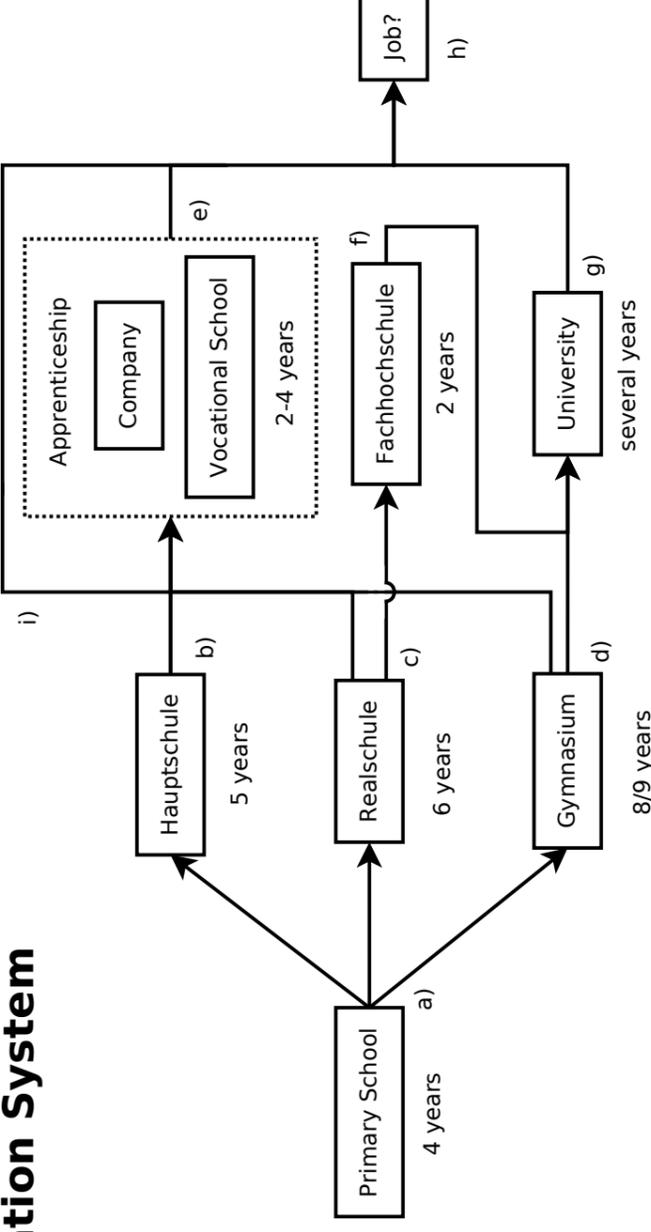


German Education System (simplified)



Please help to improve this description!
 refugee-it.de
 CC BY-SA 4.0
 2016-03-01

**For refugees,
 special rules apply!**

a) At the end of primary school, parents get a recommendation (based on marks and ability) to which kind of school their child should go.

b) Hauptschule is for pupils with low or average learning abilities. In recent years, parents try to get their children to one of the other schools because with only a Hauptschulabschluss (the final certificate) the chances on the job market aren't that good (reasons are: more automatization in the industry, therefore less manual labor; large competition from people with better certificates). As children of migrants or from socially disadvantaged families tend to go there, German parents fear a bad learning environment for their children. From time to time, people discuss if Hauptschule should be discontinued. To some extent, Hauptschule is more focused on teaching practical skills.

c) Realschule is a mixture between Hauptschule and Gymnasium: focused on both, practical skills and theoretical learning. At the end, pupil receive the Realschulabschluss (Mittlere Reife) which is insufficient for being allowed to study at a university.

d) Gymnasium with the goal of "Allgemeine Hochschulreife" (Abitur) provides the education that's necessary to be allowed to study at university. With Abitur, one can enter an apprenticeship nonetheless.

e) The apprenticeship is an important source of new employees for the German economy. A company will teach the apprentice a particular profession while the apprentice is working in the day-to-day business of that company. At the same time, the apprentice has to attend a vocational school corresponding to his/her profession. If the company would be small or very specialized, the education would be too specific towards this one company, so the vocational school makes sure that the apprentice learns his profession with a broader scope,

so he/she can be employed at other companies as well. Usually the company intends to employ the apprentice after the apprenticeship, because this education custom to their business has cost them money, but there is no guarantee. The apprentice gets a small salary. After a final exam, the apprentice receives an Ausbildungszeugnis (certificate of the profession), which is of advantage when applying for a job in comparison to applications of unlearned workers.

f) Some do it besides their apprenticeship (evening hours), some do it after they've completed their apprenticeship (full time), others after work for their job (evening hours), others directly after leaving school (full time): they attend a Fachhochschule in order to get Fachhochschulreife (certification). Opportunities like this are summarized under the term "Dritter Bildungsweg", which refers to obtaining the education and certificates necessary for studying at a university even if they did not attend Gymnasium initially.

g) Studying at university is now free of charge (paid by the state). Still, students have to pay their living expenses, either by living with their parents or with financial support from them, or they may apply for a special student loan offered by the state (BAföG). Another option is a "Duales Studium" much like an apprenticeship, where the student works half the time at a company and gets a salary, but has to learn just as much subject matter as is presented to students who study at university only. Studies = academic research with scientific methods.

h) One still has to find an employer. It can happen that the education is too low for a particular job or profession, or the education is "too high" because there might be little demand for filling higher positions, but ordinary workers are needed instead.

i) With or without a certificate from Hauptschule, Realschule or Gymnasium, one can directly go to work and skip any formal training. Note that unlearned workers usually get only low-paid, difficult, demanding jobs, and a lot of people apply for them.