

How To

GET ORGANIZED

Being organized makes your day run more smoothly and saves you time. When you're organized, you also have less stress and feel more in control of your life.



Being organized will not only make you a better student, it will help you succeed in your career and in life.

ORGANIZATION TIPS

Use a planner

Take a planner to every class. Record assignments, tests, quizzes, special events, and appointments. Also use your planner to break large assignments and projects down into more manageable parts.

Have a system for organizing papers

Whether you use folders or binders, the important thing is that you have a system for organizing all of your papers—handouts, homework, and class notes. *Have a specific place for every paper.*

Develop routines

Have a morning routine that gets your day off to a good start and a nighttime routine that includes getting everything ready for the next day.

Eliminate clutter

Throw out what you don't need. Put the papers you want to keep in a home file and keep your study area clean and neat.



VIDEO

For 10 ways to improve your grades, watch this quick video.

How To

STUDY SMART

The key to success is not studying a lot. It's studying smart.

Students who "study smart" know how to make the most of their study time.



GET OFF TO A GOOD START

Get started.

Getting started on your studying is often the hardest part. Don't put it off until later, don't make excuses, and don't wait until you're "in the mood."

Set a time to start studying and stick to it. If you have a hard time getting started, begin with something you can finish quickly or a subject you like.

Have a good place to study.

Your study area should be quiet, comfortable, well-lit, and have a surface for writing. Equip your study area with the supplies you need (such as paper, pencils, and pens). Turn off the TV and *silence your phone*.

Create a study plan.

Before you begin studying, decide exactly what you want to get done and the order in which you're going to do it. Be specific, and start with the things that are the most important.

Break large assignments down.

Large assignments and projects can be overwhelming. Break them down into smaller, more manageable parts, and start on them early.

How To

TAKE GOOD NOTES

Taking notes in class helps you stay focused on the information being presented. And because tests usually cover material that's been discussed in class, having good notes to study from can significantly improve your test grades.



GET READY

Create a notetaking system

Whether you use three-ring notebooks, binders, or spiral notebooks for your class notes, the important thing is that you have a system for organizing your notes that works for you.

Format your notes

- ▶ Start a new page for each day and class. At the top of the page, write the name of the class, date, page number, and the topic of your notes.
- ▶ Use only one side of the paper and skip lines between ideas/topics. This will give you space if you want to add something later.

Be an active listener

When you're actively listening in class, you aren't just hearing the words. You are also thinking about and trying to understand the information being presented. Teachers often give verbal cues so you'll know what information they think is important. Listen for these cues: louder or slower speech, repeating information, and the use of phrases such as "the main point."



VIDEO

For more class success tips, watch this quick video!

How To

ACE YOUR TESTS

With the right test prep and test-taking strategies, you'll spend less time studying and you'll get better test grades.



TEST PREP TIPS

Create a study plan

Have all textbook reading done early and create a study plan that spreads out your studying.

Make flash cards

Write any information you need to remember on index cards. Take these with you and go over them whenever you have a few extra minutes (for example, when waiting for a ride).

Explain it to a mirror

You really know something if you can explain it in your own words. Stand in front of a mirror and "teach yourself" what you need to know.

Study class notes and review sheets

Because most test questions come from information that's been presented in class, your class notes are your best test prep resource. Highlight key words and important phrases in your notes.

If you've been given a handout or review sheet, know everything on it. Then use it to come up with questions that might be on the test.

Prepare mind and body

Get eight hours of sleep the night before the test and get up early enough to eat a good breakfast.



VIDEO

For more, watch this quick video!

How To

STAY MOTIVATED

We all get stuck sometimes. When you're feeling less than your best, it's important to keep a positive attitude and find ways to stay motivated.



HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Surround yourself with positive people

In life, we come across all kinds of people. Some are positive influences in our lives and some are not. Try to stay away from people who are negative or critical. Instead, choose to be around people who support and encourage you. These are the people who will help you achieve your goals and realize your dreams.

Believe in yourself

You have a greater chance of succeeding when you believe in yourself. Whether you're a student tackling a difficult subject, an athlete preparing for competition, or a musician getting ready for a performance, it's important that you recognize the talents and abilities you have, and believe that you can succeed!

