

Ghana

School Classes

In Ghana, boys and girls study together in the same classrooms. Classes will have between 30 and 40 students and sometimes more. Students study eight subjects throughout the week and repeated three to four times a week, and divided by day. The student stays in the same classroom with the same classmates for 80% of the subjects throughout high school. Students are accustomed to being in class with students of the same year grade and of the same academic maturity. Most students are enrolled in boarding school in Ghana and live with their peers in school and develop friendship in school naturally. Evaluation is primarily based on examinations. Before the senior year, evaluation is based on trimester exams. During the senior year, students write a national exam to obtain valid academic certificates. Homework is usually not scored in the academic system. Students may not be aware of being scored in subjects like Choir and PE for academic purposes.

School Relationships

In the Ghanaian school system, the teacher is the main player in the class and students listen. Teachers are referred to by their formal names and title. It is common to address the teacher by "Sir" or "Madam."

Extracurricular Activities

Schools offer extracurricular activities, like sports, drama, science clubs, environmental clubs, and clubs with social, cultural and sports undertones. Some Ghanaian parents are actively involved in supporting or helping to arrange their children's extracurricular activities.

School Rules

In Ghana, students wear uniforms and they are expected to look formal in them. Cell phones are not allowed in schools in Ghana. The definition of what constitutes violence is relative. Fighting is frowned upon in schools in Ghana and weapons are never present at school. There has not been any news yet of any gun violence in school in Ghana.

Return

The school year abroad is not counted in their academic progress, and they will have to repeat the year in Ghana.

Family Life

There is blend of the extended family and nuclear family structures in the cities. In the rural areas there tend to be more extended family systems. Fathers are the primary bread winners in many families. There are situations where both parents are financial contributors and some in which the mothers are financially responsible for the family. Fathers are the main custodians of authority in the Ghanaian households. There is a general clear-cut gender role between boys and girls in the family. This is more profound in rural and Muslim communities than in urban communities.

Siblings usually eat from the same bowls in the rural communities when they are younger. Family members do not necessarily have to wait for one another before they eat. Eating may not happen at the dining table and is not necessarily an important family time. The communal lifestyle in Ghana does not encompass the concept of personal space and people are not very fussy about it. Ghanaians are not accustomed to the idea of taking individual or private time at home; spending much time to oneself may indicate there is something amiss.

Teen Life

Siblings sometimes share clothing, shoes and electronic gadgets and it is not always necessary to ask permission. Most items are considered communal property of the family. Parents give teenagers pocket money. Teenagers usually do not work until after University. However, some teenagers are compelled to work by virtue of tough economic circumstances.

Responsibilities

Families that can afford it sometimes have house help for household chores. Children are generally assigned specific chores to do at home in Ghana. Generally, there are different roles assigned to the two genders. Cooking is mainly done by the females of the family.



COUNTRY FACTS:

Capital: Accra

Population: 24,339,838

Area, sq. mi.: 92,098

Real GDP per capita: 1,500

Adult literacy rate: 66% (male); 50% (female)

Ethnic make-up: Eakan 45.3%, Mole-Dagbon 15.2%, Ewe 11.7%, Ga-Dangme 7.3%, Guan 4%, Gurma 3.6%, Grusi 2.6%, Mande-Busanga 1%, other tribes 1.4%, other 7.8%

Religion: Christian 68.8% (Pentecostal 24.1%, Protestant 18.6%, Catholic 15.1%, other 11%), Muslim 15.9%, traditional 8.5%, other 0.7%, none 6.1%

Parental Involvement

A very small percent of households have internet access at home. Many students have had access to the internet only in public cafes. For students coming from the urban setting, they may have workable internet skills, but for those coming from the rural areas, their knowledge will be minimal to none. There is communication between the school and the parents, but to a limited extent. Ghanaian teenagers are monitored by their parents and parents will often dictate their plans for them.

Pets

Pets are not an integral part of the Ghanaian household. Cats may live in the house sometimes but dogs live in kennels or sleep outside on the compound. Most dogs are guard dogs and are not friendly. In the rural areas, dogs are also used as hunters.

Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing

Parents in Ghanaian society are more comfortable when children socialize with the opposite sex once they have reached their twenties. Many times some of the males on the program may not know how to interact appropriately with females in the U.S. They misunderstand the casual interaction between boys and girls in the U.S. It is advised that male Ghanaian students have a trusted male coordinator to guide them as to how to relate to females in America.

Friendships

Ghanaian teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate, and the choice is left up to the individual. Teenagers in Ghana make friends from family, neighborhood, and religious or school activities. It is normal for teenagers to give freely without asking to be paid back. In Ghana when one is invited out, it is expected that the invitee pays the cost.

Eye Contact

Amongst the urban upper middle class and above, it is generally okay to make eye contact with elderly people when speaking with them. In the rural areas, that same behavior is considered rude and extremely disrespectful. When a student looks away when responding to questions from elders, it is a sign of respect, and not a sign that the student is hiding something or being dishonest.

Cultural Norms

Greeting someone is a sign of cordiality and harmony, not greeting a familiar person is a sign of disharmony. Greetings are sometimes expected to spark off some amount of conversation.

Ghanaians use an indirect form of communication and body language is as important as verbal communication. People in Ghana are expected to discern and read between the lines during communication. Negative emotions are expressed more modestly and with decorum to avoid hurting or offending people and may not be expressed at all if there is fear that hurting someone is unavoidable.

Being a little late is not considered rude. The general populace in Ghana is not usually on time. Time is generally referred to in the following increments: early morning, mid morning, early afternoon, late afternoon, evening, early night etc. Being even 20 minutes late to an appointment is acceptable.

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene habits vary from person to person. Ghanaians will typically bathe twice a day. Bathroom styles differ between social and economic groups in Ghana. Students from rural settings will likely not be used to bath tubs and screened off bath areas. Towels are usually aired in the open to dry. Most Ghanaian teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body, hair and face. It is generally thought to be unclean in Ghana to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear the same clothes twice without washing them. If a student is in a school uniform, church, or party clothes, he or she will change clothes upon returning home.

Diet

Halal meat is common to find in Ghana. Most meals are cooked from scratch

Religion

In Ghana, attending religious services is often a family event, and the social aspect of attending the services, being part of the community, is often just as important as the religious aspect.

Holidays

Eid al-Fitr is a national holiday in Ghana. New Years Day; Independence Day(March 6); Easter (3days); May Day (May1); African Unity Day(May 25); Republic Day (July1); Eid al-Fitr; Eid al-Adah; Farmers Day, (first Friday of December); Christmas (25 Dec); Boxing day (26 Dec)