

COUNTRY NAME: REPUBLIC OF INDIA

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Location: India is located in South Asia. India is bordered by the Arabian Sea on the southwest, the Bay of Bengal on the southeast, and the Indian Ocean on the south. In the north, it is bordered by the countries of Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Burma. India is located within both the Eastern Hemisphere and the Northern Hemisphere. It is the seventh largest country in the world in terms of geographic size, being almost 1.3 million square miles (3.28 square kilometers). With a population of 1.35 billion people, it is currently the second most populous nation in the world behind China but is projected to surpass it by 2024. India is comprised of 29 states and 7 union territories.

Language(s) of Instruction: English, Hindi, and 30 official regional languages such as Gujarati, Urdu, and others. India became an independent state in 1947 after gaining its sovereignty from the United Kingdom so influences of the British education system abound, though English is typically not the first language.

Grading Scale(s):

A common scale (including Jharkhand Academic Council, Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education, National Institute of Open Schooling):

Percentage	Division	US Grade
60-100%	First Division	A
45-59%	Second Division	B
33-44%	Third Division/Pass Division	C

Another popular scale (including Board of Higher Secondary Education, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Secondary Education Board):

Percentage	Class	US Grade
60-100%	First Class	A
50-59%	Second Class	B
35-49%	Third Class/Pass Class	C

Another popular scale (including Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education):

Percentage	Division	US Grade
75-100%	Grade I with Distinction	A+
60-100%	Grade I/First Division	A
45-59%	Grade II/Second Division	B
35-44%	Pass Division	C

Newer 10-point scale (including Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board and Board of Secondary Education, Telangana State):

Percentage				US Grade
91-100%	A1	10.0	Exceptional	A+
81-90%	A2	9.0	Excellent	A+
71-80%	B1	8.0	Very Good	A+
61-70%	B2	7.0	Good	A
51-60%	C1	6.0	Fair	B
41-50%	C2	5.0	Average	C
33-40%	D	4.0	Below Average	C-
21-32%	E1	0	Need to Improve	F
0-20%	E2	0	Unsatisfactory	F

Scale popular with State Boards of Technical Education:

Percentage	Division	US Grade
75-100%	First Division with Distinction	A+
60-100%	First Division/Class	A
50-59%	Second Division/Class	B
40-49%	Pass Division/Class	C

Some boards may use a relative scale to assess candidate performance rather than a fixed scale, such as the Central Board of Secondary Education (grade 12):

Percentage	Division	US Grade
A1	Top 1/8th of passed candidates	A+
A2	Next 1/8th of passed candidates	A
B1	Next 1/8th of passed candidates	B+
B2	Next 1/8th of passed candidates	B
C1	Next 1/8th of passed candidates	B-
C2	Next 1/8th of passed candidates	C
D1	Next 1/8th of passed candidates	C-
D2	Next 1/8th of passed candidates	D
E	Failed Candidates	F

Academic Calendar: The academic year typically runs from June/July through March/April, though some regions have a longer vacation in winter. The school year consists of a minimum of 200 teaching days.

Principal Educational Authority:

India has 3 national boards of education and 59 state-level secondary and higher secondary boards. Those boards govern more than 115,000 secondary schools and 64,000 higher/upper secondary schools to educate more than 38 million students. In 2015, approximately 19 million students sat for the lower secondary examinations, while 14 million students sat for the higher secondary exams.

Schools in India are owned either by the government (central/ state/ local government bodies) or by the private sector (individuals, trusts or societies).

Literacy Rate: According to the CIA World Factbook, literacy among adults is 71.2%, but literacy among women is only 60.6% while literacy among men is 81.3%.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE: 5+3+2+2 system, standardized to a 12-year system since 1989

The Indian Constitution (86th Amendment) guarantees free and compulsory education for students aged 6-14 as a fundamental right, but this is not the reality. The 2009 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act guarantees that every child has the right to a full-time elementary education in a formal school.

The system is highly exam driven; it is an external examinations-based system. This means that students attend classroom lecture to prepare for examinations that are conducted by an independent examination body. At the secondary and higher secondary levels, these are state and national exam boards; at the university level, these are the universities themselves. Passing the external examinations is typically the main (and often the only) requirement in order to pass the level.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Preschool/Kindergarten:

Pre-primary education typically lasts from 2-3 years but can span up to 5 years. Education at this level is not compulsory but is a growing concern and is increasingly in demand. Pre-primary education is usually offered at private schools such as Montessori schools and government centers and encompasses pre-school (18 months to 3 years), lower kindergarten (for 3 to 4 year olds), and higher or upper kindergarten (for 4 to 5 year olds).