Set goals

Goals give you focus and direction. They help you decide where you want to go and what you need to do. Set both short-term goals (*get a B on my biology test*) and long-term goals (*graduate from high school with a 3.0 GPA*).

Move with positive energy

Stand tall and walk with confidence and purpose. *If you act positive, you just may find that you feel more positive.*

How To

REACH OUT FOR HELP

There are many people in your life who want to see you succeed, but ultimately, your success is your responsibility. It's up to you to reach out for help when you need it.



TALK TO YOUR TEACHER

If you have questions, need advice, or are struggling in a class, talk to your teacher.

Teachers usually know if you're having trouble in their class, but they may or may not approach you to see what's going on, or to offer extra help. Asking for help is your responsibility.

Teachers are busy during the class period and usually don't have time to talk to students then. If you need any kind of help, talk to your teacher before or after class to schedule a time to meet—and tell them what you want to talk about. You may want to go over the results of a test, ask for help with an assignment, or inquire about earning extra credit.

If you are struggling and feel you need a tutor, ask your teacher for advice on how you can get some extra help. Perhaps there is a teacher or another student who can tutor you after school or during a study hall. The important thing is to not wait. Ask for help at the earliest sign you need it.

Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of maturity and a desire to succeed!

"You are never so strong that you don't need help."
Cesar Chavez

How To MANAGE YOUR TIME

We all have the same amount of time each day. How we use this time is time management. When you use your time well, you have time for the things you need to do *and* the things you want to do.



BE ORGANIZED

Use organization tools

Use a planner to keep track of assignments, tests, and appointments. Use a wall or phone calendar for events and project deadlines.

Make to-do lists

- ▶ Each day, make a list of all the things you need to do. Rate each item as an A (*must do*), B (*should do*), or C (*want to do today, but it can wait*).
- ▶ Take all of the As and rank them in order of importance (1, 2, 3...). Do the same with the Bs and Cs. Rewrite your list with the As at the top (in order of importance), followed by the Bs and Cs.
- ▶ Cross things off as they get done. At the end of each day, take the tasks that didn't get done and put them on the next day's to-do list.

Make a weekly schedule

Using an hour-by-hour schedule will help you organize your time after school. First, write in all appointments, practices, chores, and meal times. You will then be able to see when you have blocks of time for homework and studying—and when you have time for relaxation and social activities.

Week of _____	Weekly Schedule		
	Mon	Tue	Wed
6:00 am			
6:30 am			
7:00 am			
7:30 am			
8:00 am			
8:30 am			
9:00 am			
9:30 am			
10:00 am			

Top 10 Ways to Improve Your Grades

To help you zero in on how you can improve your grades, go through the list below and put a check mark by the things you should do.

- 1 Be more engaged in your classes.**
Being engaged in your classes pays off in lots of ways. When you ask and answer questions and participate in discussions, you learn more (which means you have less to learn on your own), your teachers see that you're trying, and the time goes a lot faster.
- 2 Improve your attendance.**
Attendance is the number one success factor. You can't succeed in your classes and get good grades if you're often a "no-show."
- 3 Complete homework assignments.**
When you do your homework, you get more out of your classes, do better on tests, and get higher grades.
- 4 Have a more positive attitude.**
Having a positive, can-do attitude can make all the difference. Use positive self-talk and believe in your ability to succeed.
- 5 Take better notes.**
Since most test items come from material that's been presented in class, it's important to have good class notes to study from. Take organized notes, and underline or highlight the most important information.



REASONS TO BE IN SCHOOL EVERY DAY

1. Better grades.

The better your attendance, the higher your grades.



2. Less stress. When you miss school, you have lots of assignments to make up. That's stressful.

3. You learn more. Learning a little every day in class is much better than having to learn everything you missed on your own.

4. More likely to graduate. Students who have poor attendance are less likely to graduate.



5. Time with friends. When you are at school, you can spend time with friends (and make new ones).

6. Good habits. You'll develop good habits for success—like showing up every day and being on time.

For more on the importance of attendance, watch this video!



VIDEO

10 Habits of Successful High Schoolers

Anyone can be successful with the right habits. Developing the following habits will help you get good grades, and have a great high school experience.



1 Have good attendance

You need to be in school unless you have a legitimate reason (like an illness) to be absent. *Attendance is the number one school success factor!*



2 Be organized

Use a planner to record assignments, tests, and activities. Make to-do lists and cross things off as you complete them.



