

Overview

Nepal is a mountainous country that is located in South Asia between India and China. Nepal covers an area of 147,180 km². The world's highest mountain, Mt Everest (8,848 metres) and the birth place of Lord Buddha, Lumbini, are both in Nepal.

Population and Language

- Nepal's estimated population is 28 million.
- Nepali is the official language.
- According to the 2011 national census, 44.6% of the population of Nepal speak Nepali as the native language and 123 other ethnic languages are spoken as a mother tongue.

Climate

- The elevation of Nepal ranges from less than 100 metres to over 8,000 metres.
- The climatic condition of Nepal varies from one place to another according to its geographical features.
- Temperatures can vary from up to -40 degrees in mountainous regions in the winter to exceeding 40 degrees in the Lowlands or the Terai region in the summer.

Education System

- No tuition fees up to Class 10 in state schools
- Primary - Class 1 to Class 5
- Lower Secondary - Class 6 to Class 8
- Secondary - Class 9 and Class 10
- Higher Secondary - Class 11 and Class 12

SEN

- There are special schools for children with SEND. In rare cases, provision of SEN support may be available within some mainstream schools.

EAL

- Written English is taught from Nursery.

Education System – main differences and implications for schools

School starting age

- The school starting age is usually 3 years old when children attend Nursery. Structured learning as well as learning by play is used at this time.
- The Government of Nepal has announced compulsory education for all children from Class 1 to 5. However there are no strict measures to ensure that this policy is followed.

School day

- The school time varies between private and public schools. Generally schools start either at 9 or 10 am and end at 4 pm.
- Children have to wear school uniform which is strongly enforced and school discipline is very strict all around.
- Most subjects are taught in the students' own classroom. The students stay in their classroom while different subject teachers come to the class.
- In Nepal, the popular method of teaching and learning is through lecture style although interactive participation is on the rise. At the same time, investigative work in Sciences and Maths is popular and independent work, such as project work is given to work on. Group work is very rare.
- No Teaching Assistant provision in any school.
- Parents are surprised at the small amount of homework their children get set at their school here. Also, it is very unusual for them to see their children not bring home any subject specific textbooks.
- In Nepal, parent meetings take place if and when necessary. There are also possibilities for parents to meet their children's teacher on report card day which takes place every three months in private schools.

Curriculum

- Various subjects are taught in schools. Nepali, English, Maths, Science, Social Studies (Nepali History, Geography, Moral Education) and Health Education are compulsory. Some schools have Music, Art, Accounting, Economics and Trigonometry etc. as optional subjects.
- At the end of each academic year, annual examinations take place and pupils need to pass in order to progress to the next class.
- Progress to a new class is based on ability, not age.

- School Leaving Certificate (National Board Exam) is taken at the end of Class 10, generally when pupils are 16 years old.
- Higher Secondary School Board Examination is taken in Class 12.
- 80% and above is a Distinction, 60% and above a First, 45% and above a Second, 35 % and above a Third and below 35% is a Fail.

Literacy

- Nepali words are written as they sound.
- In Nepal, children are taught English letters of the alphabet by their names and not their sounds.
- Independent writing is kept to a minimum and is taught mostly in higher classes. Therefore students coming from Nepal find this task quite challenging.
- The Nepali script is written under the line.
- Children use four lined exercise books to practise in English at least until Class 2.

Maths/Science

- Currently, most of the mathematical and scientific terminology is used in English i.e. geometric shapes, algebraic vocabulary, trigonometry etc.
- All operations in Maths are the same as the ones used in English.
- Methods of solving mathematical problems can vary.
- Understanding word problems and choosing correct strategies to solve these can be difficult for Nepali students.

Cultural sensitivities

- Children are encouraged to join two hands and say 'Namaste' to greet people.
- Eye contact with adults or older people used to be regarded as disrespectful in Nepal, although this belief is changing. However, newly arrived students may still feel uncomfortable to have eye contact with their teachers and other adults.
- Children in Nepal do not call adults by either their names or surnames. When in school, they will address them as 'Sir', 'Miss' or 'M'am'. In other situations, they will address them by their relation to them, such as 'Uncle', 'Auntie', 'Brother', 'Sister', etc.

Parental involvement and attendance in Nepal

Parents are:

- Highly involved in their children's education.
- Invited termly to collect the termly report card and consult with the class teacher.
- Fully involved in supporting their child's school work and homework (some parents hire private tutors as per their financial ability to support their children's education).
- Expected to write a letter explaining absence to the school the next day if not explained in advance. Therefore, attendance in school is taken seriously.
- Expected to attend annual school functions, such as sports day, parents' day, etc.

If the parents or the child do not abide by the school attendance and behavioural policy, the school can permanently exclude the student.