Primary:

Primary education begins at age 6 and consists of five years of primary schooling and. Primary school education gives students a sound basic education in reading, writing, and mathematics and an introductory understanding of social sciences.

Leaving Certificate: no leaving certificate is awarded.

Middle School: Upper primary or middle middle school lasts for a further three years. Upon completion of Class 8, students are typically 14 years old. This represents completion of compulsory education according to the RTE. Education continues the basic programs in primary school though it is more subject-focused.

Leaving Certificate: no leaving certificate is awarded.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

In India, secondary education is offered at two levels: secondary, which covers grades 8 through 10, and higher secondary, which consists of grades 11 and 12. Because of this two-tiered system, it is often referred to as a 10+2 system, where the “10” is comprised of primary and secondary education, and the “2” refers to the upper secondary studies.

Lower Secondary School:

Admissions to lower secondary education requires completion of upper primary school. Secondary education is divided into three terms for an academic year of 30 weeks. Coursework is generally offered in one of the 30 regional languages, though some schools do teach entirely in English. Upon completion of each year of lower secondary education in Year X, students sit for their state or national leaving examination for the Standard X/Class 10 diploma after completion of both grades 9 and 10. Students typically sit for 5 to 6 subjects through their exam board and may also be tested on minor subjects (electives, physical education, practicals, etc.) through internal school-based assessments. The school-based assessments seldom appear on the official marks statement issued by the exam body, but unofficial school-issued transcripts typically show the internal marks. School-issued documents are not considered official. The results on their official board exams determine which paths are available to them regarding further education and employment.

Successfully passing the examinations leads to the appropriate lower secondary school certificate (SSC) and grants access to higher secondary education in academic or vocational-technical streams, technical education diploma programs at a polytechnic, or limited employment.

Leaving Certificate:

Secondary School Certificate
All India Secondary School Certificate
Delhi Secondary School Certificate
Matriculation Examination
Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
Secondary School Leaving Certificate
Secondary School Examination
Anglo-Indian High School Examination Certificate

Upper Secondary School:

Admissions to upper secondary education requires passing the Year 10 state or national leaving examination certificate.

Upper secondary education lasts for two further years and is offered in two branches: academic and vocational/technical. The academic branch is further divided into scientific, literary, and commerce streams. At this level, students can choose particular subjects/vocations. Internally examined subjects (subjects examined by the school that typically do not appear on the official exam board certificate) include environmental education, vocational training, and physical education. A general outline of externally examined subjects includes First Language (Special), Second Language (General), and three subjects in their stream.

After completing grade 12, students sit for the Standard XII/Grade 12 diploma examinations for their particular higher secondary school (HSC) exam body (state or national examination authority). Some credentials may include names such as pre-degree, junior college, pre-university, and other nomenclature that may cause confusion, especially since many pre-degree or pre-university upper secondary qualifications are issued by higher secondary departments of public universities or Deemed-to-be universities.

Leaving Certificate:

All India Senior Secondary School Certificate
Delhi Senior School Certificate
Indian School Certificate
Senior Secondary Certificate
Higher Secondary Certificate
Pre-University Examination Certificate
Intermediate Examination Certificate

Vocational Upper Secondary:

Higher Secondary Stage Vocational Education also lasts two years following grade 10. General academic (foundation) courses comprise 30% of the instruction, while the remaining 70% is devoted to vocational studies in streams such as business/commerce, humanities, engineering and technology, agriculture, health/paramedical, home sciences, and informatics. Upon successfully completing year 12, students will sit for the state or national leaving examination.

Leaving Certificate:

Certificate of Vocational Education

Technical Upper Secondary School

Admissions to technical upper secondary school requires the Secondary School Certificate or other lower secondary (grade X) examination results certificate. As an alternative to academic upper secondary education, students may pursue a 10+3 technical upper secondary education program through their local state board of technical education and training.

Students in the academic and vocational secondary sectors usually follow a 10+2 path, where As an alternative to academic or vocational upper secondary, students may pursue a 10+3 technical upper secondary education program their local state board of technical education and training. The Diploma in Engineering/Technology is a 3-year program that completes the upper secondary education curriculum in a specific technical field and also consists of first year of engineering or technology degree studies.

Graduates of a 10+3 Diploma in Engineering/Technology program are typically eligible to enter directly into the second year of a 4-year Bachelor degree in a related field at universities in India. As a result, the Diploma in Engineering/Technology is considered to represent both completion of high school and some lower division undergraduate study. As a result, some of the courses or years of study represent high school-level study, while other courses are recommended for academic credit at the university level.

