

## **Education in Pakistan**

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There are hundreds of countries around the world, and each of these countries has a different system of education. For some people who move from one country to another it's easy to adjust to a new educational system, and for others it's not.

I was born in Pakistan, a country in Southeast Asia. I went to school in my city, Islamabad, for ten years. For the first ten years of our country's education system, we have to go to school from eight o'clock in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon, six days a week. Each school day begins with fifteen minutes of prayer, no matter what a person's religion, but most people are Muslim. For prayer, we have to stand in straight lines on the school playground, and after prayer we have to sing the Pakistani national anthem. Then we go to our classes in lines.

Each grade holds its classes in separate rooms, and the students don't change rooms; the teachers do. We have to stand when the teacher walks into the room and then sit down when we are told to sit.

When a teacher gives homework, he checks to see that it has been done by making a checkmark with a red pen; the homework is never actually read by the teacher. When a student doesn't have his homework or his book, comes to school late or is absent, he is hit with a stick.

There are only two tests given in class: one in the middle of the term, and the other at the end. The final grades are determined by the last test. It doesn't matter how the student did in the class during the term; if he doesn't pass the last test, he doesn't pass the class.

High school ends after 10th grade, and college begins in the 11th year. When I came to New York, I had already graduated high school in my country, so I

had planned to get admitted to a college. However, I found my first surprise when one of my friends told me that high school in New York goes up to 12th grade, so that I had to spend two more years in high school before I could go on to college.

I found several other differences between the Pakistani and the New York educational system. I was very happy when I found that here there are no fifteen minutes of prayer, no lines, and no corporal punishments for not doing ones homework or for arriving late to class.

But the thing I was most surprised at was the students' behavior toward their teachers and classmates. Most of the time, students were mean in class, which I didn't like. To me, it was disrespectful toward the teachers because in Pakistan we consider teachers to be like parents.

Here I was, going into a liberal educational system. I was scared that I might get expelled, so I worked very hard to stay on the right track. And this is what an immigrant has to do to adjust to this system of education. An immigrant has to work hard so that things work out well for him.

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