

# Turkey



## COUNTRY FACTS:

**Capital:** Ankara

**Population:** 77,804,122

**Area, sq. mi.:** 302,533

**Real GDP per capita:** 11,500

**Adult literacy rate:** 95% (male);  
80% (female)

**Ethnic make-up:** Turkish 70-75%, Kurdish 18%, other minorities 7-12%

**Religion:** Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), other 0.2%

## School Classes

School hours vary from school to school however most school days start at 8am and end at 3pm. Each class is 45 minutes long with 5-10 minute breaks in between and a longer lunch break. Students remain in one classroom throughout the school day and teachers rotate. Out of 100 points scale, 45 is the lowest passing grade. Daily homework may be given in some classes; however it does not contribute to the student's final grade. Turkish students are generally not accustomed to doing incremental work.

## School Relationships

Teachers are highly respected in Turkey. As a general rule, teachers are not addressed by their first name or a nickname out of respect for their authority and age. Students can raise their hand to make or argue a point in an indirect way, but they would rarely argue or contradict a teacher directly. In Turkey it is not the norm to know teachers on a personal level outside of class.

## Family Life

The family is the dominant source of belongingness for both males and females. Individuals within Turkish society are generally loyal to and have close relationships with their families. It is considered desirable to have grandparents and other relatives around, and that is generally the case except in the largest cities. Regardless, relatives do travel back and forth and stay closely connected. It is not unusual for young adults to help their younger siblings with school expenses, or to help elderly relatives with their needs.

The traditional male-dominated family and authority structure is becoming less pronounced in the urban areas of Turkey. The Turkish mother may be considered the "ruler" of her household and she, and the rest of her family, considers it her responsibility to dote on her family. This may include waking them up in the morning. She assumes all responsibility for household chores. YES Turkish students might have the mindset that "Mom runs the house, manages the money, cooks, irons, serves, and educates the children to assume responsibility." Turkish fathers, on the other hand, generally fulfill the role of the financial provider and are usually not responsible for household chores or cooking.

## Teen Life

Most teenagers in Turkey do not work and are only responsible for their academic success. Families give pocket money to the teenagers and, depending on the amount given, families might expect that the teens budget the money on their own. If a Turkish child has 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.

## Responsibilities

Chores are generally done by the parents. Teenagers sometimes help them out but most male teenagers do not even help with the cleaning. Chores are an area where the contrast between American culture and Turkish culture is clear and obvious, and thus, where conflicts may arise for YES Turkish students. Generally it is the parents who cook in Turkey.

## Parental Involvement

In the Turkey, meals may be eaten all together as a family, or separately depending on family members' schedules. Turkish parents often monitor what their children do online in the interest of their children's safety. Parents also may limit what sites a child may visit online, or how much time the child spends on the internet. In Turkey it is considered respectful to allow family members to regular, individual time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax.

Many Turkish parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. Turkish parents are often actively involved in supporting or helping to arrange their children's extracurricular activities.

## Pets

In Turkey, dogs are most often acquired for the purposes of protection as a watch dog or for special use by hunters or police. They are not commonly viewed as domestic pets.

## ***Personal Interactions***

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

It is perfectly acceptable for Turkish teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually.

### ***Friendships***

Turkish teenagers sometimes socialize in groups, and sometimes one-on-one. Both ways are considered appropriate and the choice is left up to the individual. Most teenagers have made their friends through school but neighborhood bonds are strong in Turkey so they can become friends with their neighbors as well. Friendship means bonds and sharing in Turkish culture so even though students might socialize with many teenagers and call them friends, they only have limited number of 'close friends.' It's common to borrow from or lend money to trusted friends.

### ***Communication Styles***

Turkish students will tend to use a more indirect communication style will be used to indirectly confronting people, for instance, addressing their concerns to someone other than the person to whom they intend the criticism. It is important in Turkey to avoid conflict and therefore 'save face.' Turkish students may not want to openly disagree and will instead become sullen and resentful, but unwilling to discuss what has made them uncomfortable or offended them.

### ***Eye Contact***

Eye contact is important in Turkish culture, as a sign of respect when speaking with others. Teenagers are expected to make eye contact with adults.

### ***Cultural Norms***

The concept of personal space is small in Turkey and people tend to have more physical contact while they are communicating. Friends kiss each other from the cheek when they meet. That also is the same for family members.

Turkish people tend to view time as unlimited and flowing and much greater flexibility exists around deadlines and schedules. Attending to relationships with others is more important than being punctual and cutting a conversation short in order to be able to make another meeting on time could be seen as a sign of disrespect.

### ***Personal Hygiene***

Turkish students typically take long showers two or three times a week rather than quick daily showers.

Wearing the same clothes for more than one day might be considered normal. Sweaters and trousers are generally worn multiple times, especially in the winter time.

### ***Food and Culture***

#### ***Diet***

Almost all meat sold in Turkey is halal. Pork is sold only in big grocery stores and most people do not eat pork. Generally in Turkey dinners are cooked at home.

#### ***Gifts***

Gifts are given to and from adults and the youth and some close friends on the New Year in Turkey.

### ***Religion***

Islam in Turkey is adapted to modern life and may be not be as traditionally followed. Many Turks value the moral and spiritual bases of Islam, and revere it as a guide to right living and ethical conduct. Religious practices in Turkey are voluntary rather than obligatory in Turkey. The approach to religion in Turkey is considered very personal.