

19 Education

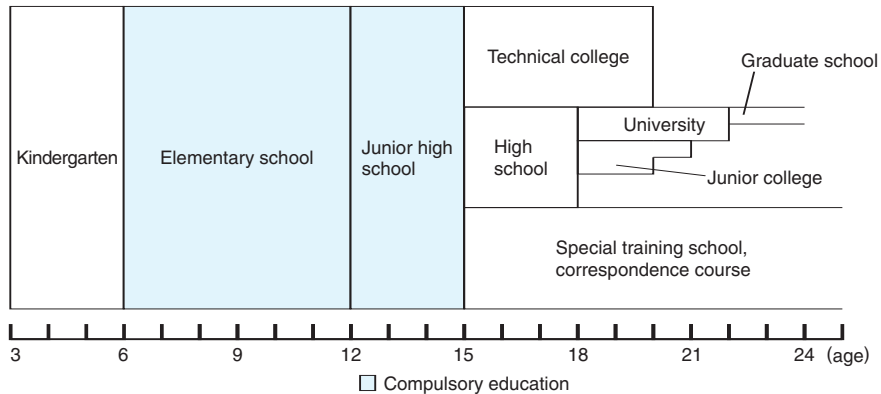
Education System

The Japanese school year starts in April and finishes in March of the following year. Under Japan's education system, six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school are mandatory. Children enter elementary school at the age of six and graduate from junior high school at 15. There are no fees for tuition or textbooks for compulsory education at public schools.

In July 2003 the National University Corporation Law and other related laws were enacted, and 89 national universities were transformed into independent administrative corporations in April 2004. The incorporation of national universities marks the largest reform in the nation's history of higher education since the establishment of the imperial university system in the late nineteenth century. The reform is expected to strengthen the universities' autonomy and the leadership of their presidents, leading to intensified competition among universities.

As part of the reform of the Japanese judicial system, 23 national, 2 public, and 49 private universities had postgraduate law schools in the school year 2005 with about 5,800 students. Graduates from the three-year law schools will be automatically qualified to take the new national bar examination, which was scheduled to be introduced in 2006.

Japan's School System



Education Levels

In the postwar period after 1945 several educational reforms brought about major changes in Japan's education system and raised its standard. One of the major trends has been the sharp rise in the ratio of students going on to high school from the mid-1960s, reaching 97.6% in 2005.

The percentage of women advancing to two- and four-year colleges stood at just 11.3% in 1965, only half that for men, but the figure increased steadily to reach 36.8% in 1989, exceeding the ratio of 35.8% for men for the first time. In 2005 the college advancement rate was 53.1% for men and 49.8% for women, and the overall figure for both sexes was 51.1%.

In addition, more people have been entering vocational training schools. The shares of high school graduates who went on to vocational training schools and who entered the job market in 2005 were 27.1% and 17.2%, respectively.

In school year 2002 a new curriculum for kindergartens, elementary schools, and junior high schools was introduced, aimed at making Japanese education less regimented and nurturing children's ability and willingness to solve problems by themselves. A regular five-day school week was introduced to create a "pressure-free" educational environment.

However, the results of international academic ability tests released in December 2004 clearly showed a decline in academic abilities among Japanese children. Amid mounting concern over the lowering of educational levels, the Central Council of Education, an advisory panel to the education minister, compiled a draft report in February 2006, which proposes an increase of classroom hours for Japanese language, mathematics, and science. It also asserted the necessity of improving English education for elementary school children. The draft report is seen as recommending a change to the current curriculum centered on "pressure-free" education.

Trends in Rates of Advancement to High School and University

(Total in % [Male %/Female %])

	High school	University and junior college
1950	42.5 (48.0/36.7)	n/a
1955	51.5 (55.5/47.4)	10.1 (15.0/5.0)
1960	57.7 (59.6/55.9)	10.3 (14.9/5.5)
1965	70.7 (71.7/69.6)	17.0 (22.4/11.3)
1970	82.1 (81.6/82.7)	23.6 (29.2/17.7)
1975	91.9 (91.0/93.0)	38.4 (43.6/32.9)
1980	94.2 (93.1/95.4)	37.4 (41.3/33.3)
1985	94.1 (93.1/95.3)	37.6 (40.6/34.5)
1990	95.1 (94.0/96.2)	36.3 (35.2/37.4)
1995	96.7 (95.8/97.6)	45.2 (42.9/47.6)
2000	97.0 (96.3/97.7)	49.1 (49.4/48.7)
2005	97.6 (97.3/97.9)	51.5 (53.1/49.8)

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Gakko kihon chosa hokokusho* (Report on Basic Survey on Schools), 2005.

