

Overview

Population: According to the last estimate in 2016, the Greek population was 10,955,000.

Language: The official language of Greece is Greek and it is spoken by 99% of the population. Greek is also the official language of Cyprus. The language is spoken by at least 13.2 million people today in Greece, Cyprus and all over the world by the Greek diaspora. Greek is one of the oldest languages (3,400 years) and many of the foundational texts in science and Western philosophy are composed in Greek. Greek words are often used as roots of new words for other languages. Greek and Latin are the predominant sources of international scientific vocabulary. This could offer an excellent opportunity (matched with the curriculum) for the use of the pupil's first language in class and for schools to show interest in Greek pupils' culture and background.

Climate: Greece has a Mediterranean climate on coastal areas and islands with mild winters and hot sunny summers. The northern inland cities and especially the mountainous areas however have cold and snowy winters with milder summers.

Education System

Age 5-6--- **Nursery –compulsory**
 Age 6-12--- **Primary School -compulsory**
 Age12-15-- **Secondary School /Gymnasium -compulsory**
 Age 15-18-- **Lyceum-** completes secondary education/general or vocational/ non-compulsory

SEN: The provision of special education and training is offered in the following ways: 1) At a Public Mainstream School either in the classroom or in a special education unit. 2) At a Special Education School. 3) Through services provided at other premises.

EAL: In Greece all children start learning English at the age of 6 at Year1 and they continue until the age of 18. In addition, most children go to (private) evening English classes or they have English lessons with a private tutor at home. Few children go to a private language school where all the lessons are taught in English.

Education System – main differences and implications for schools

School starting age

- Children start primary school at the age of 6, going into Year 1.
- Compulsory education starts with pre-school, at the age of 5 for one year till the age of 15. Very soon however it will be starting from the age of 4 with two years in nursery.

Implications

- New arrivals from Greece aged between 4,5 and 6 (so going into Year R, Year 1 and even Year 2 respectively), may have had no previous education or may have had only preschool or nursery experience.
- During the 1st year of compulsory education (age 5-6 years), children are introduced to the alphabet, the numbers up to 10 and they start to learn to read. However, the emphasis is on play and any learning is totally through games and crafts.
- Young and older new arrivals will have had fewer years of schooling than their English peers; consequently they may not have covered many topics from the curriculum.
- As pupils appear to have 'jumped' a year (i.e. a child finishing Year 1 in Greece may start Year 3 in the UK), both parents and children could find this very worrying. Reassurance must be given that the child has been placed in the correct year group and that special attention will be given to his/her individual needs.

School day and Cultural sensitivities

- The day starts at 8:15am and lasts 5, 6 or 7 hrs, depending on the school phase.
- Children do not eat hot meals at school; they have snacks at break time and a packed lunch from home if they stay until 4:30pm for after school clubs.
- From the age of 8, children are left at the school gate as parents are not allowed to go into the playground.
- Children do not wear a school uniform so older new arrivals may find it difficult to get used to the rules at the beginning.

- Children sit on traditional double desks facing the board (never on the carpet). Teaching is more formal and less interactive, although this is gradually changing. It may be necessary to explain to parents that children are not playing but learning through group work and more practical activities.
- Children in Greece have more homework; they are expected to work daily from 0.5 to 1.5hrs in primary school and up to 3 hrs at the following stages. Therefore, requests to participate in pre-learning activities at home, in order to help familiarise the child with an upcoming topic will be very welcome by parents, who usually require some reassurance for the lack of (or the limited amount of) homework especially in primary schools.
- Most subjects are taught in the students' own classroom in both primary and secondary school and the teachers move from class to class.
- Most schools use blackboards or whiteboards in class. Interactive whiteboards are rare and schools do not have a computer for every child.
- Grade scales range from 1 to 10 (10=excellent) in primary and 1-20 (20=excellent) in secondary school.
- Secondary and Lyceum school children may have to repeat a school year if they do not pass the end of year exams for most subjects; this is also the case for the children who take their general education-/end of year exams before their A level exams.
- All children are taught together and they are not streamed by ability. It might be necessary to explain to parents how and why children are grouped by ability or according to their individual needs where this is done.
- 90% of Greeks are Christians (Greek Orthodox). Every morning at assembly children are expected to pray; only non-Christian children are allowed to abstain.

Parental involvement and attendance in Greece

- It is extremely common for a child –regardless of his/her academic ability-to have additional private tuition in the evening at home or by attending a private teaching school, especially in the last stage (Lyceum). Parents feel obliged to pay for this.
- Parents do not take their children out of school for holidays as this is not allowed.

- Greek children have books provided by the state and they bring them to school and back every day together with the exercise and homework booklets. Therefore, parents can see what they have been learning and very often support their children with daily homework. Here in the UK Greek parents feel 'left out' about their child's progress and what they are learning at school. A home-school diary is very effective to put parents' minds at rest.

Curriculum

- Primary school children are taught literacy, maths, RE, PE and by the last years (5th and 6th) they will have been introduced to geography, history, music, science, environmental studies, art, drama and introduction to citizenship studies.
- Greek children learn two languages (English and either French or German).
- In secondary school, children start-in addition to the subjects above- IT, Ancient Greek, technology and art.
- During the last year of the General Lyceum, at the age of 17, Greek children select one from the following directions (equivalent to A levels): science, classics, social and political studies and economics. All children have to write an essay on a specific social topic as part of their A level exams where both content and language structure are tested. During this year, children are following some of the general education subjects as well as the extra ones of the selected directions described above.

