

18 Education

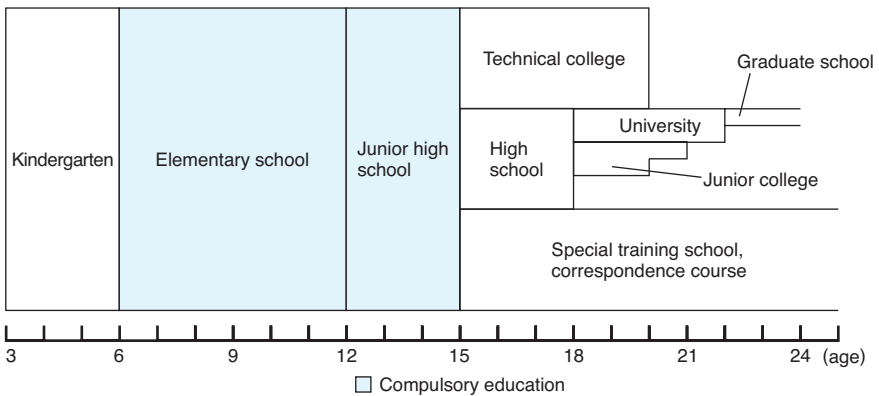
Education System

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 in 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 was 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, 68 postgraduate law schools were established in 2004, and in the school year 2007, 5,713 students were enrolled in the law schools opened at 74 universities (23 national, 2 public, and 49 private). Of the 4,607 students who studied at those law schools and took the new national bar examination in 2007, 1,851, or 40.2%, passed the exam, down 8.1 percentage points from 2006. The most successful school was Tokyo University, which produced 178 successful applicants, followed by Keio University with 173.

Japan's School System



Note: The area does not represent the proportion of students.

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 97.7% in 2007.

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 2007 the college advancement rate was 54.9% for men and 52.5% for women, and the overall figure for both sexes was 53.7%.

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 2007 were 23.7% and 18.5%, 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, amid mounting concern over the lowering of educational levels, the Central Council of Education, an advisory panel to the education minister, compiled a report in January 2008, which proposed an increase of 10% in classroom hours for major subjects. Based on this report, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology unveiled a draft of new curriculum guidelines in February 2008, which will be fully adopted by elementary schools in the school year 2011, and by junior high schools in 2012. Under the new curriculum, students will take more hours of science, mathematics, and English, while English lessons will become mandatory in elementary schools. This drastic change marks the first increase in class hours in about 40 years.

Trends in Rates of Advancing 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)
2007	97.7 (97.4/98.0)	53.7 (54.9/52.5)

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Gakko kihon chosa* (Report on Basic Survey on Schools), 2007.

Note: Figures from 1985 include correspondence courses.

Number of Schools, Students, and Teachers, FY 2007

	Schools	Students	Full-time teachers
Kindergarten	13,723 (8,292)	1,705,408 (1,367,729)	111,245 (85,889)
Elementary school	22,693 (200)	7,132,868 (74,796)	418,206 (3,960)
Junior high school	10,955 (729)	3,614,552 (253,795)	249,585 (14,008)
High school	5,313 (1,322)	3,406,343 (1,013,392)	243,951 (59,229)
Secondary school	32 (12)	14,902 (5,944)	1,148 (458)
Special-needs school ^a	1,013 (14)	108,173 (817)	66,810 (267)
Technical college	64 (3)	57,985 (2,190)	4,453 (171)
Junior college	434 (398)	186,664 (175,665)	11,015 (10,074)
University	756 (580)	2,828,635 (2,071,642)	167,648 (94,867)
Special training school	3,435 (3,218)	703,339 (674,525)	42,232 (39,156)
Miscellaneous (vocational) school	1,655 (1,643)	147,220 (146,237)	10,227 (10,167)
Total	60,073 (16,411)	19,906,089 (5,786,732)	1,326,520 (318,246)

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Gakko kihon chosa* (Report on Basic Survey on Schools), 2007.

Note: Figures in parentheses are for private schools.

a. School for the blind, the deaf, and the handicapped.

Subjects of Concentration in Higher Education

(% of students)

	Japan ^a	Korea (ROK) ^b	UK ^c	France ^c	China ^c
Humanities, arts	18.5	10.1	20.6	36.6	15.2
Law, economics	34.4	26.7	26.1	23.5	27.8
Science	3.1] 40.9	19.3] 16.5	6.2
Technology	16.4		8.7		35.1
Agriculture	2.7		1.2		2.0
Medicine, health	8.4	5.4	15.4	6.8	7.2
Education	7.5	4.8	3.5	n/a	6.5
Others	9.0	12.1	5.2	16.5	0.0

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kyoiku shihyo no kokusai hikaku* (International Comparison of Education Indexes), 2008.

a. 2007.

b. 2006.

c. 2005.