Note: Figures from 1985 include correspondence courses.

Number of Schools, Students, and Teachers, FY 2005

	Schools	Students	Full-time teachers
Kindergarten	13,949 (8,354)	1,738,766 (1,383,249)	110,393 (84,568)
Elementary school	23,123 (194)	7,197,458 (70,950)	416,833 (3,606)
Junior high school	11,035 (721)	3,626,415 (242,506)	248,694 (13,269)
High school	5,418 (1,321)	3,605,242 (1,068,923)	251,408 (59,810)
School for the blind	71 (2)	3,809 (92)	3,383 (42)
School for the deaf	106 (1)	6,639 (64)	4,974 (31)
School for the handicapped	825 (11)	91,164 (644)	55,275 (189)
Technical college	63 (3)	59,160 (2,356)	4,469 (154)
Junior college	488 (436)	219,355 (203,365)	11,960 (10,507)
University	726 (553)	2,865,051 (2,112,291)	161,690 (89,327)
Special training school	3,439 (3,225)	783,783 (753,888)	41,776 (38,917)
Miscellaneous (vocational) school	1,830 (1,814)	163,667 (162,455)	11,045 (10,981)
Total	61,073 (16,635)	20,360,509 (6,000,783)	1,321,900 (311,401)

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Gakko kihon chosa hokokusho* (Report on Basic Survey on Schools), 2005.

Note: Figures in parentheses are for private schools.

Subjects of Concentration in Higher Education

(% of students)

	Japan (2005)	UK (2002)	France (2003)	China (2003)
Liberal arts	18.8	20.2	33.8	16.1
Law, economics	35.5	25.9	22.8	26.6
Science	3.2	21.1	17.1	9.1
Technology	16.9	9.0		33.3
Agriculture	2.6	1.2		2.3
Medicine, health	7.5	14.0	6.9	7.3
Education	7.5	3.0	6.7	5.3
Others	8.1	5.6	12.7	0.0

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kyoiku shihyo no kokusai hikaku* (International Comparison of Education Indexes), 2006.

Computers in Public Schools, March 2005

	Number of students per computer	Number of computers per school	Internet-connected schools (% of total)
Elementary school	10.1	30.8	99.9
Junior high school	7.1	46.5	99.9
High school	6.2	107.6	100.0

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

International Comparison of Educational Achievement, 2003 (15-Year-Old Students)

Mathematics		Reading	
Mean score		Mean score	
1. Hong Kong	550	1. Finland	543
2. Finland	544	2. Korea (ROK)	534
3. Korea (ROK)	542	3. Canada	528
4. Netherlands	538	4. Australia	525
5. Liechtenstein	536	5. Liechtenstein	525
6. Japan	534	6. New Zealand	522
7. Canada	532	7. Ireland	515
8. Belgium	529	8. Sweden	514
9. Macao	527	9. Netherlands	513
10. Switzerland	527	10. Hong Kong	510
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		14. Japan	498

Science		Problem solving	
Mean score		Mean score	
1. Finland	548	1. Korea (ROK)	550
2. Japan	548	2. Hong Kong	548
3. Hong Kong	539	3. Finland	548
4. Korea (ROK)	538	4. Japan	547
5. Liechtenstein	525	5. New Zealand	533
6. Australia	525	6. Macao	532
7. Macao	525	7. Australia	530
8. Netherlands	524	8. Liechtenstein	529
9. Czech Republic	523	9. Canada	529
10. New Zealand	521	10. Belgium	525

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Programme for International Student Assessment, 2003.

