



Germany

In Germany, the majority of children begin school at 4 years of age when they enter into kindergarten, although kindergarten is not mandatory. After kindergarten students enter the Grunschule, the German version of primary or early elementary school. In the fifth or sixth grade (age 9 or 10), students choose between the 4 streams of schooling below. This decision is based mainly on their grades and interests. In some cases, students are able to move between streams.

Stream 1 – To **Hauptschule**. Hauptschule consists of basic subjects (including English) that students learn as they prepare for trade-industry jobs. After completing Hauptschule, students can proceed into **Berufsschule**, where companies and part time vocational schools offer training and education.

Stream 2 – To **Realschule**. Realschule provides slightly more advanced education than Hauptschule. It is possible to transfer to a Gymnasium school from a Realschule if the proper grade level is achieved. If not, students may continue their education in **Berufsoberschule**, a full-time vocational school or **Fachoberschule**, a vocational upper-secondary school.

At age 19, students from the above streams may complete a vocational qualification that allows for entrance into more advanced Technical or Trade schools.

Stream 3 – To **Gymnasium**. In Gymnasium, students must learn two foreign languages (including English) in addition to their basic subjects. If a student wants to enter University, they may use the optional 13th grade to prepare for the *Arbitur*, or entrance exam.

Stream 4 – To **Gesamtschule**. Gesamtschule is a comprehensive school that offers Hauptschule, Realschule, and Gymnasium all in one location.

Age	4	5-9	10-14	17-18	19	20+
School level	Kindergarten	Grundschule	Hauptschule	Berufsschule	Vocational Qualification	Technical or Trades School
			Realschule	Berufsoberschule		
				Fachoberschule		
			Gymnasium		Optional Grade 13	University
		Gesamtschule				

Please note: In some areas in Germany, Realschule and Hauptschule go by other names including, but not limited to: **Mittelschule**, **Sekundarschule**, and **Regelschule**.