

FRENCH YOUTH OVERVIEW

DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population:** 59,551,227 (Ranked 21st in the world by the US Census Bureau).
- **Population density:** 281 people per square mile.
- **Children 0-14:** 18.7%—11,125,442.
- **Teenage 10-19:** 12.9%—7,689,638.
- **Youth between 15-24:** 13 %—7,712,136.
- **Seniors Over 70:** 11.6% 6,933,249.
- **Male to female ratio:** 95.1 males per 100 females.
- **Birth rate:** 12.27 per 1,000 people.
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 74.91 for males and 82.8 for females.
- **Infant mortality rate:** 5.56 per 1,000 live births.

EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Pre-primary	Beginning age, 2	Duration, 4 years
Primary	Beginning age, 6	Duration, 5 years
Secondary	Beginning age, 11	Duration, 7 years

The administration of education in France is under the auspices of le Ministère de l'Education nationale (National Ministry of Education). It is responsible for 18,844 pre-primary schools (2.5 million students) and 41,000 primary schools (4.1 million students) and for the over 8 million students in the secondary and tertiary schools. It is thought that 99% of the population over 15 is literate. Education is compulsory from ages 6-12.

ISSUES

Illiteracy is not a problem in France. 99% Of the population over 15 is considered literate. Unemployment, however, is a problem which the educational system in France must address.

ETHNIC LANDSCAPE

Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indochinese, Basque minorities.

SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

There are almost 60 million people in France. Those under 15 make up about 19% of the population. There are 95 males for every 100 females in France. The birth rate is 12.27 per 1,000 people, and the infant mortality rate is 5.56 per 1,000 live births. The death rate is 9.14 deaths per 1,000 people, so France has an overall growth rate of 0.38%. On average, men can expect to live to about 75 years, and women can expect to live to about 83 (79 is the overall average).

France has a fairly strong economy, and the government's direct influence on that economy is shrinking. Agriculture is France's strong point, as it the leading agricultural producer in Western Europe. The workweek is only 35 hours, and France has exceptionally high social welfare benefits. France is a part of the European Union, and shares the common currency and economic policies of that union.

The official language is French, and the limited use of regional dialects is continually decreasing.

France is a democratic republic, and elections are generally fair and free. The federal government once had much more authority, but it has been engaged in decentralization for years. Now the local authorities have a good deal of say in issues like transportation, communication, schools, law enforcement, etc.

France has a fairly tight immigration policy, and has been known to refuse asylum and entry. And even though the unemployment rate for immigrants is three times the national average, some in France blame immigrants for the high unemployment.

The press is free in France, but is financially supported by the government. Religious freedom is guaranteed and enforced. Labor rights are respected and strikes are widely used as a leverage tool. Legally, women are equal to men in France. All French couples, including same sex ones, have certain rights guaranteed by the Civil Solidarity Pact.

ISSUES

Unemployment is a major social issue in France. Estimates place the unemployment level at about 11% of the overall working population. Combine unemployment with the government's very generous social welfare plan, and budgets become increasingly difficult to meet. France has chosen to continue raising taxes and cutting defense spending in order to keep its social welfare system intact.

There are also some issues related to the European Union. Financially, France is glad to have the support of the European Union. Socially, however, France would like to retain some independence (as do most countries in the union). In addition, France has been in conflict with Great Britain for centuries. The European Union actually brought a case against France for its refusal to import British beef.

RELIGION AND FAITH

Christianity is the dominant religion in France, with about 92% of the population claiming to be either Roman Catholic (90%) or Protestant (2%). There is also a small Jewish segment of the population (1%), and a small Muslim segment (1%, mostly migrant farm workers from Northern Africa). The other six percent are likely religious, but consider themselves unaffiliated.

SOURCES

[UNESCO Statistics Division.](#)

[US Central Intelligence Agency. *World Factbook.*](#)

Freedom House.

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