Computers in Public Schools, March 2006

	Number of students per computer ^a	Number of computers per school	Internet-connected schools (% of total)
Elementary school	9.6	32.9	99.9
Junior high school	6.9	47.5	100.0
High school	5.7	112.7	100.0

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

a. As of May 2005.

International Comparison of Educational Achievement, 2006 (15-Year-Old Students)

Mathematics		Reading		Science	
	Mean score		Mean score		Mean score
1. Taiwan	549	1. Korea (ROK)	556	1. Finland	563
2. Finland	548	2. Finland	547	2. Hong Kong	542
3. Hong Kong	547	3. Hong Kong	536	3. Canada	534
Korea (ROK)	547	4. Canada	527	4. Taiwan	532
5. Netherlands	531	5. New Zealand	521	5. Estonia	531
6. Switzerland	530	6. Ireland	517	6. Japan	531
7. Canada	527	7. Australia	513	7. New Zealand	530
8. Macao	525	8. Liechtenstein	510	8. Australia	527
Liechtenstein	525	9. Poland	508	9. Netherlands	525
10. Japan	523	10. Sweden	507	10. Liechtenstein	522
		⋮			
		15. Japan	498		

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Programme for International Student Assessment, 2006.

Note: Updates every three years.

Educational Expenditure

Annual Cost of Attending School, FY2006

(¥ per student;
nonprivate school / private school)

	Kindergarten	Elementary school	Junior high school	High school
Educational expenses	133,346 / 368,392	56,655 / 780,001	133,183 / 957,893	343,922 / 785,289
Supplementary expenses ^a	103,588 / 144,861	236,542 / 562,340	302,006 / 304,244	176,581 / 259,945
School meals	14,390 / 25,153	40,937 / 30,843	36,563 / 7,254	n/a / n/a
Total	251,324 / 538,406	334,134 / 1,373,184	471,752 / 1,269,391	520,503 / 1,045,234

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kodomo no gakushuhi chosa* (Survey of Children's Educational Costs), FY 2006.

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

Note: Updated every two years.

School Enrollment and Expenditure by Country

	Enrollment (1,000 students)			Expenditure per student (US\$) ^d		
	Primary education	Secondary education	Higher education	Primary education	Secondary education	Higher education
USA ^a	38,990	15,955	17,273	8,805	9,938	22,476
Japan ^b	7,133	7,036	3,013	6,551	7,615	12,193
France ^c	3,963	5,375	2,100	5,082	8,737	10,668
UK ^c	9,721 (combined)		1,433	5,941	7,090	11,484
Germany ^c	11,608 (combined)		1,986	4,948	7,576	12,255

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kyoiku shihyo no kokusai hikaku* (International Comparison of Education Indexes), 2008.

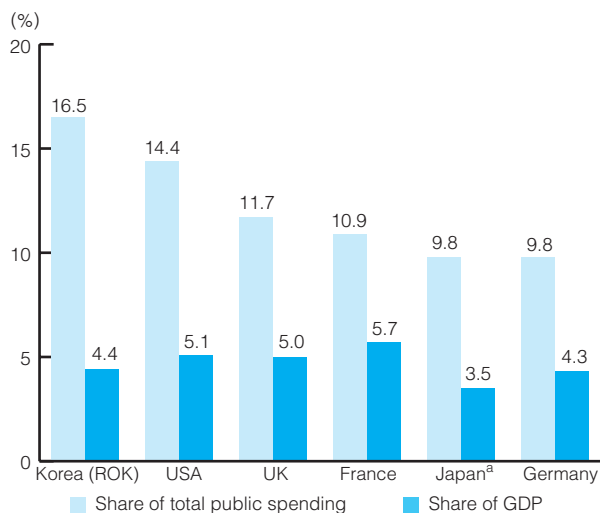
a. FY 2004.

b. FY 2007.

c. FY 2005.

d. 2004. National and public schools only.

Public Spending on Education by Country



Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, *Kyoiku shihyo no kokusai hikaku* (International Comparison of Education Indexes), 2008.

Note: Figures are for 2004.

a. 2003 school year (April 2003–March 2004).

Problems at Schools

Bullying among schoolchildren is a serious issue, and reported bullying cases in national, public, and private elementary, junior high, high, and special needs schools in the 2006 school year numbered 124,898. Of the total, 60,897 cases occurred at elementary, 51,310 at junior high, and 12,307 at high schools. The number of schools where bullying cases were reported was 22,159—55.0% of all schools.

Elementary and junior high school students who refused to go to school for more than 30 days in the 2006 school year numbered 126,894, a drop of 8.5% from a peak of 138,722 recorded in 2001.

In the 2005 school year, reported cases of student violence numbered 44,621, of which 30,564 cases were by junior high school students and 10,254 by high school students.

In the 2006 school year, the number of students who quit national public or private high school before graduation was 77,027. The percentage of dropouts among all students was 2.2%.

