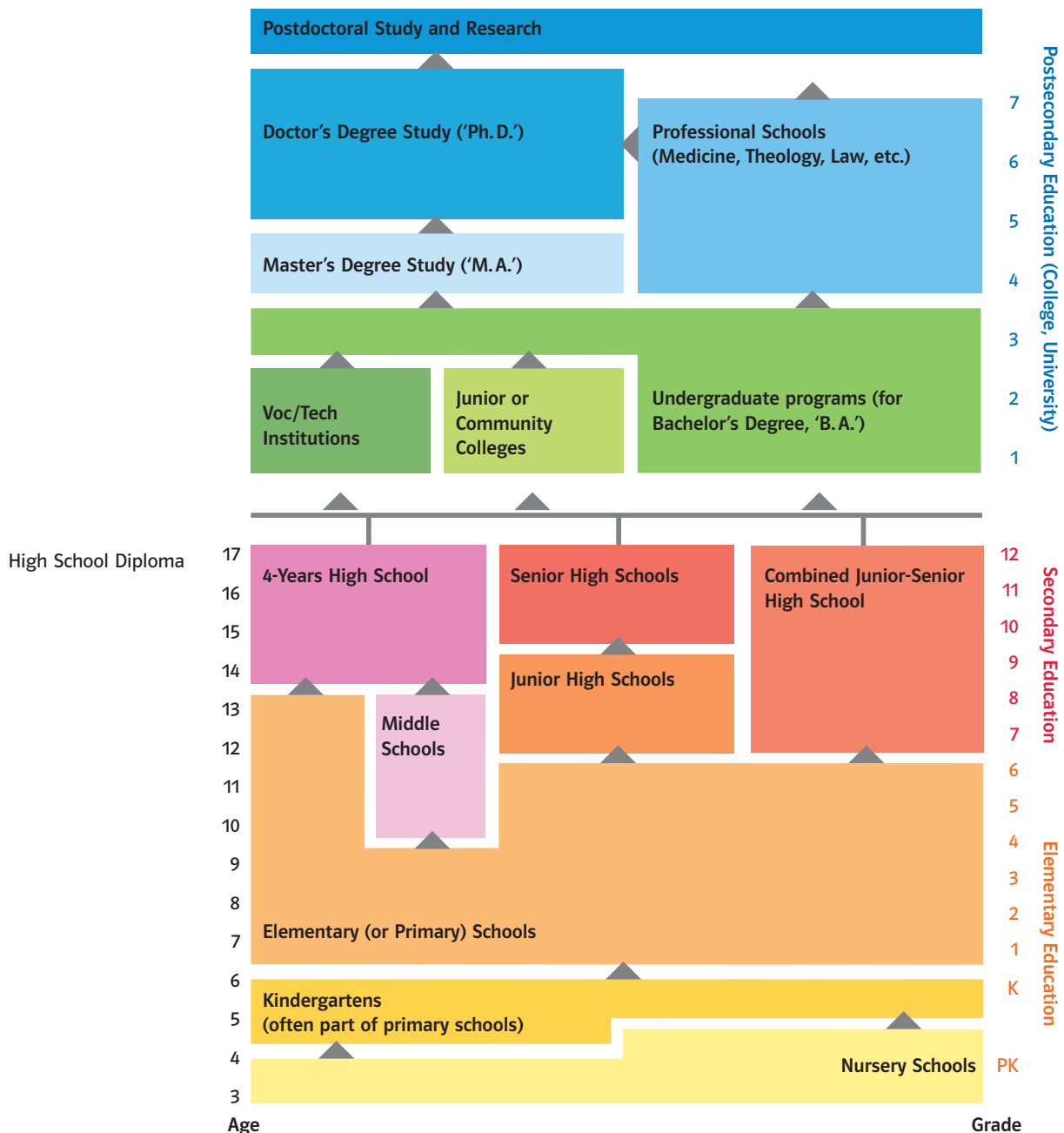


Education in the US and the UK

Map of the US education system



1 Understanding the diagram

Use the information given in the diagram to answer the following questions.

- John is 11, and is at Middle School. How old was he when he left his Elementary School?
How old will he be when he starts High School?
- What is the difference between Junior and Senior High School?
- Marie is 16 and wants to be a doctor. What school is she at now? How will her education continue?
- Sam, 17, has just started as an undergraduate at an American university.
How many years will it take him to get his Bachelor's Degree?

¹Bachelor ['bætʃlə]

The UK education system

Children in the UK start primary school when they are five, usually after two years of nursery school. At age 11 they go on to secondary school. There are a few state grammar schools, but most pupils attend comprehensive schools. The first year classes at these schools are of mixed-ability, but after that they are usually divided into different groups for lessons in academic subjects. Some of these comprehensives are 'independent specialist schools', which put special emphasis on certain subjects like sports or IT and attract pupils who are particularly interested in this subject.

The National Curriculum has four 'key stages':

Key stage 1: up to age 7 (Years 1/2)	Key stage 2: age 7–11 (Years 3–6)	Key stage 3: age 11–14 (Years 7–9)	Key stage 4: age 14–16 (Years 10/11)
--	---	--	--

At the end of each key stage pupils are assessed by National Curriculum tests. The assessment at the end of Key stage 4 is called the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education), a series of tests in different subjects. After taking GCSEs, pupils have a choice. They can leave school and look for a job. They can continue their education at vocational or technical colleges. Or they can stay at school in the sixth form and prepare for the AS-Level examinations at the end of the first year. If they want to go to a British university they must stay in the sixth form for two years and take A-Level examinations.

Most undergraduate courses at university take three years to complete and result in a Bachelor's Degree. Those who stay on for a fourth year as postgraduate students take a Master's Degree, in which they specialize in a certain area of study. A Doctor's Degree, also known as a Ph. D., can take another two or three years.

DID YOU KNOW?

UK:

- **Private schools** are fee-paying schools and are not run by the state. Many are **boarding schools**. They include the famous **public schools** (Eton, Harrow, etc.), which have a high academic standard. Over 7% of British pupils go to private schools.

US:

- **Private schools** are also popular in America.
- State schools in the US are known as **public schools**.

2 Make a diagram

Take suitable information from the text to make a diagram explaining the British education system. Use the diagram on the opposite page as an example. Include as many facts as you can.

3 The US, the UK and Germany

Compare the US and UK systems with each other and with the one you know in Germany.