

# Bahrain



## COUNTRY FACTS:

**Capital:** Manama

**Population:** 738,004

**Area, sq. mi.:** 286

**Real GDP per capita:** 38,800

**Adult literacy rate:** 89% (male);  
84% (female)

**Ethnic make-up:** Bahraini  
62.4%, non-Bahraini 37.6%

**Religion:** Muslim (Shia and  
Sunni) 81.2%, Christian 9%,  
other 9.8%

## School Classes

In Bahrain, students are primarily evaluated on homework, quizzes, community service and midterm and final exams. Class participation does not contribute to a student's grade in the public school system. However, it does in the private school system. In Bahrain, some private schools are co-ed while others are not and boys and girls are seated apart. Schools in Bahrain have a dress code. In Bahrain public and Arabic private students remain in the same classroom and teachers rotate to the different rooms. In non-Arabic private schools, students usually take each subject in a different classroom.

## School Relationships

In Bahrain students usually use the title "Mr." or "Ms.," with the teacher's first name. Their relationship is friendly, but still formal.

## Extracurricular Activities

In Bahrain, students are asked to do 60 hours of community service. However, there are no clubs in public schools. Most parents in Bahrain are not involved in their children's extracurricular activities.

## School Rules

Cell phones are not allowed in class and phones should be turned off. Schools in Bahrain do have a dress code, but not necessarily uniforms.

## Return

Students from public schools may find it hard upon return to Bahrain to study their main subjects in Arabic as they used to do before their exchange year in the U.S. Many of them transfer to private English schools.

## Family Life

In Bahrain households usually consists of parents, their children, and sometimes grandparents. Sometimes the household is large with uncles and their families under one roof. Children do not leave home even when they are in college or work. They move out of the family home when they are married. In many Bahraini families mothers do not work. However, if she does, the father is still responsible for supporting his family. Both parents have equal authority, but in some families most of the authority is with the father.

In Bahrain family members are expected to have time to pursue to their own interests. Family members must respect each other's desires. In Bahrain, meals are usually eaten together as a family.

## Teen Life

If a Bahraini child owns something, it is generally his or her own and not understood to be the shared property of siblings. This includes clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first. In Bahrain teenagers are expected to interact respectfully with their parents at all times. However, it is fine to be informal with their siblings.

## Responsibilities

In Bahrain, it is common for families to employ household help. Boys and girls are generally not used to doing house chores. Most teenagers in Bahrain rarely cook for themselves. Most Bahraini teenagers do not have part-time jobs because the concept of working while studying does not exist in Bahrain. Their parents are expected to give them monthly allowances. Students are expected to be responsible for their academic performance and other school related issues.

## Parental Involvement

Most teenagers in Bahrain are dependent upon their parents. Bahraini parents are in direct contact with schools and monitor their children's academic progress regularly.

## Pets

Nearly all Bahraini households are pet-free. Bahraini students may initially feel uncomfortable if pets are given "free reign" of the house.

## ***Personal Interactions***

### ***Mixed Gender Socializing***

Having friends of the opposite sex is not acceptable for most in Bahraini society. Teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one; both ways are considered appropriate and the choice is left up to the individual. Amongst good friends it is common to share money, but not in casual friendships.

### ***Eye Contact***

As a sign of respect, children do not tend to make direct eye-contact with adults. Instead, they look towards the ground when they are spoken to by adults.

## ***Personal Hygiene***

Bahraini teenagers generally take a quick (5-15 minute) shower once a day and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. In Bahrain, everyone has their own towel, either one or two, to use in the bathroom. Bahraini teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them. Towels are hung up and hygiene products are put away. It is generally thought to be unclean in Bahrain to wear the same clothes two days in a row. In Bahrain most teenagers do not change clothes upon entering the house.

## ***Religion***

### ***Holidays***

Most families encourage their children to attend religious services. Usually boys go to the mosque with their fathers every Friday for the congregational prayer. During Ramadan, students fast from dawn until sunset. Eid is a religious and family event. Parents give money to their children. Recognized holidays include Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha along with national holidays. Some of these observances are the same as the U.S. holidays, such as Labor Day, Independence Day, etc.