions entirely. Muslim men typically go to the mosque every Friday.

Holidays: Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are celebrated by both Muslims and Christians, especially in Zanzibar. On these holidays, Muslims go to mosque and Christians take a bank holiday. Muslim students fast during the month of Ramadan.

The main Tanzanian-specific holidays that students will miss are:

- Tanzania Independence day - December 9
- Islamic holidays of Iddi and Maulid
- Nyerere Day- October 14
- Union Day- April 26
- Workers Day - May 1

Personal Hygiene



It is generally thought to be unclean in Tanzania to wear the same clothes two days in a row, or to wear them twice without washing, however many students do not have many clothes and some may repeat their clothing throughout the week. The school uniform must be clean and pressed every day for school, and students will change clothes immediately upon returning home. Teenagers in Tanzania hand wash their own clothes, as they have to appear in clean ironed uniforms each day. Students would not be familiar with the use of American washing and drying machines.

Students in Tanzania typically shower at least once a day, if not more if they are from a hot and humid climate. Most teenagers do not have towels and rather they air dry. Keeping the bathroom clean and dry is not expected of teens in Tanzania.

Dodoma

Population
41,892,895

Square Miles
588,624

Currency
Tanzanian Shilling

Literacy rate
65.4%

Literacy rate
75.9%

African 99%
Bantu 95%
Other African 4%
Other 1%

Christian 61.4%
Muslim 35.2%
Folk Religion 1.8%
Other 0.2%
Unaffiliated 1.4%



Thailand

Family Life



Many Thai families consist of parents and children, and often grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins will live in the same house. It is common in Thailand to have both parents work and be responsible for the family. It is very rare that mothers remain at home as a homemaker.

In Thailand, most fathers tend to make decisions on major issues and mothers are responsible for household chores and taking care of family members. Thai families make every effort to eat meals together and it is an important time of the day for sharing information. Additionally, family members in Thailand expect to have time to pursue their own interests, and having individual time for this is considered normal.

Teen Life: It is unusual for a Thai teen to be employed; most of the time spent outside of regular school hours is spent in supplementary classes after school or on weekends. Many parents give their children a daily allowance, and students can ask for extra money for their social activities or to buy personal items. Some Thai siblings share clothes and accessories if they are of the same gender and size, and usually they ask for permission first.

Responsibilities: In Thailand, children are given some household chores, and they tend to follow gender lines. Boys do not cook, do the laundry, or sew, as these are regarded as tasks for women. Most male teenagers in Thailand cannot cook beyond simple dishes or heating pre-packaged meals. Men are regarded as stronger and may be assigned more physically demanding jobs than women. Some families have household help to do chores.

Parental Involvement: Thai parents monitor their student's internet usage to a certain extent. Some parents may set time-limits for students to spend online, but many Thai students use the internet as a resource for studying.

Thai parents generally have a great influence on their children's activities or plans. Some parents may allow family members to pursue their own activities but will watch and advise often. Many Thai teens are attached to their parents, and will ask their parents for advice or approval.

Thai parents will contact their teen's school in cases where their student is showing low academic performance or misbehavior. Thai schools have open house sessions once a semester that allow parents to meet with the teachers.

Pets: Some Thai families have dogs, cats, or fish as a pet. Muslim families will not have dogs in the home. Students may be used to dogs living outside, but indoor dogs may be a new experience for Thai students.

A common solution to this is to allow students to keep their bedroom door closed so dogs will not be allowed into the room.

Personal Interactions



Classes: In Thailand, students may take over 10 subjects each semester. Students will have core classes, such as Math, English, and Thai nearly every day. Thus, students may need assistance from their host families at the beginning of the school year to help them choose classes and navigate studying new subjects. In Thai schools, there are typically about 50 students or more in each classroom. Thai students remain in one classroom throughout the school day while teachers rotate. Boys and girls sit apart in different rows.

Students in Thailand are evaluated almost the same way as students in the U.S., but they are not assigned homework every day. Assignments are varied according to the contents and learning objectives. Final exam grades are typically worth 40% of a student's grade, while the midterm exams, small tests, and assignments cover 60% of the final grade. While on program, Thai students may struggle with having daily homework assignments.

School Relationships: In Thailand, students must show respect for their teachers both verbally and non-verbally, addressing them by their last name with a title. Student will address their instructors as "Teacher," followed by the teacher's name.

