

## Essential Question: Is the French school day more rigorous than the American school day?

### A Typical French School Week

<http://www.lyonalacarte.com/?A-Typical-French-School-Week>

For France, changing the school week is something of a revolutionary idea that would overturn more than a century of school tradition. French school holidays 2013/2014 and the new 'rythmes scolaires' are discretionary this year. Local authorities can choose to implement this change in the school year starting in 2013 or in 2014, so check with your school or your local Mairie if you are not sure if your school is concerned.

French school days may be relatively few, but they are at least as long as a day of work for adults. The new school schedule "*rythmes scolaires*" It consists basically in a return to the 4.5-day week, but the number of hours per week doesn't change. That means that children will have shorter days on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and compensate with an extra half-day added. Most schools will opt to have lessons either on Wednesday morning or Saturday afternoon. The total week therefore consists of nine half-days.



In elementary school, the school week can be either 4 days – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – or 4 ½ days (Wednesday morning or Saturday afternoon).

In elementary school, Wednesday is generally considered as a day for the children to rest and do sports or cultural activities. Working parents may wish to take their children to outdoor activity centers (called “centres aérés” in French) located in their neighborhood or town (check with your local District Hall).

In junior high/ high school, classes are held Monday through Friday and, in some cases, on Saturday mornings as well.

Recess (called “récré” in French) is held in the morning and the afternoon in the school grounds. It lasts between 15 and 30 minutes and gives children a chance to relax by playing with their friends.

Despite long summer breaks and the four-day school week, French elementary school students actually spend more hours per year in school than average — 847, compared with 774 among countries in OECD, a club of wealthy nations. But the time is compressed into fewer days each year. The French school day begins around 8:30 and ends at 4:30 p.m., even for the youngest, despite studies showing the ability of young children to learn deteriorates as the day goes on.

To stagger vacation dates around the country, the French national education ministry (**Le ministère de l'éducation nationale**) has created 3 geographical areas:

ZONE A Caen, Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble, Lyon, Montpellier, Nancy-Metz, Nantes, Rennes, Toulouse

Return to school: 03-09-13 \* All Saints: 19-10-13 to 04-11-13 Christmas: 21-12-13 to 06-01-14 Winter: 01-03-14 to 17-03-14 Spring: 26-04-14 to 12-05-14 Summer: 05-07-14

ZONE B Aix-Marseille, Amiens, Besançon, Dijon, Lille, Limoges, Nice, Orléans-Tours, Poitiers, Reims, Rouen, Strasbourg

Return to school: 03-09-13 \* All Saints: 19-10-13 to 04-11-13 Christmas: 21-12-13 to 06-01-14 Winter: 22-02-14 to 10-03-14 Spring: 19-04-14 to 05-05-14 Summer: 05-07-14

ZONE C Bordeaux, Créteil, Paris, Versailles

Return to school: 03-09-13 \* All Saints: 19-10-13 to 04-11-13 Christmas: 21-12-13 to 06-01-14 Winter: 15-02-14 to 03-03-14 Spring: 12-04-14 to 28-04-14 Summer: 05-07-14

### Official School Holidays

- **January** 1st (New Year's Day)
- **March / April** Easter Sunday and Monday\*
- **May** 1st (Labor Day), 8th (To celebrate the end of WWII), and Ascension Thursday\*
- **July** 14th (Bastille Day, the national holiday)
- **August** 15th (the Assumption)\*
- **November** 1st (All Saints Day)\*, 11th (Armistice Day)
- **December** 25th (Christmas)\*

Take a look at the video: [http://youtu.be/pcHlPdi\\_LHM](http://youtu.be/pcHlPdi_LHM)

Use your own device, go to <https://www.google.fr/>, search “systeme scolaire francais”, what are some of your findings?

**Êtes-vous d'accord? Oui ou non?** Read each statement. Decide if you agree with the statement or not.

| Oui ou non? |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
|             | Les sciences sont difficiles.       |
|             | Le français est ma classe préférée. |
|             | L'histoire est intéressante.        |
|             | L'EPS est importante.               |
|             | J'aime étudier.                     |
|             | L'art est un cours nécessaire.      |
|             | Les mathématiques sont faciles.     |
|             | Les devoirs sont amusants.          |
|             | Je n'aime pas l'informatique.       |
|             | Nous avons besoin de l'anglais.     |

**Les Cours.** Using the classes listed on the board, put each class under the heading for which it is needed.

[illegible]

Quel cours est le plus important? Et le moins? Rank the classes from 1 (plus important) to 13 (moins important).

| 1-13 | Les Cours                                       |
|------|---|
|      | l'anglais                                       |
|      | la langue (l'espagnol, le français, l'allemand) |
|      | l'histoire                                      |
|      | l'EPS   |
|      | les mathématiques                               |
|      | l'art   |
|      | la musique (le cœur, la fanfare, l'orchestre)   |
|      | l'informatique                                  |
|      | les arts industriels                            |
|      | l'éducation ménagère                            |
|      | le déjeuner                                     |
|      | l'heure d'étude                                 |
|      | les sciences                                    |

Vocabulary I need to talk about school, classes, favorites, etc.

**Micro-Argument.** Think about the question “Is the school day too long?” Choose a side to take. Then, work through the micro argument steps below to support your claim.

| Steps  | Response   |
|--|--|
| <b>Claim</b><br>-Choose a side.  | -The French school day is more rigorous.<br>-The American school day is more rigorous.<br>-The French and American school days are equally rigorous. |
| <b>Evidence</b><br>-Present data or facts.<br>-Tell what made you choose your claim.   |  |
| <b>Warrant</b> -Tell why or how your facts support your claim.   |  |
| <b>Counterargument</b><br>-Present the other side of the argument.<br>-Tell what some opposite thoughts might be.                        |  |
| <b>Response</b><br>-Tell how else you can still support your claim.<br>-Use your evidence and opinion to respond to the counterargument. |  |

**Le résuméé.** Write a paragraph of 5 or more sentences summarizing your micro argument.

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