

Vocabulary

1. **free** (4) to last, to continue in time
2. **compulsory** (7) reduce, to become less
3. **literacy** (1) at no cost (no money necessary)
4. **runs** (5, 6) period with no work or school activity,
5. **vacation** (5, 6) time with no school or work.
6. **weeks off** (2, 8) mandatory, obligatory.
7. **lessen** (2, 8) to have the need, obligation.
8. **required** (3) the ability to read and write

[Nuria Villalobos](#) wrote:

In 1869 Costa Rica became one of the first countries in the world where education became both **free** and **compulsory**. Nowadays Costa Rica has a 95% **literacy** level and even the smallest of towns has its own school.

The school year in my country **runs** from February to December in the public education system. Students have **vacations** for about two months (December and January), which turns out to be our summer, as well as **two weeks off** in July. Primary education lasts six years, while high school education might be five or six years, the first being academic and the latter technical or professional. There are also private schools, which use an American, European or Japanese system.

Students in public schools wear an official uniform in order to **lessen** social and economic distinctions among them. In elementary school, little boys wear dark blue pants or short pants and a white shirt; girls wear a dark blue skirt or pants and a white shirt. In high school, students wear dark blue pants or skirts, and a light blue shirt. In some high schools the colors of the uniform are different, like in the Technical High School I attended, where we wore burgundy pants and skirts, and beige shirts.

In all public schools, students have to take subjects such as Math, Science, Social Studies, Spanish and two foreign languages (English and French). They also take Art, Music, Physical Education and Computer Science classes. A normal school day starts at 7am. and can finish between 1 and 5pm, approximately. Sometimes students go to class either in the morning or in the afternoon.

Students in elementary and high schools are **required** to pass comprehensive tests on all subjects studied during the five or six years. The high school diploma is needed for admission to universities, either public or private.

Fonte: Pocket Cultures - the world in your pocket.

<http://pocketcultures.com/2010/09/15/school-days-around-the-world/> .

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