

An Overview of The Educational System of Trinidad & Tobago



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Introduction to Trinidad and Tobago



- Located 7 miles off the coast of Venezuela
- The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has a population of approximately 1.3 million inhabitants
- Majority of the population is located in Trinidad with about 50,000 inhabitants on the smaller island of Tobago
- Ruled by the British, Trinidad and Tobago gained independence in 1962 and declared itself a republic in 1976
- The economy is largely based on the country's abundance of natural resources, particularly Oil and Gas.



Introduction to Trinidad and Tobago



- The country has a stable government and considers itself to be a leading political and economic power in the Caribbean.
- The total GDP in 2005 was approximately 14 million USD
- Literacy rate is 98.6- highest in the Caribbean
- The official language is English with French, Chinese, Spanish and the Caribbean Hindustani, a dialect of Hindi also spoken

Map of Trinidad and Tobago





Education System



- Based on British Model
- Education is free and compulsory for children ages 5 to 13 years of age
- Education System divided into 3 phases:
 - Primary Education
 - Secondary Education
 - Higher Education



Higher Education

- Higher Education is post-secondary study leading to diploma, certificates and degrees
- Two major higher education institutions:
 - University of West Indies
 - National Institute for Higher Education



Primary Education



- ☒ Primary consists of 2 preparatory ("infant") grades and 5 "standard" grades
- ☒ Includes children 5 to 11 years of age
- ☒ Education is free and compulsory through primary

Primary Education

- ☒ Although primary education is free, many students have problems attending due to inability to pay the costs of transportation, lunches, uniforms, textbooks, and school supplies





Primary education

- At the end of Standard Grade 5, student take the Common Entrance Exam (CEE)
- Scores of the CEE determine how a child's education will continue
 - Some students progress to Secondary School allowing them to eventually progress to higher education
 - Some students go onto vocational and craft training which will end their formal education
- Because Placement in secondary school is limited and based solely on CEE scores, pressure on students in T&T is greater than the pressure on their American counterparts



Secondary Education

- Secondary education can be provided either as traditional academic instruction or as a more diversified curriculum including technical and vocational studies.



Secondary Curriculum

- **What is the secondary school curriculum?**
- All secondary schools follow the national curriculum. The national curriculum includes the basic subjects of Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Geography and in some cases Religious Instruction.
- Each school may choose to offer additional subjects, as well as extra-curricular activities.



Secondary Enrollment

- Gross enrollment ratios at the end of the 1990s were 88 percent for both male and female students and net enrollment ratios were 72 percent for males and 75 percent for females.
- Any child from age 12 to age 18 can be enrolled in secondary school.
- Enrolment is compulsory for children 16 years of age and younger.