

# Preparing for the eight-year gymnasium: the great pupil steeplechase

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## Summary

- Nearly 20% of all fifth-year pupils apply for entry to eight-year gymnasium, but fewer than half of them are successful. The vast majority apply on the basis of their own and their parents' joint interests.
- Preparation for the entry exams is a burden both for the children and their parents, whether in the form of lost free time, or in terms of financial outlayings for tutoring, preparatory courses and practice tests.
- Nearly 85% of those enrolled to take the entry examinations dedicate time weekly to their preparation, and each day sees almost one in two of these pupils busy with preparation.
- Intensive preparation vastly increases the likelihood of acceptance for the lower-achieving half of candidates. For the higher-achieving half, intensive preparation is rather an insurance measure, to ensure that the very hard-working candidates from the lower half will not overtake them.
- There are many indications that intensive extra-curricular study in preparation for the entry examinations for eight-year gymnasium significantly improves pupils' knowledge and skills. In this, will power, perseverance, ambition, rigour and pressure from the parents play a significant role.