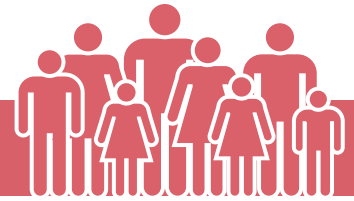




Sierra Leone

Family Life



In Sierra Leone, the typical household encompasses the extended family, with parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins all living in one home. One of the parents will have responsibility for their family financially, and it could be the mother or father. In Sierra Leone, men are the dominant figures in the home and may make decisions without the knowledge of the wife.

Every individual eats their meals on their own time, and most houses do not have dining area. It is not common in Sierra Leone to allow family members to regular, individual time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax. Time is typically spent all together as a family and there is very little time spent alone.

Teen Life: Most children in Sierra Leone do not have access to a computer, even at school. In most Sierra Leonean homes, almost everything is shared by siblings without any permission, except for underwear and toothbrushes, which people own individually and do not share. Using family items is common and does not require permission in most homes.

Teenagers in Sierra Leone are largely dependent upon their parents. Teenagers do not get allowances from their parents nor do they have part time jobs. Sierra Leonean students interact more with their mothers and rarely sit and talk with their fathers.

Sierra Leonean students may make independent decisions, but it is considered rude and bad behavior. The culture says children should not make decisions on their own until they become adults.

Responsibilities: It is not common in Sierra Leone to have housekeepers. Typically the mother is responsible for housekeeping. In Sierra Leone, it is common for female teenagers to cook for themselves and their families but not common for male teenagers to cook. Sierra Leonean students are expected to be responsible for studying, attending school, and looking after their clothes.

Parental Involvement: Many Sierra Leonean parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress.

Pets: Generally, people in Sierra Leone do not have pets at home, especially cats. Some families keep dogs, but they are not allowed inside the home.

Personal Interactions



In Sierra Leone, students are evaluated on daily homework, class participation, and periodic written exams. To maintain a good grade, students must turn in daily homework, participate in class regularly, and perform well on exams.

Classes: In Sierra Leone, students remain in one classroom while teachers rotate. There are mixed schools and schools for just boys and just girls in Sierra Leone. In co-ed schools, boys and girls may be seated next to each other.

In Sierra Leone, tests and exams are a combination of multiple-choice questions, essays, and short answers depending on the exam students are taking (National Exams or school exams). Group discussions, where student interpretation/input is encouraged, does not exist in Sierra Leone. Students are expected to write what their teacher wrote for them on the blackboard, and studying consists of memorization.

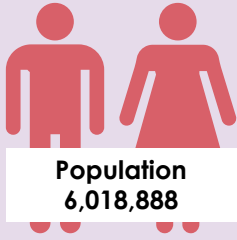
Students in Sierra Leone take between 12-15 subjects in "junior school" (Grade 7 – 9) for two years, and are required to pass eight of those subjects in grade 9. Students in "senior school" (Grade 10-13) study eight subjects but are required to pass five as the university requirement.

In Sierra Leone, students have compulsory subjects with limited choices. They are allowed to choose four classes in grade 9. In senior school they do not have any choice subjects. Instead, they choose an area of study that they follow for the rest of their academic career. Areas of study include: Arts, Commerce, and Science.

School Relationships: Sierra Leonean culture does not allow younger people to call elders by their first names, and students call their teachers by their last names with a formal title.



Freetown



Population
6,018,888



Square Miles
44,577

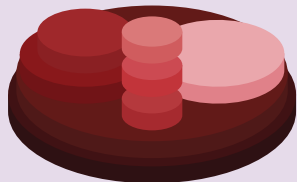


Currency
Sierra Leonean
Leone



Literacy rate
37.7%

Literacy rate
58.7%



Temne 35%
Mende 31%
Limba 8%
Kono 5%
Kriole 2%
Mandingo 2%
Loko 2%
Other 15%



Extracurricular Activities: In Sierra Leone, most parents do not want their kids to be involved in extra-curricular activities because parents believe extra activities are distractions to students. Most students normally play football (soccer), practice music, and engage in other extracurricular activities without the knowledge of their parents.

School Rules and Attire: Sierra Leone high schools have a “zero tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school, and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe.

Cheating is not allowed in Sierra Leone, and disciplinary action is similar to that in the U.S. with added penalties. Students caught cheating can have an incomplete in the course, and may be asked to leave the class or the exam hall, which results in a zero grade.

All students in Sierra Leone wear a uniform, with black or brown shoes and white socks, to school.

Returning from Exchange: Only Grade 10 and 11 students can apply for the YES Program in Sierra Leone, and are not required to repeat classes upon their return to Sierra Leone.

School



Mixed Gender Socializing: Culturally, in Sierra Leone teenage boys and girls are allowed to socialize together in groups, but seldom one-on-one.

Friendships: Sierra Leonean students socialize in groups and sometimes one-on-one. They make most of their friends in school, through activities and from family or neighborhood connections. It is uncommon for Sierra Leonean teenagers to share money with each other, but they may share food. In Sierra Leone, friendship means someone teens feel confident with at all times and whom they trust deeply.

Communication Styles: Sierra Leonean teenagers show negative emotions quite freely amongst their peers but not amongst family. Direct communication is shared only between close friends.

Eye Contact: In Sierra Leone it is not culturally acceptable to make eye contact with elders when they are talking, as a sign of respect.

Cultural Norms: Family time is most important and personal space or time for individual pursuits is rare. Being late is very common in Sierra Leone so it is acceptable.

Food and Culture



Religion: Attending religious services is often a family and community affair. Muslims go to pray as a large group in open fields, share food with friends and families, and visit each other.

Holidays: The main holidays celebrated in Sierra Leone are: Christmas, New Year, Easter, Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Independence Day.

Christmas is a major holiday and is celebrated regardless of religion or tribe. People in coastal towns go to the beach with food, drinks, and music. People in inland towns go to nearby mountains, rivers, or smaller traditional villages. It is usually a very noisy setting with everyone socializing, dancing, swimming and playing. People visit with neighbors and family members. Adults bring gifts of food and money for kids.

Personal Hygiene



In Sierra Leone, teens shower twice a day. It is generally thought to be unclean in Sierra Leone to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear them twice without washing. Teenagers in Sierra Leone will change their clothes immediately when they get home from school, or formal events. Sierra Leonean teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean after using them. Many Sierra Leonean teenagers have only one towel to dry their body, face and hands.

Students usually wash their own clothes by hand. They will most likely not know how to use American style washing and drying machines, as they may have never seen one.