Special edition • NARA ENGLISH • August 2026

BACK TO SCHOOL



Different countries, different seasons, different traditions. For some students, a new school year means autumn leaves and cooler days. For others, it comes with spring flowers or the end of a hot summer. But wherever you live, the feeling of a fresh start is probably very similar: new notebooks, new plans, familiar faces, and that strange feeling that anything can happen this year.

For many people, September feels like a new beginning. Summer is over, students return to their classrooms, and a new school year begins. But September does not mean "back to school" everywhere in the world.

In Russia, the school year traditionally starts on September 1, known as Knowledge Day.

In England, students usually return to school in early September, although the exact date can be different depending on the school and area. But travel a little further east, and the calendar changes completely.

In Japan, the school year begins in April. Spring becomes the season of new teachers, new classmates, and new beginnings. In South Korea, students start their academic year even earlier, in March. So while European students are already several months into their school year, Korean and Japanese students are only beginning theirs.

On the other side of the world, the seasons change the picture again. In Australia, summer comes in December, January, and February. Students have their long summer holiday around December and January, and the new school year usually begins in late January or early February. So Australian students go back to school during the final weeks of summer, not autumn.

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to a world of possibilities.

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WORKSHEET

Task 1. Vocabulary in Context

Match the words from the text (1–4) with their correct meanings (A–D).

1. New beginning — _____
2. Classmates — _____
3. Academic year — _____
4. Familiar — _____

A. People who study together with you in the same room/grade.
B. Well-known to you, easy to recognise.
C. The time period of the year during which students attend school or university.
D. A fresh start; starting something again from the beginning.

Task 2. Calendar Detective (Matching)

Match each country to the exact time students return to school, according to the article.

1. Russia — _____
2. England — _____
3. Japan — _____
4. South Korea — _____
5. Australia — _____

A. In April
B. In March
C. On September 1 (Knowledge Day)
D. In late January or early February
E. In early September

Task 3. True / False / Not Given

Read the sentences and write T (True), F (False), or NG (Not Given) based on the text.

1. In England, every single school starts strictly on the exact same date. [ ]
2. Students in South Korea start their school year before students in Japan. [ ]
3. Australian students return to school in the middle of winter. [ ]
4. Students in Japan wear traditional uniforms on their first day of school. [ ]
5. Despite different seasons, the feeling of a fresh start is very similar around the world. [ ]

Task 4. Quote Analysis & Discussion

Read the quote from the bottom of the article and answer the questions.

> "Education is your passport to a world of possibilities."

1. Which school calendar mentioned in the article would you prefer for yourself (starting in spring, autumn, or late summer), and why?

2. How do you understand the quote above in the context of your own studies?