Consequently, the final year of the Diploma in Engineering is considered comparable to the freshman year of a U.S. Bachelor degree.

Leaving Certificate:

Diploma in Engineering

Diploma in Technology

TIME LINE: Years of education from preschool through 13th grade.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					A			B		C		D	F
												D	

- A. Primary School completion
- B. Middle School completion
- C. Year 10 Secondary School Certificate
- D. Year 12 Higher Secondary Certificate
- E. Year 12 Certificate of Vocational Education
- F. Diploma of Engineering/Technology

Useful Vocabulary:

10+2: Some countries in South Asia, particularly India, may refer to their combination of primary and secondary education studies as 10+2. Primary and (lower) secondary education are comprised of 8 years of primary education and 2 years of (lower) secondary education for a total of 10 years. After Grade 10, students attend a junior college to complete 2 years of upper secondary or intermediate education. As a result, this is referred to as 10+2.

College: College refers to post-secondary study in the US and is often used interchangeably with university; in other countries outside the US, it can refer to both upper secondary and post-secondary studies. In some countries such as India and Nepal, college is actually used to refer to either upper secondary or post-secondary studies, depending on the institution and program.

Conceded Pass: Some educational systems allow students to pass a course even if they did not meet the minimum passing grade. This is often referred to as a conceded pass or compensated pass. This is similar to the concept of a D grade in the US because the student did not actually meet minimal course requirements but is still allowed credit for the course without retaking it.

External Marks: After tenth and twelfth grades, students sit for national or state examinations. While courses are studied at a local secondary school or higher secondary school, the examination body sets the examination information, typically does the grading, and releases the results, while the individual schools may offer homework, assignments, pop quizzes and other studies to prepare students for the exams. Some subjects are graded by the local school. Subjects that are examined by the examination body are external examinations, while the school may also assess students internally on electives, physical education, and practicals.

Internal Marks: In India, most secondary and higher secondary programs are studied at a local school to prepare students for statewide or national examinations. Usually, the school will assess students in such areas as mid-term exams, semester or annual projects, laboratory practices, or daily work, prior to the examination period, while the official examination for the subject is conducted and graded by the examination board. However, some subjects are only assessed internally by the local school. Sometimes, the marks statements issued by the exam boards will show internal assessments, but in most cases, the student's success on the examination is determined by their results on the formal board examinations.

Junior College: In the US, a junior college typically offers post-secondary education that may transfer to a university-degree program. In India, however, a junior college may actually offer studies at the upper secondary level, post-secondary level, or vocational studies at both levels.

Marks: Marks are the method of grading students in many countries whose education is based on the British system of education. Marks may be out of 100 (most common) but may range from 25 to 300, and other variations exist as well. In India, marks are used simultaneously to both to identify a student's performance (similar to a grade) and to indicate the weight of a particular subject examination (similar to credits).

Marks Statement: In the US, when students complete a level of education, they receive a transcript showing the subjects, grades, and credits they earned. In India, each state and national board awards their own unique documentation showing a student's results on their board examinations. Some boards refer to these results as a marks statement, though other names exist, including memorandum of marks, marks certificate, certificate of performance, statement showing the marks, statement of marks, and others. Examination results might appear on both the marks statement and the passing certificate, though some exam bodies issue a single document that encompasses both.

Polytechnic: A polytechnic is a type of educational institution that typically offers several types of technical education. This type of institution may offer upper secondary vocational studies, 10+3 Diploma programs in Engineering or Technology, post-secondary technical training, and higher technical education programs offering diploma-level studies.

Private Candidate: A private candidate typically refers to a student who is sitting for a state or national examination, such as the higher secondary education examination, separately from the rest of the candidates, who are typically registered for the national or state-specific exam by their higher secondary school. Most private candidates are registering as such because they are taking supplementary exams for previously failed subjects, but some register for the supplementary examination time period because they missed the regularly scheduled examination, due to illness or other absence.

Secondary Education: Secondary education refers to the education after primary or elementary school but before university-level studies. In many countries, secondary education is offered in two stages: lower and upper secondary, but the phrase “secondary education” generally refers to the lower stage. Lower secondary education may even be the benchmark credential for high school graduation in some systems, but university-bound students typically must complete higher or upper secondary education.