Extracurricular Activities: Most Thai students join clubs or sport activities at school. On the weekends, they may have music or other kinds of sports activities in private clubs.

School Rules and Attire: In Thai schools there is a zero tolerance policy regarding cell phone use in school, and fighting is prohibited. There are severe penalties for breaking either rule. If a student cheats at school, there is also a penalty, and the school will call the student's parents.

Returning from Exchange: Upon return to their country, Thai students need to secure transcripts from their U.S. school to present in to their home school. If they do not have the U.S. transcript, they may have to repeat the school year in Thailand.

Bangkok

School



Mixed Gender Socializing: Girls and boys can socialize in a group, but not individually in Thailand.

Friendships: Most Thai students socialize in groups and a few socialize one-on-one; students tend to socialize with the same sex. Most friends are from family and neighborhood connections, and some are from school. Friends are important for Thai teens, and they take the role seriously – friends often become like family for Thai teens. Most teens in Thailand socialize by going to malls or meeting with friends for extra studying.

Communication Styles: Communication is mostly indirect in Thailand. Thai people communicate indirectly to avoid irritating each other or being impolite. Expressing negative emotion is regarded as rude in Thailand, so students may try to hide their feelings or emotions. Some Thai students smile when they are uncomfortable, and this often happens when they are being disciplined.

Eye Contact: Eye contact in Thailand is regarded as rude and disrespectful when children talk to adults.

Cultural Norms: Thai teens are mostly dependent on their parents for their daily plans. In Thai culture, timeliness and punctuality is not taken as seriously as in the U.S. Also, in order to be polite and show respect to their elders, Thai people will call the elder “sister/brother”, “uncle/aunt”, or “grandma/grandpa,” and follow this by their first name, even they are not relatives or siblings.

Food and Culture



Religion: Muslims in Thailand will take time for prayers five times a day, but they are often flexible with prayer times. Thai Muslims fast during daylight hours in Ramadan, eating meals only before sunrise and after sunset.

It is not tradition in Thailand to give gifts on the New Year or for birthdays, but many families have adopted this practice.

Holidays: In Thailand, Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are not nationally celebrated, but many people know about these celebrations from the media. Thai Muslims do celebrate the Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha holidays. Students on program may miss things like fasting during Ramadan (if they are Muslim), especially because Muslim families will usually prepare a large meal for dinner or breaking the fast to celebrate the day. During this meal, students and families will share a lot of food and will talk about their days.

Guest Culture: Thai people will always take care of their guests.

Lunch and Diets: Nearly all Thai families prepare meals from scratch. In big cities where life is rushed, people may serve packaged meals, but this is often only for breakfast. Students are accustomed to hot lunches. Most Thai schools have a canteen where students can buy there hot lunch, and most students will eat rice or noodles for lunch. Students from Thailand will likely not be familiar with eating sandwiches for lunch.

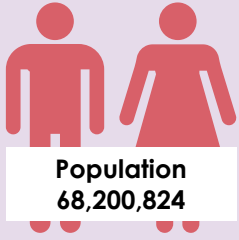
In areas where there is a large Muslim community, halal meat is available in fresh markets, and preserved halal food is available on the supermarket shelves. It is uncommon for Thai people to eat leftovers, but some may wrap up any uneaten food if there was a lot of food leftover. This wouldn't be done for small amounts of food.

Personal Hygiene



Thai change clothes every day and it is considered unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row. Students from Thailand will shower twice a day, and sometimes more if it is a hot day. YES Thai students may be uncomfortable if they do not shower before going out and before going to bed. In Thailand, water is not wiped up in bathrooms, but is left to dry naturally because bathrooms are well ventilated. Towels are hung up outside the bathroom.

Some Thai teenagers will wash their own clothes, but during examination periods, parents might do it for them. Students will know how to use washing machine, but each machine could operate differently, so host families should teach students to use their specific washing machine. In Thailand, clothes dryers are rare, so students will not know how to use an electric clothes dryer.