3 Do all of your homework

When you do your homework, you get more out of your classes, perform better on tests, and get higher grades.



4 Participate in class

Pay attention, ask and answer questions, and participate in discussions. Keep a positive attitude, and ask for help when you need it.



5 Get involved

Participating in extracurricular activities is a great way to make friends, develop new skills, and have fun.

HOW TO BUILD AN IMPRESSIVE HIGH SCHOOL RECORD

Your high school record is your opportunity to show college admissions officers and future employers who you are, what you have learned, and what makes you unique.

Here are some tips for building a high school record you can be proud of.



TAKE THE RIGHT CLASSES

Choose courses that will help you develop your skills in your areas of interest, and if you plan to further your education, be sure to take the courses you need for college.

Most four-year colleges recommend that students take the following courses in high school.

- ▶ 4 years of English
- ▶ 3–4 years of math (including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II)
- ▶ 3–4 years of science
- ▶ 2–3 years of one foreign language
- ▶ 3 years of social studies
- ▶ 1 year of fine or performing arts

Competitive schools and programs consider the above to be the minimum requirements. They recommend that students challenge themselves by taking advanced, honors, and AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses whenever possible.

To learn more about what college admissions officers look for, watch this quick video.



VIDEO

Top
10

Ways to Overcome Test Anxiety

A little nervousness before a test is normal, but if you're overly anxious, it's hard to do your best. The good news? There are ways to overcome test anxiety.



1. Start studying early

Have all reading done early, spread your studying out, and give yourself enough time to prepare. Cramming the night before a test or exam only increases anxiety.

2. Be prepared

Study enough to feel confident you know the material. Being well prepared increases confidence and helps reduce test anxiety.

3. Visualize taking the test

The day before the test, visualize yourself confidently walking into the classroom, taking the test, and correctly answering the questions.

4. Use relaxation techniques

Before you begin a test, take a deep breath. Breathe in, count to four, and breathe out. Repeat. This will help you calm down and relax. *For more calming techniques, watch this short video.*



VIDEO

Top
10

Ways to Improve Mental Health

Maintaining your mental health is just as important as maintaining your physical health. Here are 10 ways to improve your mental health!

1. Get enough sleep.

The amount of sleep you get impacts your mood. Go to bed at a regular time each night and make sure you get at least eight hours of sleep.

2. Exercise.

Your body releases mood-improving chemicals when you exercise. Look for ways to integrate physical activity into your daily routine.

3. Open up to someone.

Talking about your feelings is a great way to process them. Talk to a friend or family member when you have a problem or something is bothering you.

4. Be mindful.

Mindfulness is being aware of the world around you and focusing on what you are experiencing. Throughout your day, remind yourself to be fully present, and to focus on the "now."

5. Deal with stress.

Stress can really take a toll on your mental health. To feel more empowered and less overwhelmed, make a list of the things that stress you out and come up with a plan for dealing with them.

Feeling Overwhelmed?

If so, you're
not alone.
We all feel
overwhelmed
at times.



When you're feeling overwhelmed, it's important to have strategies that help you cope and feel more on top of things. Here are some tips that might help.

Take deep breaths. When you're feeling stressed out or overwhelmed, stop, breathe in deeply, count to four, and exhale. Do this for two minutes.

Take a time out. Do something that has nothing to do with school, work, or any of your obligations—read a book, listen to music, go for a walk, take a hot bath.

Learn to say no. Don't be afraid to turn down requests and say no to invitations.

Look at all you're doing. You may have taken on more than you can handle. If this is the case, try to simplify your life. Look for activities or obligations you can eliminate, shorten, or postpone. Do not sacrifice sleep or exercise to get everything done.

74% of people report feeling overwhelmed at times.

Also feeling stressed out? For tips on dealing with stress, watch this video.



VIDEO

10 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS



These 10 tips will help you manage stress, find your calm, and get more enjoyment out of life.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR STRESSORS. Make a list of the things that are stressing you out and determine how each can be dealt with. Having a plan will help you feel less overwhelmed and more empowered.

2. TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF. Do something that has made you feel calm and relaxed in the past. Listen to music, go for a walk, or spend time in nature.