Educational Expenditure

Cost of Attending School, FY 2004

(¥ per student;
nonprivate school / private school)

	Kindergarten	Elementary school	Junior high school	High school
Educational expenses	128,667 / 341,273	54,515 / n/a	132,603 / 956,233	342,152 / 769,458
Supplementary expenses ^a	92,881 / 141,969	218,848 / n/a	299,469 / 315,435	174,179 / 265,231
School meals	16,630 / 26,177	40,798 / n/a	36,701 / 3,100	n/a / n/a
Total	238,178 / 509,419	314,161 / n/a	468,733 / 1,274,768	516,331 / 1,034,689

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kodomo no gakushuhi chosa* (Survey of Children's Educational Costs), FY 2004.

a. Home study, private lessons, after-school classes, etc.

School Enrollment and Expenditure by Country, 2002

	Enrollment (1,000 students) ^a			Expenditure per student (US\$)		
	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Primary	Secondary	Higher
USA	38,832 ^b	15,058 ^b	15,928 ^b	8,049	9,098	20,545
Japan	7,198 ^e	7,239 ^e	3,031 ^e	6,117	6,952	11,716
France	3,900 ^d	5,463 ^d	2,089 ^d	5,033	8,472	9,276
UK	9,922 (combined) ^c		1,318 ^c	5,150	6,505	11,822
Germany	11,745 (combined) ^d		2,016 ^d	4,537	7,025	10,999

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kyoiku shihyo no kokusai hikaku* (International Comparison of Education Indexes), 2006.

a. Fiscal year.

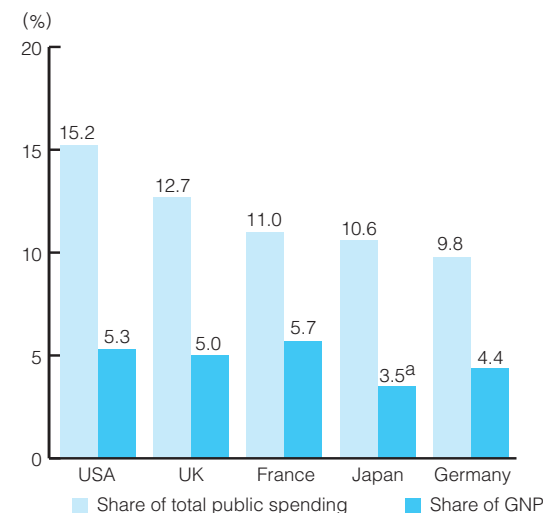
b. FY 2001.

c. FY 2002.

d. FY 2003.

e. FY 2005.

Public Spending on Education by Country, 2002



Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kyoiku shihyo no kokusai hikaku* (International Comparison of Education Indexes), 2006.

a. 2001 school year (April 2001–March 2002).

Problems at Schools

Although bullying among schoolchildren is a serious issue, the number of reported bullying cases in public elementary and junior high schools dropped substantially from a peak of 60,096 in 1995 to 21,671 in the 2004 school year. Of the total, 13,915 cases occurred at junior high schools and 5,551 at elementary schools. The number of schools where bullying cases were reported was 7,599—19.7% of all schools.

On the other hand, cases of long-term truancy are on the rise. Elementary and junior high school students who refused to go to school for more than 30 days in the 2004 school year numbered 123,317, a drop of 11.1% from a peak of 138,722 recorded in 2001.

In the 2004 school year, reported cases of student violence numbered 34,022, down 3.9% from the previous year, of which 25,984 cases were by junior high school students and 5,938 by high school students.

In the 2004 school year the number of students who quit public or private high school before graduation was 77,897, a decrease of 4.8% from a year earlier. The percentage of dropouts among all students was 2.1%.

Out-of-School Studies

The number of elementary and junior high school students receiving private instruction after school is on the rise, particularly in urban areas. While many elementary school children attend private classes in such subjects as art and music, junior high and high school students are more likely to enroll in private cram schools to prepare for entrance examinations. Recently an increasing number of elementary school students have also begun attending cram schools to prepare for junior high school entrance examinations. In 2004 there were 49,198 cram schools in Japan.