Square Miles
318,837



Currency
Thai Baht

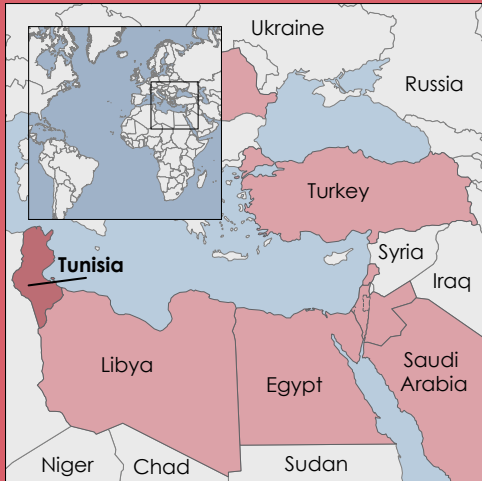


Literacy rate
96.7%

Literacy rate
96.6%

Thai 95.5%
Burmese 2%
Other 1.3%
Unspecified 0.9%

Buddhist 93.6%
Muslim 4.9%
Christian 1.2%
Other 0.2%
None 0.1%



Tunisia

Family Life



In Tunisia, most households consist of parents and their children. Rarely do grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins live in the same house unless the family lives in a rural area. Families in Tunisia tend to split the household responsibilities along gender lines where most mothers are more responsible for the household and fathers are more responsible financially. Fathers usually have the authority in most occasions, but mothers do intervene if necessary. Families typically eat their meals together and consider this valuable family time.

Teen Life: Siblings freely share clothes with each other and rarely ask permission of one another. In Tunisia, teenagers are expected to interact respectfully with their parents at all times. However, it is fine to be informal with their siblings. Teenagers in Tunisia usually meet at school or through common activities, as well as in their neighborhoods. But online acquaintances are becoming more and more popular. It is common for students to lend money to each other.

Responsibilities: Once a child leaves the household they are expected to take responsibility for themselves, until then, however, a child is largely dependent upon their parents. It is not typical for families to have maids. Usually, the girls are more helpful around the house and the boys less so. Tunisian males rarely cook, but females do. Students typically receive pocket money for food and fun from their parents, but don't necessarily budget.

Parental Involvement: Parents in Tunisia have no worries regarding internet use as they don't know much about the internet and technology. They rarely monitor their teenagers. Parents check their children's school results as they arrive in the mail, it is not through direct contact with the school. Parents will usually respect their children's personal interests and individual time. Females, however, may be slightly more restricted in their movement in the evening times, or because they may be required to be accompanied by a relative to social or individual activities.

Pets: Tunisian families rarely keep pets indoors, and pets in Tunisia are treated like pets. However, this will really depend on whether or not the student grew up with pets.

School



Classes: Students remain in one classroom throughout the day and teachers come in to teach different subjects. In Tunisia students are evaluated on daily homework, class participation, and periodic written exams. Students in Tunisia do not have the option to study subjects at different levels of difficulty and are not allowed to choose their school subjects.

School Relationships: The relationship between students and teachers in Tunisia is formal. The students show respect to teachers by calling them professor/teacher first or last name, by abiding by the teacher's rules in class and by doing the work assigned to them.

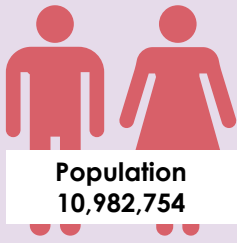
Extracurricular Activities: Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities are limited at school although the concept does exist. Students usually go to private sports clubs or public youth centers. Tunisian parents are typically not involved in their children's extracurricular activities.

School Rules and Attire: Tunisian students can have their phones with them at school and use them as long as they are not seen inside the classroom. In Tunisian schools girls wear blue school aprons, not uniforms. Boys do not have uniforms. The dress code allows clothing that is no higher than the knee and at least half sleeve-shirts.

Returning from Exchange: Upon return to their country, Tunisian students often face difficulties with French and Arabic languages as they may have missed a year of material in those courses.



Tunis



Population
10,982,754



Square Miles
63,170

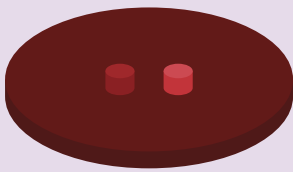


Currency
Tunisian Dinar

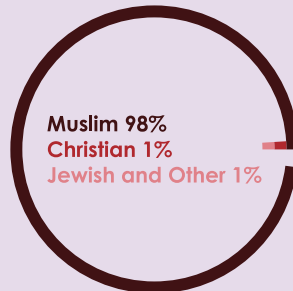


Literacy rate
72%

Literacy rate
89%



Arab 98%
European 1%
Jewish and Other 1%



Muslim 98%
Christian 1%
Jewish and Other 1%

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: Socializing is more common in groups. At school in particular, socializing one-on-one is not as common. With regards to mixed gender socializing in the U.S., girls might feel awkward about it at first, but boys will likely adjust quickly as they are generally a bit more out-going than girls. Personal space between people of the same gender is often close.