3. IF IT'S BEYOND YOUR CONTROL, LET IT GO. If you're stressed about things you can't change, let those worries go completely.

4. RELAX. Close your eyes and imagine a relaxing scene. Breathe in slowly and slowly exhale. Repeat.

5. EAT HEALTHY. Having a healthy diet improves your mood, motivation, and mental health.

6. GET ENOUGH SLEEP. The amount of sleep you get affects your mood and your ability to tackle problems. Never sacrifice sleep to get everything done.

ANXIETY

Information and Coping Tips

Occasional anxiety is a part of life—it's a natural reaction to events or situations that are frightening or stressful.

The start of a new school year, waiting to hear if you passed the test, made the team, or got the job—all of these things can make us feel nervous and anxious.

When we feel anxious, our bodies often react by releasing adrenaline, which can increase our heart rate and breathing. For most people, the feelings of anxiety go away when the situation that caused it is over, or the problem is resolved.

OVERLY ANXIOUS?

Some people suffer from anxiety that's persistent. Their anxiety affects their well-being and interferes with their day-to-day lives. These people often:

- ▶ worry excessively and become fearful.
- ▶ have difficulty sleeping and concentrating.
- ▶ feel irritable, restless, and on edge.

If this sounds like you, talk to a counselor or doctor. They can help you explore ways to lessen your anxiety.

WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK?

A panic attack is a sudden feeling of severe fear and distress. A person who is having a panic attack may have chest pains, nausea, sweating, shaking—and feel like something is physically wrong.

If you experience a panic attack, take deep breaths and get to a safe place until it passes.

Feeling Lonely?

Everyone feels lonely sometimes. It's normal. But feeling lonely is no fun, particularly when it lasts for an extended period of time. When that happens, know that there are ways to feel better.



Common Reasons People Feel Lonely

- ▶ You're in an unfamiliar situation—living in a new city, going to a new school, in a new job.
- ▶ You feel different, like no one shares your interests, values, or personality.
- ▶ You feel like no one has time for you, whether it's family or friends.
- ▶ There is, or was, someone important in your life who is no longer there.
- ▶ You don't have the kinds of strong relationships you would like to have, like a best friend or a romantic relationship.

Maybe you're feeling lonely for one of these reasons, maybe it's something else, or maybe you don't know why you feel lonely, you just do.

Know that dealing with loneliness is temporary, and it's something that everyone goes through at some point. Also know that there are things you can do to change how you're feeling.

Keep reading to learn how you can feel more connected and less alone.

For ways to improve your mental health, watch this quick video.



VIDEO

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

While social media can add a lot to your life, it can also have some negative effects on your mental health. Here are some examples.

EDITED LIVES

Everyone puts their best selves on social media. Sometimes, this can make you feel like everyone's life is more exciting and fun than yours. Just remember that on social media, you're only seeing selected snippets of someone's life.

SOCIAL MEDIA OBSESSION

Being obsessed with social media can make you anxious and angry when you can't use it. Social media can also take up so much of your time that your schoolwork and relationships suffer. If you are overly involved with social media, ask yourself if it is making your life better or worse.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is taking a huge toll on the mental health of so many young people today. If you are being bullied online, know that it's not your fault. Stay strong, tell someone, and ask for help. If you are someone who has been mean to others online, try to put yourself in their shoes. Think about what you're doing, and about the pain you're causing.

CALMING TECHNIQUES

Tips for Staying Calm and Relaxed

We all feel stressed, anxious, or angry at times. When you feel this way, it's important to have a toolbox of calming techniques to help you relax. Here are some quick and easy calming techniques.



Breathe

Breathing is the best way to feel calmer. Take a deep breath, count to four, and slowly exhale. Repeat.



Relax your body

Drop your shoulders, then flex and release all the muscles in your body, from top to bottom.



Change your thoughts

To help refocus your thoughts, visualize a bright red stop sign, say STOP, and visualize something positive.



Visualize calm

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a peaceful setting, feeling calm, relaxed, and stress-free.



Try guided meditations

With guided meditation, a voice helps you relax your body and focus your thoughts. Guided meditations are available on Spotify, and on apps like Meditation Studio and Calm.