Language differences that may cause problems with Literacy

Alphabet/Script

The Nepali alphabet consists of 36 consonants and 12 vowels. The main script is Devanagari. The alphabet is shared by Nepali and Hindi where the root is Sanskrit and is written from left to right and top to bottom.

Spellings

Words are written as they are sounded out. There are long and short sounds, for example, 'i' and 'ee', 'oo'.

Punctuation

Punctuation symbols in Nepali and English are the same except for a full stop: instead of a dot, a vertical line (|) is used to mark the end of a sentence.

Gender/Articles

Gender differentiation exists in the same way as in the English language in Nepali.

Auxiliaries/negatives/questions/tenses: Nepali – English grammatical differences

Some common grammatical errors for a Nepali student in English can be:

Capital letters

There is no upper case or lower case in Nepali writing.

Plurals

In Nepali, adding 'haru' to any noun makes it plural. Example: pens – kalamharu, teeth – daantharu

Articles

There are no articles in the Nepali language. Students may omit articles or use them inconsistently in their writing.

Tenses

In the Nepali language, verb tenses are the same as in the English language. Problems are likely to be related to under-developed skills rather than grammatical differences.

Prepositions

Students often choose the wrong prepositions or include a preposition where it is needed. In Nepali, the same word is used for **in on** and **at** so these 3 prepositions can cause particular difficulties. The prepositions used in English are used as postposition in Nepali. For example, on the table – tablemaa

Modal verbs

Students experience difficulties using: **would, could, can, shall, should** and **will** correctly, especially in conditional sentences. These words do not exist in Nepali.

Word order

Nepali word order differs from English as the verb always comes at the end in a sentence or a question. Example:

Subject + verb + object (in English): **I have a toy.**
Subject + object + verb (in Nepali): **I toy have.**

Useful classroom words

Greetings

Welcome	swaagatam
Hello	Namaste
Thank you	dhanyabaad
Please	kripayaa
Goodbye (formal)	Namaste
Bye (casual)	bye/ taa taa
Morning	shuvaprabhaat
Afternoon	shuvadin
Are you OK?	ke tapaain thik hunuhuncha?

School Routine

School playground	vidhyaalayako khelkud maidaan
School office	vihyalaayako kaaryaalaya
School	vidhyaalaya
Toilets	toilets/sauchaalaya
School field	vidhyaalayako chaur
Classroom	kakshaa kothaa
Registration	haajiri
Computer suite	computer kothaa
Tutor group (class)	kakshaa samuha
Break time	break time
Outside	baahira
Inside	bhitra
Fire drill	aaglaagi baare chetana
Packed lunch	gharko khaajaa/ tiffin
School dinner	school dinner/ vidhyaalayako khaajaa

School nurse	school nurse
First aid room	Praathmik upchaar kothaa
Lunchtime	khaajaa khaane samaya
School uniform	vidhyaalayako poshaak
Library	pustakaalaya
Reading book	padhne kitaab
Library book	pustakalayako kitaab
Copy	kaapi, pratilipi, saarnu
Pen	pen/kalam
Pencil	pencil/sheeshaa kalam
Yes	ho/cha/hunchha
No	hoina/chaina

Days of the week

Monday	sombaar
Tuesday	mangalbaar
Wednesday	budhbaar
Thursday	bihibaar
Friday	shukrabaar
Saturday	sanibaar
Sunday	aaitabaar
Weekend	saptaahanta

Numbers

Zero	–	sunya	
One	–	ek	
Two	–	d ui	20 – bis
Three	–	tin	30 – tis
Four	–	chaar	40 – chaalis
Five	–	paanch	50 – pachaas
Six	–	chha	60 – saathi
Seven	–	saat	70 – sattari
Eight	–	aath	80 – assi
Nine	–	nau	90 – nabbe
Ten	–	das	100 – ek saya

How many? – kati wataa

Instructions/Questions

Work with a partner – saathisanga kaam gara

Use your dictionary - shabdakos prayog gara

Do you understand? - bujhyau?

Talk about this at home

- yes baare gharmaa kuraa gara

Translate these words at home

- yi shabdaharulaii gharmaa ultha gara

You can write in Nepali

- timile Nepalimaa lekhna sakchhau

Write in sentences - waakyamaa

lekha

Fill in the blanks - khaali thaaunmaa

bhara

Annotate - byaakhaa gara

Highlight - highlight

Draft - draft (khesraa) lekha

Please be quiet - kripayaa chup

laaga

Come here please - kripayaa yataa

aaunus

Sit on the carpet - carpetmaa basa

Where does it hurt? - khaa dukhcha?

Well done! - syaabaas!,