Communication Styles: The cultural norm is that it is unacceptable to show negative emotions in public or in front of the family, however, many teenagers still show their emotions. They may do so more with their peers than with their family, but it does happen at home too. In Tunisian culture, silence can be a means of communicating negative feelings they may be experiencing. Teens may not talk with their parents about important subjects as they may be shy to do so.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is important as a way to demonstrate respect, but Tunisian teens may be shy with new people.

Food and Culture



Religion: Many Tunisians practice their religion at home with family, but they do not necessarily attend services with the community. Ramadan is the month where family sits together for dinner, and wakes up at night for a light snack. For Eid al-Fitr children buy new clothes, visit family and go somewhere for fun.

Holidays: Prophet's Anniversary, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha are predominate holidays in Tunisia. The anniversary of the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina is the beginning of the new Islamic calendar, Hijri year. The dates of these holidays vary from year to year by about 10 days as they are based on the Hijri calendar. Most of the Tunisian holidays are celebrated as family gatherings. The students will miss the family gatherings and the meals in addition to the spirit of the holiday as the whole country will be celebrating.

Guest Culture: Usually in Tunisia, we offer food or drink to guest three times as in the Tunisian culture guests do not accept food or drink offer the first time they get asked. If a guest declines the first time, the host will keep asking.

Lunch and Diets: Portions in Tunisia are not as large as in the U.S. Eating leftover meals is a common practice. Usually, students do not pack their lunches and buy hot lunches.

Personal Hygiene

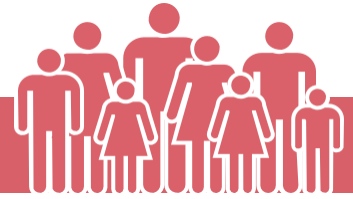


In Tunisia, people generally shower every two days on average but that varies from one person to another. Underwear is supposed to be changed every day, but other clothes can be worn two days in a row. If the clothes smell, then they are considered unclean. If they do not, such as a jacket or jeans, they are not considered unclean. In Tunisia, students will put on house clothes when they return home when they know that they're staying in the house.



Turkey

Family Life



In Turkey, the family is the dominant source for creating a sense of belonging for both males and females. Individuals within Turkish society are generally loyal to and have close relationships with their families. It is considered desirable to have grandparents and other relatives around, and that is generally the case, except in the largest cities. Regardless, relatives do travel back and forth and stay closely connected. It is not unusual for young adults to help their younger siblings with school expenses, or to help elderly relatives with their needs.

The traditional male-dominated family and authority structure is becoming less pronounced in the urban areas of Turkey. The Turkish mother may be considered the “ruler” of her household, and she and the rest of her family considers it her responsibility to dote upon her family. This may include waking children up in the morning. The mother assumes all responsibility for household chores. YES Turkish students might have the mindset that “Mom runs the house, manages the money, cooks, irons, serves, and educates the children to assume responsibility.” Turkish fathers, on the other hand, generally fulfill the role of the financial provider and are usually not responsible for household chores or cooking. In Turkey, meals may be eaten all together as a family, or separately depending on family members’ schedules.

Teen Life: Most teenagers in Turkey do not work and are only responsible for their academic success. Families give pocket money to the teenagers and, depending on the amount given, families might expect that the teens budget the money on their own. If a Turkish child owns something, it is generally his or her own and not understood to be the shared property of siblings. This includes clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first.

Responsibilities: Chores are generally done by the parents. Teenagers sometimes help, but most male teenagers do not even help with the cleaning. Chores are an area where the contrast between American culture and Turkish culture is clear and obvious, and thus, where conflicts may arise for YES Turkish students. Generally, it is the parents who cook in Turkey.

Parental Involvement: Turkish parents often monitor what their children do online in the interest of their children’s safety. Parents also may limit what sites a child may visit online, or how much time the child spends on the internet. In Turkey, it is considered respectful to allow family members to regular, individual time by themselves to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends, or to simply relax.