Top 10 Ways to Develop a Growth Mindset



With a growth mindset you believe that there's no limit to what you can accomplish. *Having a growth mindset will help you achieve your goals and reach your potential!*

1. Use positive self-talk

Be kind to yourself. If the voice in your head is negative or critical, change the message. Use self-talk that's positive and encouraging.

2. Have a can-do attitude

Fear of failure holds so many people back in life. When you believe that you can do whatever you set your mind to, you open yourself up to exciting new experiences and growth.

3. Use the power of yet

When you feel frustrated because something isn't going well, adding the word *yet* reminds you to be patient and keep at it. *"I don't know how to do that...yet."*

4. Develop your interests and skills

Whether it's playing a sport or knitting a sweater, find out what brings you joy and spend time doing it. As you develop your skills and interests, you'll become a more accomplished, confident, and interesting person.

DECISIONS & CONSEQUENCES

You make decisions every day: what clothes to wear, what music to listen to, what to eat. You probably don't put a lot of thought into most of your decisions because they don't seem very important.

However, some decisions that are made without much thought are important, and they can impact your life for a long time—possibly forever. That's why you need to stop and think before you act.

With all that teens have to deal with today, it can be hard to always make the right choice or decision. But often, taking just a few seconds to consider what you're about to do can keep you from doing something you will regret.

When you're in a situation that requires you to make a fast decision, ask yourself:

1. Is this the right thing to do?
2. Is this a safe thing to do?
3. Will I feel good about myself if I do this?

If the answer to any of these questions is *no*, then more than likely, what you are about to do will have negative consequences for you and others. *It's time to take a step back and reconsider.*



For more, watch this quick video!

VIDEO

Top 10

Character Traits for Success



Having good character means that you have the traits people generally expect to see in a “good” person. The following 10 positive character traits will help you succeed in school, in a career, and in life.

1. **Honesty:** being truthful in your actions, communication, and dealings with others
2. **Integrity:** sticking to your values, even when it's difficult
3. **Kindness:** demonstrating empathy and concern for the well-being of others, and being willing to offer help and support
4. **Respect:** treating others with dignity, regardless of their background or beliefs
5. **Responsibility:** following through on your commitments, working hard, and being accountable for everything you say and do
6. **Fairness:** treating others equitably, and being impartial and just in decision-making
7. **Patience:** staying calm and understanding in challenging or difficult situations
8. **Tolerance:** respecting diverse opinions and beliefs, even when they differ from your own
9. **Generosity:** being willing to share your time, resources, and support with others
10. **Citizenship:** working to make the world a better place for everyone

Bullying

Info,
Facts,
& Tips

Bullying is aggressive behavior that's harmful, intentional, and repeated. Bullying is a problem in many schools, and it's the responsibility of everyone to work together to make their school bully-free. Here's what you need to know.

Types of bullying

Physical – using physical force to harm others

- ▶ pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking
- ▶ stealing or damaging someone's property
- ▶ hazing a member of a team or group

Verbal – using words to hurt others

- ▶ making intimidating or threatening remarks
- ▶ taunting, insulting, or embarrassing others

Social – hurting another's social standing

- ▶ spreading rumors, lies, or gossip
- ▶ purposely harming another person's self-esteem or reputation
- ▶ excluding someone from a group

Cyberbullying – using technology to harm others

- ▶ creating hurtful or embarrassing posts or pictures
- ▶ sending rude or threatening texts or DMs

Teasing vs. bullying

Teasing happens between people who generally like each other. It's also more playful. In bullying situations, you see the following:

1. There is a power imbalance.
2. It occurs repeatedly.
3. There is an intention to do harm.

Stand Up to Bullying

Cyberbullying

Students today use all sorts of devices to communicate with their friends. But when students use their phone, tablet, or computer to harass, threaten, or embarrass others, it's cyberbullying—and it's not okay.

If you are the target of a cyberbully, here are some things you can do.

- ▶ Immediately block or delete the cyberbully's number, profile, or email address.
- ▶ Don't respond or retaliate. Ignore it. Cyberbullies who don't get a reaction often get bored and quit.
- ▶ Tell an adult you trust. Also tell your friends. Don't let anyone bully you into silence!
- ▶ Save, print, or screenshot all messages or posts. Keep a record of where it's coming from and when it happens.