Transcript: In the US, a transcript is an academic record that typically includes subjects studied, grades earned, and credentials earned, if applicable. It may also include the major field of study, grading definitions, scholarships or honors received, term dates, cumulative Grade Point Average, and other relevant information. In other countries, the term transcript may have no meaning, may refer to an enrollment record or letter, or may be an unofficial academic record created by recruiters for applying to US colleges and universities. Asking for a transcript in India will typically not result in the official academic record.

Resources/Websites:

All India Council for Technical Education, Boards of Technical Education: <http://www.aicte-india.org/education/institutions/Board-of-Technical-Education>

Council of Boards of School Education in India: <http://www.cobse.org/member.htm>

The Indian Education System Described and Compared with the Dutch System. NUFFIC, 2015. <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/publications/find-a-publication/education-system-india.pdf>

Indian School Education System: An Overview. British Council, 2014. https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/indian_school_education_system_-_an_overview_1.pdf

International Education Guide for the Assessment of Education from the Republic of India. International Qualifications Assessment Service, 2009.

Ministry of Human Resource Development: http://mhrd.gov.in/autonomous_bodies and http://mhrd.gov.in/recognized_boards (archived).

Online Guide to Educational Systems around the World: India. NAFSA, 2010.

Results of Secondary and Higher Secondary Examinations 2015. Government of India, 2017. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/Final%20sheet%202015.pdf

Boards of Education Approved by the Council of Boards of School Education

Central Boards

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) – SSC, HSC
Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) – SSC, HSC
National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) – SSC, HSC

State Boards

Board of Secondary Education, Andhra Pradesh – SSC
Board of Intermediate Education, Andhra Pradesh – HSC
A.P. Open School Society – SSC, HSC
Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA) – SSC, HSC
Assam Higher Secondary Education Council – HSC
Assam Sanskrit Board – SSC
State Madrasa Education Board, Assam – disbanded in May 2017 and transferred to (SEBA)
Aligarh Muslim University Board of Secondary & Sr. Secondary Education, Aligarh
Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) – SSC, HSC
Bihar Board of Open Schooling & Examination
Bihar Intermediate Education Council – dissolved in 2012 and absorbed by BSEB
Bihar State Madrasa Education Board – SSC, HSC
Bihar Sanskrit Shiksha Board
Banasthali Vidyapith (University) – SSC, HSC
Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education – SSC, HSC
Chhattisgarh State Open School – SSC, HSC
Chhattisgarh Sanskrit Vidya Mandalam – SSC, HSC
Chhattisgarh Madrasa Board – SSC, HSC
Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed University)
Goa Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education – SSC, HSC
Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board – SSC, HSC
Board of School Education, Haryana – SSC, HSC
Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education – SSC, HSC
Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education – SSC, HSC
Jharkhand Academic Council – SSC, HSC
Karnataka Secondary Education, Examination Board – SSC
Karnataka Department of Pre-University Education – HSC
Kerala Board of Public Examination – SSC
Kerala Board of Higher Secondary Examination – HSC
Board of Vocational Higher Secondary Education, Kerala
Board of Secondary Education, Madhya Pradesh – SSC, HSC
Madhya Pradesh State Open School – SSC, HSC
Maharishi Patanjali Sanskrit Sansthan
Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education – SSC

Board of Secondary Education, Manipur – SSC
Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur – HSC
Meghalaya Board of School Education – SSC, HSC
Mizoram Board of School Education – SSC, HSC
Nagaland Board of School Education – SSC, HSC
Board of Secondary Education, Odisha (formerly Orissa) – SSC
Council of Higher Secondary Education, Odisha (formerly Orissa) – HSC
Punjab School Education Board – SSC, HSC
Board of Secondary Education Rajasthan – SSC, HSC
Rajasthan State Open School – SSC, HSC
Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (Deemed University)
State Board of School Examinations and Board of Higher Secondary Examinations, Tamil Nadu – SSC, HSC
Board of Secondary Education, Telangana State – SSC
Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education – HSC
Telangana Open School Society
Tripura Board of Secondary Education – SSC, HSC
Uttar Pradesh Board of High School and Intermediate Education – SSC, HSC
U.P. Board of Secondary Sanskrit Education
Board of School Education Uttarakhand – SSC, HSC
Uttarakhand Sanskrit Shiksha Parishad
West Bengal Board of Secondary Education – SSC
West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education – HSC
West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education – SSC
West Bengal Council of Rabindra Open Schooling (Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya) – SSC, HSC
West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education – HSC (recognized by the Government of India)

Contact Information:

Peggy Bell Hendrickson, Director
Transcript Research
9540 Garland Rd, Ste 381, Box 383, Dallas, TX 75218
peggy@transcriptresearch.com 214.810.1124