Many Turkish parents are in direct contact with their children’s school and are kept aware of their academic progress. Turkish parents are often actively involved in supporting or helping to arrange their children’s extracurricular activities.

Pets: In Turkey, dogs are most often acquired for the purposes of protection as a watch dog, or for special use by hunters or police. They are not commonly viewed as domestic pets.

Personal Interactions



Mixed Gender Socializing: It is perfectly acceptable for Turkish teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually.

Friendships: Turkish teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate and the choice is left up to the individual. Most teenagers have made their friends through school, but neighborhood bonds are strong in Turkey, so they can become friends with their neighbors, as well. Friendship means bonds and sharing in Turkish culture, so even though students might socialize with many teenagers and call them friends, they only have a limited number of close friends. It’s common to borrow from or lend money to trusted friends.

Communication Styles: Turkish students will tend to use a more indirect communication style and will be used to indirectly confronting people, for instance, addressing their concerns to someone other than the person to whom they intend the criticism. It is important in Turkey to avoid conflict and therefore ‘save face.’ Turkish students may not want to openly disagree and will instead become sullen and resentful, but unwilling to discuss what has made them uncomfortable or offended them.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is important in Turkish culture, as a sign of respect when speaking with others. Teenagers are expected to make eye contact with adults.

Cultural Norms: The concept of personal space is small in Turkey, and people tend to have more physical contact while they are communicating. Friends kiss each other on the cheek when they meet. The same holds true for family members. Turkish people tend to view time as unlimited and flowing, and much greater flexibility exists around deadlines and schedules. Attending to relationships with others is more important than being punctual, and cutting a conversation short in order to be able to make another meeting on time could be seen as a sign of disrespect.

Ankara

School



In Turkey, school hours vary from school to school, however most school days start at 8am and end at 3pm.

Classes: In Turkey, each class is 45 minutes long with 5-10 minute breaks in between and a longer lunch break. Students remain in one classroom throughout the school day and teachers rotate. Students cannot study subjects at different levels of difficulty. Turkish students take 12-15 courses each semester. These courses include: mathematics, science, foreign language, Turkish literature, history, geography, physical education, and more. Most subjects are compulsory, but there are also optional courses such as sociology and logic.

Out of 100 points scale, 50 is the lowest passing grade. Daily homework may be given in some classes, but it does not contribute to the student's final grade. Turkish students are generally not accustomed to doing incremental work.

School Relationships: Teachers are highly respected in Turkey. As a general rule, teachers are not addressed by their first name or a nickname out of respect for their authority and age. Students can raise their hand to make or argue a point in an indirect way, but they would rarely argue or contradict a teacher directly. In Turkey it is not the norm to know teachers on a personal level outside of class.

Extracurricular Activities: Most public schools in Turkey do not offer clubs, sports, or art programs. Students would arrange for these activities independent of the school structure.

School Rules and Attire: The Ministry of Education has a policy against fighting, bullying, and cheating, which all schools are required to implement.

Returning from Exchange: Upon their return, if a Turkish YES student studied 10th or 11th grade in the U.S., they are able to continue their studies from the next grade. However, if a YES student studied in the 11th grade in Turkey and was supposed to study 12th grade in the U.S., they are required to repeat the year, unless they return from U.S. with a high school diploma.

Food and Culture



Religion: Islam in Turkey is adapted to modern life and may not be as traditionally followed. Many Turks value the moral and spiritual bases of Islam, and revere it as a guide to right living and ethical conduct. Religious practices in Turkey are voluntary rather than obligatory. The approach to religion in Turkey is considered very personal.

Holidays: End of Ramadan Festivities (Eid al-Fitr) and the Sacrifice Feast (Eid al-Adha) are the most commonly observed religious holidays in Turkey. These holidays are times when extended families come together, and Turkish students might feel more homesick during these days.

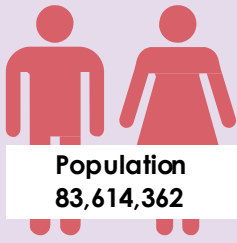
Guest Culture: Adults, youth, and close friends give and receive gifts on New Year's in Turkey.