Maths

- Decimals are written using a comma rather than a full stop i.e. 9,5 instead of 9.5 On the other hand, a full stop is used to separate units from thousands and millions.
- Reasoning problems are introduced from a young age and the expectations are high.
- Methods/positioning of numbers for subtraction, multiplication and division differ.

- Time: Greek children often get confused with telling the time as it is read the other way around i.e. 'quarter past five' is read 'five past/and a quarter'.

Literacy

Much of the first year in school is spent on the alphabet (which is differs from the English one) and phonics work with copying, spelling and dictation exercises. However as the years progress, essay /independent writing is one of the most important subjects and it is compulsory until the last school year.

Language differences that may cause problems with Literacy

- **Spellings:** The sound 'r' is written 'ρ' in Greek and that is often confused with the English 'p'. Each word has a different ending/spelling according to its gender, tense and if it is plural or not. Vowel sounds especially are written with different diagraphs. Depending on how a word is pronounced, an *accent* ' is added on the top of the appropriate vowel.
- **Punctuation:** It is used in a similar way. Comma and period are the same. The Greek question mark (;) looks similar to the English semicolon (;). The Greek semicolon is (·) is a period above the line i.e. πόρτα ·
- **Auxiliaries/negatives/questions/tenses:** The auxiliary 'do' is not used to form questions; instead question intonation is applied to a statement. Negatives are formed by adding **δεν** before the verb. Tenses are broadly similar (the verbs 'έχω-to have and είμαι -to be are used for the perfect tense and the passive voice respectively) but each tense has its own inflection depending on the personal pronoun and the verb conjugation.
- **Word order:** is broadly similar to English. However, there are cases where the subject of a sentence can be omitted as it can be inferred by the verb inflection. Greek is an inflected language.
- **Gender/Articles:** Nouns (and their 'matching' adjectives) have three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter and each gender has its article. Nouns, pronouns, adjectives and articles must agree with each other and are formed with specific inflections /endings according to number, gender and case.

Useful classroom words

Greetings

Welcome	καλωσήρθες
Hello	γεια σου
Thank you	ευχαριστώ
Please	σας παρακαλώ
Goodbye (formal)	αντίοσας
Bye (casual)	γεια/αντίο
Morning	πρωί
Afternoon	απόγευμα
Are you OK?	είσαι καλά;

School Routine

School playground	πρασίνο
School office	γραφείο του
σχολείου	
Hall	μεγάλη αίθουσα
School	σχολείο
Assembly	σχολική συνέλευση
Toilets	τουαλέτες
School field	χωράφι σχολείου
Classroom	αίθουσα σχολείου
Registration	εγγραφή
Computer suite	αίθουσα υπολογιστή
Tutor group (class)	τάξη/τμήμα
Break time	διάλειμμα
Outside	έξω
Inside	μέσα
Fire drill	άσκηση εκκένωσης
Packed lunch	μεσημεριανάππο
το σπίτι	
School dinner	σχολικό γεύμα
School nurse	σχολική νοσοκόμα
First aid room	αίθουσα πρώτων
βοηθειών	
Staff room	αίθουσα προσωπικού
Lunchtime	ώρα μεσημεριανού
School uniform	στολή σχολείου
Library	βιβλιοθήκη
Reading book	βιβλίο ανάγνωσης
Library book	βιβλίο βιβλιοθήκης
Copy	αντιγράφο
Label	βάζωτίτλο/ετικέτα
Colour	χρωματίζω
Pen	στυλό
Pencil	μολύβι
Yes	ναι
No	όχι

Days of the week

Monday -Δευτέρα
 Tuesday - Τρίτη
 Wednesday- Τετάρτη
 Thursday- Πέμπτη
 Friday- Παρασκευή
 Weekend- σαββατοκύριακο

Numbers

Zero - μηδέν
 One - ένα
 Two - δύο 20 - είκοσι
 Three - τρία 30 - τριάντα
 Four - τέσσερα 40 - σαράντα
 Five - πέντε 50 - πενήντα
 Six - έξι 60 - εξήντα
 Seven -επτά 70 - εβδομήντα
 Eight - οκτώ 80 - ογδόντα
 Nine - εννιά 90 - ενενήντα
 Ten - δέκα 100- εκατό

How many? - πόσα;

Instructions/Questions

Work with a partner-	Δούλεψε με έναν συμμαθητή σου
Use your dictionary	Χρησιμοποίησε το λεξικό σου
Do you understand?	Καταλαβαίνεις;
Talk about this at home	Μίλησε γι' αυτό στο σπίτι
Translate these words at home	Μετάφρασε αυτές τις λέξεις στο σπίτι
You can write in (language)	Μπορείς να γράψεις στα Ελληνικά
Write in sentences	Γράψε σε προτάσεις
Fill in the blanks	Συμπλήρωσε τα κενά
Annotate	Σχολίασε
Highlight	Δώσε έμφαση
Draft	Κάνε ένα προσχέδιο
Please be quiet	Παρακαλώ κάνε ησυχία
Come here please	Έλα εδώ παρακαλώ
Sit on the carpet	Κάτσε στο χαλί
Where does it hurt?	Πού πονάει;
Well done!	Μπράβο!