

Urban Schools of China

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There are many differences between the urban schools of China and the ones of the United States.

Public Schools and Private Schools-

From 1949 to the 1980s, almost 100% of the schools of China were public schools. In the late 1980s, some private elementary schools and high schools were started in some cities. So far, most Chinese people still prefer a good public school to a private one since most people do not know that much about private schools.

So, let's talk about public schools...

Elementary, Junior High, and High Schools-

Comparing with the schools in the U.S.A., in China, elementary school is from grade 1 to grade 6, junior high school is from grade 7 to 9 (It's called grade J1 to J3 in china), and high school is from grade 10 to grade 12 (H1to H3).

A Day in an Urban School-

In the morning, you go to school before the first period to have "Morning reading." After third grade, there won't be a teacher in your class this period. Your class monitor, who is one of your classmates or any one of the students who is one duty that day, takes attendance and watches the class to make sure that everyone in the classroom is studying.

Usually, this period is for reading texts or materials in Chinese or foreign languages. The "Subject Representative," one of your classmates who is the best one in that subject, leads the class to read the texts or materials of the subject. Thirty minutes later, the class is over.

You have a ten-minute break. After the break, when your teacher walks into the room, the monitor (or the on-duty person) calls, "Stand Up!" The teacher bows to the class with greeting words and the class does the same to the teacher. Teachers and students greet each other every period. In this way, we show respect to each other. After hearing "Sit Down!" from the monitor, you sit down with your classmates. There are not any chairs for your teachers in the classrooms. They are too busy to sit down during the 45- minute period. After the first two periods in the morning, there is a 20-minute break. The entire school has to go to the sports grounds to do exercise for ten to fourteen minutes. After the fifth period in the morning, there is a two- hour lunch break. You may go out or go home to have your lunch and take a rest in your classroom or at home.

Usually, there are three or four periods in the afternoon. After the last period, one row of students in your class stays late to clean the classroom while the others go home. The groups take turns to do so. In high schools, there is a two- hour "Self- Study" period in the evening. You don't have to attend this period, but almost all students attend because this is the best time (probably the only time) to get some help for your homework from your teacher and ask your teacher some questions individually. Your homeroom teacher also makes some announcements to the class this period.

Campus and Classroom-

In China, every campus is open since school campus is considered as one of the safest places in the city. Usually, there are several buildings on a school campus. Every class has its own classroom and has its own "home-room teacher".

For most classes except physical education and music, students don't move from one room to another, the teacher changes rooms. Your classroom is like your home in school. In your classroom, you have your own desk to keep your books and supplies. You have most school activities in your classroom and you and your classmates have responsibility for the room. You have to keep the room clean and organized, and make it look nice.

Students, Teachers, Classes and Academic Achievement-

In urban schools of China, class size is huge. Usually there are 55-65 students in a class. Teachers need student aids for such big classes. From the first year of elementary school to the last year of high school, every class has a “class committee” which consists of seven to eight members. All of them are selected from the students of the class. One of them is in charge of cleaning, one is in charge of academy, one is in charge of class activities, one is in charge of organizing students, and so forth.

Your home- room teacher is your teacher as well as your guardian in school. Usually, in an elementary school, you have the same homeroom teacher from the first grade to the third grade. In junior high and high school, you have the same homeroom teacher for all three years. Your homeroom teacher teaches your class (and two other classes) one of the core courses, such as math, Chinese, physics, chemistry, or English. In addition, he/ she has the responsibility to help students in your class achieve academic goals and to pass the High School Entrance Exam (for junior high school students) or the **National College Entrance Exam** (for high school students) which Chinese people say is the one of the most difficult examinations in the world. Your homeroom teacher has the right to hold a class- wide parent conference any day after class, to call parents, to visit students’ homes, or to ask parents to come to school. Your homeroom teachers play very important roles in your school life. In China, different subjects have different amounts of class time in a week. Different days have different schedules. The typical high school schedule is as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning				
1. Mathematics 2. Chinese 3. Physics 4. English 5. Art	1. Chinese 2. Chinese 3.Math 4. Chemistry 5.Physics	1. English 2. Math 3. Math 4. Chemistry 5. Physics	1. English 2. Chemistry 3. Physics 4. Physics 5. Geography	1. Physics 2. Math 3. Chinese 4. Chinese 5. Computer
Lunchtime				
Afternoon				
1. P. E. 2. Writing 3. Chemistry	1. Biology 2. Philosophy 3. Class meeting	1. Geography 2. Chinese 3. History	1. Chinese 2. Philosophy 3. P.E.	1. History 2. English 3. Art

Students have to buy textbooks and materials for studying. (Maybe this is one of the reasons that in China, you can hardly hear that a student has lost his or her textbook). There are many kinds of tests and exams for students. You may need to review the books anytime for important tests and exams so most students keep all of their books carefully until they graduate from high school.

In China, there is a lot of homework for students. Usually, a high school student rarely goes to bed before midnight. Chinese teachers and parents believe that "Practice makes perfect." From the first grade in elementary school, students keep hearing from their teachers and parents about this and then believe it too. Usually, a student can not get help outside of a class for free, so you have to pay all of your attention in class if you want to be good. Also, Chinese people believe that adolescence is the best time for learning. You lay a foundation for your whole life during the school years. Because of that, not only the parent and teachers, but the students think that learning and academic achievement is most important and serious things. Most students try very hard to learn. In school, you are in academic competition. You not only compete with intelligence, but also with hard work. If you perform well in school, people, especially your peers, respect you. You will feel confident and want to try your best to achieve academic goals.

Conclusion-

You can see many things in the schools of China are quite different from schools in the U.S.A. Homeroom teachers have the responsibilities of parents. Students have responsibility for their academic progress and the progress of other students. These responsibilities reflect the attitudes of the society. In general, teachers, parents, and students believe that young people must study hard to prepare for their lives and to build a strong society.