Lunch and Diets: Almost all meat sold in Turkey is halal. Pork is sold only in big grocery stores and most people do not eat pork. Generally, dinners are cooked at home and if there are any leftovers it is kept and re-heated the next day. Students are used to eating cold lunches as well as hot lunches at school, depending whether or not their school has a cafeteria.

Personal Hygiene



Turkish students typically take long showers two or three times a week rather than quick daily showers. In Turkey, re-using a towel/bathrobe for 1-2 weeks is normal. Turkish children, in general, are used to their mothers picking up after them, so it will take participants some time learning how to clean the bathroom while on program. Wearing the same clothes for more than one day might be considered normal. Sweaters and trousers are generally worn multiple times, especially in the winter time. Turkish teenagers are likely to have never used a washing machine in their lives, and they would not be familiar with how to run the programs or how much detergent/fabric softener to use. Most homes in Turkey do not have drying machines, and they line-dry their clothes. Students may not be aware that some fabrics could shrink when tumble dried or lose their shape when dried in an electric clothes dryer.



Population
83,614,362



Square Miles
302,533



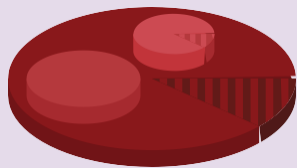
Currency
Turkish Lira



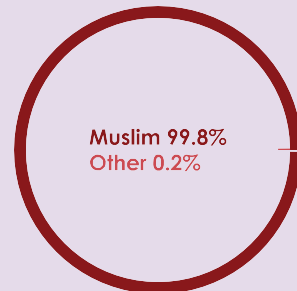
Literacy rate
92%



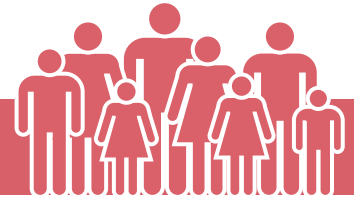
Literacy rate
98.4%



Turkish 70-75%
Kurdish 18%
Other minorities 7-12%



West Bank and Gaza



Family Life

In cities, Palestinian families consist of parents and their children. Families in the country side may have grandparents also living with them. One or both parents may work outside the home. However, parents in Palestine usually arrive home from work about the same time as their children. In Palestine, family members typically eat lunch together as a family, and

help themselves sporadically at dinner or breakfast. Middle Eastern cooking can be complicated so Palestinian parents cook for their children, and children are rarely expected to cook.

Teen Life: If a Palestinian has a sibling close in age they may share things. Siblings may share clothes, computers, and a bedroom. If an item is not normally shared, then the norm is to ask permission. In Palestine, parents are highly respected and there are limits as to how far a child can engage in argumentative behavior with his parents. Palestinian teenagers are mostly dependent on their parents. Palestinian students coming on the YES Program typically learn how to become more independent and responsible for their actions while in the U.S.

Responsibilities: In Palestine, most teens depend on their mothers for household upkeep. Palestinian teenagers get their money from their parents for personal items and social activities, and sometimes from babysitting work or from paid chores. Palestinian teenagers are responsible for their homework, keeping their room clean, and sometimes for watching younger siblings, especially if parents are busy at work.

Parental Involvement: Fathers in Palestine are often more responsible for working and bringing in a household income, whereas mothers are more involved with children and school. Palestinian families may monitor their children's use of the computer, though not all do. In Palestinian public schools, parents may only become involved if their child exhibits serious behavioral concerns, and are not generally kept up to date with academic progress. Mothers are usually available around the time their children are back from school. Public transportation in Palestine is easy for Palestinian students so parents do not always need to transport their teenagers. Many Palestinian parents attend their children's activities

Pets: Pets are uncommon in Palestinian homes.

School



Classes: Palestinian students are evaluated on written exams which mostly focus on memorization. A small part of the evaluation depends on homework and projects. Some teachers in Palestine evaluate students on class participation, which is about 10% of the student's grade. In Palestine, all students who are in the same grade take the same subjects. Students remain in one classroom while the teachers rotate rooms. There are three types of schools in Palestine: public, private and UNRWA. There are typically about 38 students in each class. Most schools in Palestine are not co-ed; rather, they are schools either for girls or for boys. There are a few schools which are gender mixed in which boys and girls study in the same classes

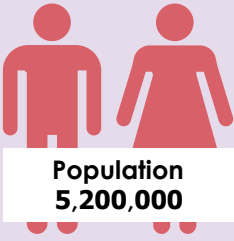
School Relationships: In Palestine, showing respect to teachers differs from school to school. Rarely, there are some schools where the students have a friendly, yet respectful, relationship with their teachers. In most schools, students are asked to address teachers with appropriate title like Ms., Mrs., Mr. and the teacher's name.