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 2006 there were 51,625 cram schools in Japan. Average annual expenditures for cram schools were ¥142,000 for public, ¥287,000 for private elementary school students, and ¥246,000 for public, ¥221,000 for private junior high school students.

Adult Education

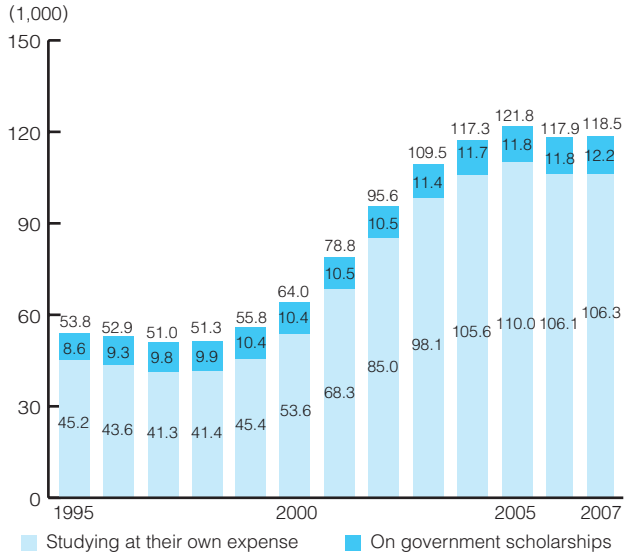
Adult education is becoming popular in Japan. The Open University of Japan began its broadcast courses in 1985; 83,126 people were enrolled in the second 2007 term. In the school year 2006, 23,395 public lectures held on national, public, and private university campuses offered 1,111,395 local residents 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. In 2007, 7.4 million students were attending those schools. As of January 2008, there were 3,570 language schools throughout Japan, and the number of teachers was 10,506.

Foreign Students

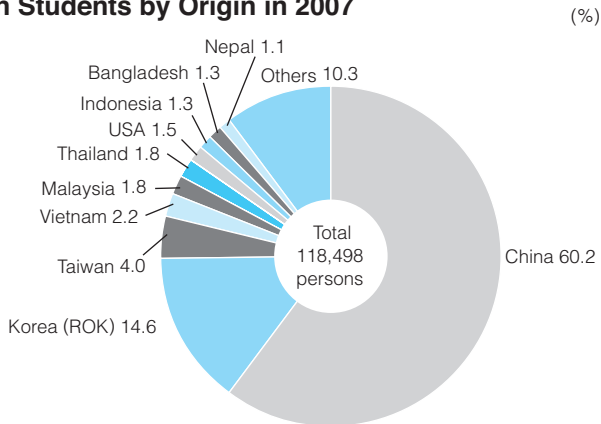
The number of foreign students in Japan (excluding those attending Japanese-language schools) increased by 0.5% from the previous year to 118,498 in May 2007. The number of foreign students is still small compared with countries like France and the United States. As many as 89.7% of these students study at their own expense, and 92.4% of all the foreign students come from other Asian countries.

Foreign Students in Japan



Source: Japan Student Services Organization.

Foreign Students by Origin in 2007



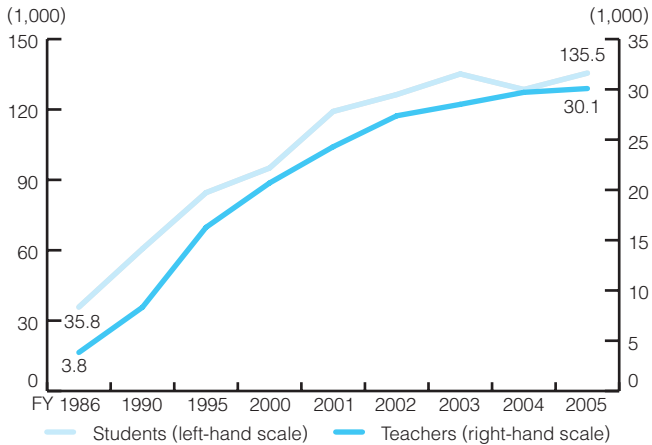
Source: Japan Student Services Organization.

Japanese-Language Study

The number of people studying the Japanese language has been increasing. As of November 1, 2005, 135,514 people, the highest ever recorded, were studying Japanese at 2,047 institutions in Japan. Of the total, 104,441 (77.1%) were from Asia, 6,301 (4.6%) from North America, 5,011 (3.7%) from South America, and 4,852 (3.6%) from Europe. The number of Japanese language instructors in Japan stood at 30,084, about 1.8 times the figure of a decade earlier. There were 476 institutions in Japan offering training courses for Japanese-language instructors, and 37,965 people were studying at them.

Figures from a survey of overseas institutions that teach Japanese reveal that about 3.0 million people, about 77.1% of them in Asia, were studying the language in 133 countries and regions in 2006.

Japanese-Language Study in Japan



Source: Agency for Cultural Affairs.
 Note: Figures from 1994 include volunteer teachers.