Adult Education

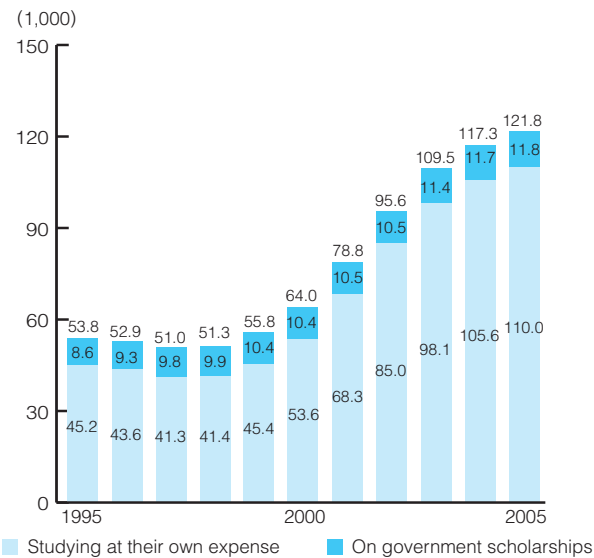
Adult education is becoming popular in Japan. The University of the Air began its broadcast courses in 1985; 87,391 people were enrolled in the first 2005 term. In the school year 2006, 20,873 public lectures held on national, public, and private university campuses offered 1,063,074 local residents a high-level learning experience. The popularity of the wide range of courses offered at community centers is evidence of the general public's enthusiasm for learning.

Foreign-language schools are also very popular. As of January 2006, there were 3,418 schools throughout Japan, and 8,581,666 students were attending those schools. The number of teachers was 11,915.

Foreign Students

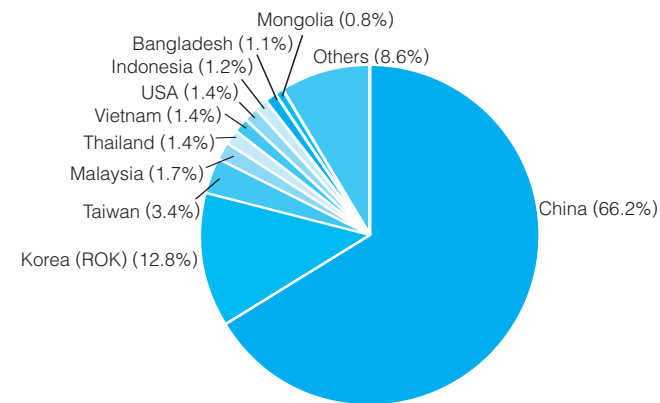
The number of foreign students in Japan hit a record high of 121,812 in May 2005 (excluding those attending Japanese-language schools), an increase of 3.8% over the previous year, and the figure has almost doubled from 2000. However, the number of foreign students is still small compared with countries like France and the United States. As many as 90.3% of these students study at their own expense, and 93.3% of them come from other Asian countries.

Foreign Students in Japan



Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Foreign Students by Origin in 2005



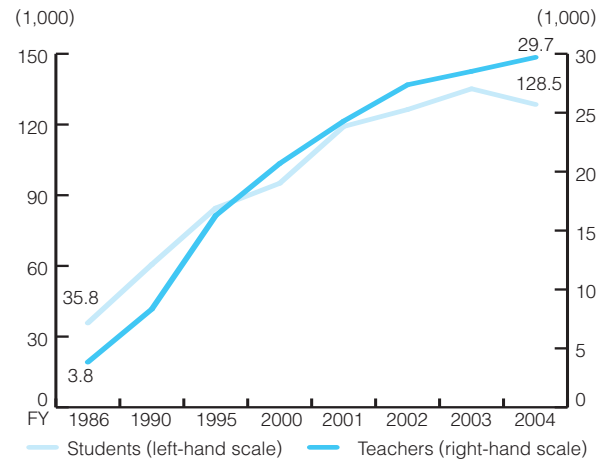
Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Japanese-Language Study

The number of people studying the Japanese language has been increasing. As of November 1, 2004, 128,500 people were studying Japanese at 1,816 institutions in Japan. Of the total, 102,442 (79.7%) were from Asia, 6,087 (4.7%) from North America, and 4,371 (3.4%) from Europe. The number of Japanese-language instructors in Japan stood at 29,704, about 1.9 times the figure of a decade earlier. There were 390 institutions in Japan offering training courses for Japanese-language instructors, and 40,729 people were studying at them.

Figures from a survey of overseas institutions that teach Japanese reveal that about 2.4 million people, about 70% of them in Asia, were studying the language in 127 countries and regions in 2003.

Japanese-Language Study in Japan



Source: Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Note: Figures from 1994 include volunteer teachers.