Extracurricular Activities: Palestinian students generally join clubs outside the school for extracurricular activities and schools do not typically have clubs. There are many centers, mostly in urban areas, which encourage sports and music, and provide classes. Most villages and rural areas do not have clubs in school or even in the community. Palestinian students generally join clubs outside the school for extracurricular activities as schools generally do not have clubs. Extracurricular activities often include sports like soccer, basketball, and swimming, or playing musical instruments, art and drawing, and dancing, particularly the Palestinian folkloric dancing "Dabkeh".



School Rules and Attire: In Palestine, students are not allowed to bring cell phones into the classroom. Schools in Palestine have strict disciplinary policies, and there is not much room to break rules without suffering consequences. Most all-female and mixed schools require that students wear school uniforms. It is either a knee-high dress for girls, or pants and shirts for both males and females in mixed or all-boy schools.

Returning from Exchange: Palestinian students usually have to take summer classes to help prepare them for the national exam 'Tawajhi.' However, there have been no concerns about students facing difficulties upon their return to school after their U.S. experience.



Population
5,200,000

Personal Interactions



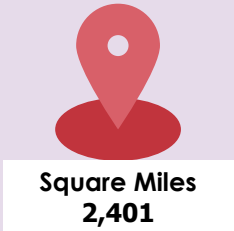
For Palestinians, personal space often means "private time," and may not refer to the distance kept between people when talking or during general independent pursuits.

Mixed Gender Socializing: Mixed gender socializing within a group is normally considered acceptable. Socializing in mixed gender one-on-one relationships is generally unacceptable by the community.

Friendships: Palestinian teens typically socialize in groups. However, there are one-on-one relationships between same-gender friends which are often very close. Friendships are made through school, from the neighborhood, and through the family. In Palestinian culture, people usually share or borrow money from each other with the idea that borrowed money will be returned as agreed upon.

Communication Styles: Palestinian teenagers are taught to express their negative emotions in an appropriate way that does not disrespect others.

Eye Contact: It is common in Palestine not to make direct eye contact with a person while talking to them.



Square Miles
2,401



Currency
Israeli Shekel

Food and Culture



Religion: In Palestine, Muslims attend Friday noon prayers as a weekly religious event with their family. Christians attend Sunday church services with their family.

Holidays: Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are spent visiting family and cooking certain meals and sweets. New Year and Christmas are also holidays.

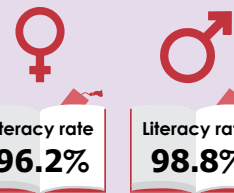
Guest Culture: It is considered a courtesy to offer food or drink to a guest more than once in order to show respect and hospitality. If the guest says no the first time, which they probably would, it is expected that the host will offer a second time and insist that the guest accept the offer. In some situations, it is considered rude to reject the offer after the host insists. It is also rude to not offer any drink or food to guests. It is not common for people to ask for food or drink from a host.

Lunch and Diets: Food portions are relatively large. Leftover meals are a common practice. Usually, students would take cold meals to school, mostly a cold cut sandwich. This would be their brunch meal. Normally, parents would prepare this meal for their children to take to school. After they return home, students would have a hot meal lunch.

Personal Hygiene

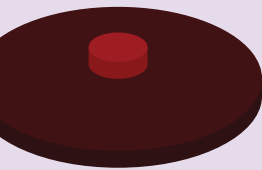


Generally in Palestine, people shower every day or once every two days. Palestinian teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them (towels are hung up, and hygiene products are put away). Each person has their own towel. It is very uncommon for people to wear the same clothes for two days in a row, however they sometimes do not wash their clothes after wearing them one time.



Literacy rate
96.2%

Literacy rate
98.8%



Palestinian Arab
and other 87%
Jewish 13%

West Bank
Muslim 80-85% (pre-
dominantly Sunni)
Jewish 12-14%
Christian 1-2.5% (mainly
Greek Orthodox)

Gaza
Muslim (Sunni) 98-99%
Arab Christian 0.2%
Other <1%