

Overview

Population

The population of Finland is 5.5 million. Finland belongs to the Nordic group of countries. Finland is high in terms of Happiness, Equality and Competitiveness.

Finnish is predominantly spoken by 92% of the population and 5% speak Swedish. There is a Saame speaking minority in Lapland.

Climate

The average monthly temperature in July is 17°C but sometimes in the summer the temperature rises to 30°C.

Winters are usually very cold, but can be mild some years. The temperature is usually below 0 and sometimes goes down to -20 °C. In the North the snow stays until April or in some years even May.

Education System

- Age 6 yrs Pre-School (Optional)
- Age 7-11 yrs School or Peruskoulu
- Age 12-16 yrs Lower Secondary School
- Age 16- 19 yrs Sixth Form College
- Compulsory education lasts till 16 years of age but most children continue until 19 years of age.
- About 60% of students go for a Senior High School (Lukio) which ends in a Maturity Exam.
- Another alternative is to go into professional training (Ammattikoulu).
- Now it is possible to do a combination of both and may be followed by several forms of upper education, leading to a Bachelor, a Masters or a PhD.

SEN

Children with serious special needs are not usually educated in a main stream school but attend a special school.

Education System – main differences and implications for schools

School starting age

- In Finland children start compulsory education during the calendar year in which they have their 6th or 7th birthday.
- Finnish children attending pre-school do not normally learn to read.
- The emphasis is on play and learning social skills.

Languages

- Students in Finnish schools must learn two different foreign languages. The first foreign language is usually English and the second is Swedish. It is possible to select French or German.

School day

- School normally starts at 9 am and finishes at 3pm.
- In the first 3 years the school days are shorter.
- There is far less home work in Finland than here.
- The education system has done well in PISA tests. It has been rated the best country for a long time.
- A lot of the small, country schools have now been closed down and the children are driven to bigger schools.
- The first national tests are the Matriculation Exams at the end of "lukio" or Sixth form College.
- The matriculation exam requires each student to take a minimum of four subjects. Normally, however, most students take 6 subjects.

Curriculum

- All schools follow a reasonably similar curriculum. Because of printed text books and exercise books, the same material will be covered in all schools.
- Schools themselves draw up their own curricula for pre-primary and basic education within the framework of the national core curriculum.

Literacy

- A lot of early years' literature is Finnish or Swedish depending on the language of the school.
- Finnish is a phonetic language.
- Finnish children normally learn to read in the first year of Peruskoulu.

Maths

- Maths education covers almost exactly the same range of topics as in British schools but methods are very often different.

Cultural sensitivities

- Finland is a protestant country which means that sexuality is looked upon as part of a normal school subject. There are no specific issues at school that cannot be taught.
- Participation in the religious confirmation camp at the age of 16 is still over 90% and this is considered a growing up routine/rite of passage.
- Education in Finland is free is free and everyone is expected to be educated by it.

Parental involvement and attendance in Finland

- Parents are expected to be strongly involved in their child's education.
- There is usually a notebook or an online tool to convey messages to parents.

Language observations

Alphabet/Script

- There are 28 letters in the Finnish alphabet: 8 vowels and 20 constants.
- Finnish has A, Ä, O, Ö, U and Y pairs of front and back vowels. E and I can appear in either group.
- Some letters (b, c, f, x, q, w, å) are not considered to be Finnish letters and are used only in Swedish/other words and names.

Spellings

Finnish spelling is phonetic. Double consonants cause trouble for children who have been brought up in the UK: Mato = a worm, Matto = a mat.

Punctuation

Finnish punctuation is similar to that of English. However there are more rigid rules concerning the use of commas. Subordinate clauses are almost always marked off with a comma.

Auxiliaries/negatives/questions/tenses

- The Finnish language has 4 tenses: present, past tense, perfect and past-perfect.
- Questions (direct and indirect) are formed by placing the word "-ko" at the end of the word to be used as a question word.

Word order

The Basic word order in Finnish is subject-verb-object; however, as it is a synthetic language, it is possible to move words around in the sentence to give a different emphasis.

Gender/Articles

- There are no articles in the Finnish language.
- There is no gender with the words.

Vocabulary

Finnish has many words borrowed from Swedish and the Baltic and Russian languages.

Useful classroom words

Greetings

Welcome	Tervetuloa
Hello	Hei or Moi
Thank you	Kiitos
Please	Ole hyvä
Goodbye (formal)	Näkemiin
Bye (casual)	Hei, Hei Hei
Morning	Huomenta
Afternoon	Päivää
Evening	Iltaa
Are you OK?	Oletko kunnossa?

School Routine

School playground	Koulun leikkikenttä
School office	Toimisto
Hall	Sali
School	Koulu
Assembly	Kokoontuminen
Toilets	Vessa
School field	Leikkikenttä
Classroom	Luokka
Registration	Ilmoittautuminen
Computer suit	Tietokonehuone
Tutor group (class)	Luokka
Break time	Tauko
Outside	Ulkopuolella
Inside	Sisäpuolella
Fire drill	Paloharjoitus
Packed lunch	Lounaspaketti
School dinner	Koululounas
School nurse	Terveystieteiden opettaja
First aid room	Ensiapu
Staff room	Opettajien huone
Lunchtime	Lounasaika
School uniform	Koulupuku
Library	Kirjasto
Reading book	Lukukirja
Library book	Kirjaston kirja
Copy	Kopio
Label	Etiketti
Colour	Väri
Pen	Kynä
Pencil	Lyijykynä
Yes	Kyllä
No	Ei

Days of the week

Monday	Maanantai
Tuesday	Tiistai
Wednesday	Keskiviikko
Thursday	Torstai
Friday	Perjantai
Weekend	Viikonloppu

Numbers

Zero-	Nolla	kyt = kymmentä
One –	Yksi	
Two –	Kaksi	20 –kaksikyt
Three –	Kolme	30 - kolkyt
Four –	Neljä	40 – nelkyt
Five –	Viisi	50 – viiskyt
Six –	Kuusi	60 –kuuskyt
Seven -	Seitsemän	70- seitkyt
Eight -	Kahdeksan	80– kaheksakyt
Nine –	Yhdeksän	90 – yheksäkyt
Ten -	Kymmenen	100 -Sata
How many?		Montako?

Instructions/Questions

Work with a partner – Työskentele kaverin kanssa
Use your dictionary – Käytä sanakirjaa
Do you understand? – Ymmärrätkö?
Talk about this at home – Puhukaa tästä kotona
Translate these words at home –
Käännä nämä lauseet kotona
You can write in Finnish – Voit kirjoittaa suomeksi
Write in sentences – Kirjoita lauseita
Fill in the blanks – Täytä tyhjät
Annotate – Kommentoi
Highlight – Korosta
Draft – Luonnostelee
Please be quiet – Ole hiljaa
Come here please – Tule tänne
Sit on the carpet – Istu matolla
Where does it hurt? – Mihin sattuu?
Well done! – Hyvin tehty