Most importantly, don't let a cyberbully get you down. Do things with your family and friends, and stay busy with activities you enjoy. Focus on the positive people and things in your life!



Healthy Relationships

Having positive relationships with others is tremendously important to our health and well-being. Relationships can make a huge difference in the quality of our day-to-day lives.

Here are some tips for making sure your relationships are happy and healthy—and making your life better.

Healthy Friendships

Friends are some of the most important people in our lives. They support us, make life more fun, and help us grow.

So how do you know if someone is a good fit for you as a friend? Ask yourself these questions.

- ▶ Do we share similar interests?
- ▶ Do we laugh and have fun together?
- ▶ Do we agree on what's right and wrong?
- ▶ Do we respect and trust each other?
- ▶ Can I be my true self around this person?

Of course, friendships aren't easy and fun all the time. Disagreements happen. But if a friend...

- ▶ tells you to do things you don't want to do
- ▶ is mean to you
- ▶ brings a lot of drama into your life
- ▶ makes you feel bad about yourself
- ▶ talks about you behind your back

...then it's probably time to rethink that friendship.

Friends who consistently upset you or make you feel bad are not worthy of your friendship.

What Are Soft Skills?



Soft skills are a combination of social skills and character traits that are essential for success in school, in a career, and in life.

Here are a few examples of important soft skills and how you can work on developing them.

Communication Good communication goes two ways. Being able to express yourself is important, but so is being able to listen.

Speak clearly. Be aware of your speech habits. Do you speak too fast or too slowly? Too loudly or too softly? Also be aware of your tone of voice.

Be a good listener. Make eye contact and ask questions. Focus on what the other person is saying, not just on what you want to say next.

Pay attention to your nonverbal cues. Make sure your body language shows that you are engaged and interested.

Problem-solving Your overall well-being and the way others see you are both influenced by the way you tackle life's difficulties.

Define the outcome you want. When you have a problem, visualize an outcome that's realistic and acceptable to you. Then, come up with steps that will help you achieve that outcome.

Don't let obstacles deter you. Focus on the outcome you want, and on what you can do to achieve that outcome.

For more problem-solving tips, watch this short video.



VIDEO

Choosing the Right Classes



To succeed in school, you need to be in the right classes. To help ensure that you put together the best course schedule for your academic and career goals, consider the following.

Know your options

Learn all you can about the programs and courses available at your school and in your district. Most high schools offer the following:

- ▶ career and technology programs for the students who like a more "hands-on" approach to learning or want to explore a career.
- ▶ programs that allow students to take college courses in high school (dual-enrollment).
- ▶ advanced, honors, and AP classes for students who excel in specific subjects.
- ▶ assistance for students who need extra help.

If you want to go to college

Four-year colleges recommend that students take the following college prep courses in high school:

- ▶ 4 years of English
- ▶ 3 years of science
- ▶ 3–4 years of math
- ▶ 3 years of social studies
- ▶ 2–3 years of one world language
- ▶ 1 year of fine or performing arts

Competitive schools and programs consider these courses to be the minimum requirements. They recommend that students challenge themselves by taking advanced courses whenever possible.

Top
10

Reasons to See Your Counselor

Here are 10 things your counselor can help you with.

1. Your classes

School counselors are experts on what classes are the best fit for you and your goals. If you have questions about which classes to take in the future, or if you think you're in the wrong class now, talk to your counselor.

2. Study tips

If you would like to be more successful in your classes, your counselor can offer helpful suggestions on note taking, managing your time, getting organized, overcoming test anxiety, and more.

3. Planning your future

Your counselor can give you information on different types of careers, help you decide what type of career might be a good fit for you, and help you figure out how you can best prepare for your career.

4. Dealing with stress

Between school, activities, work, sports, and friends, many students today are feeling overwhelmed and stressed out. If this sounds like you, ask your counselor for some suggestions on how you can reduce your stress.

5. College information

If you have questions about college (choosing a college, taking the ACT or SAT, applying to college, paying for college), your counselor can provide you with answers and advice.

Why Go to College?



You probably know that while going to college is important, it takes a lot of hard work to get there. From time to time, you may find yourself wondering, "Is it really worth it?" The short answer is...yes!

Here are some reasons why going to college is a goal that is definitely worth working toward.



More career opportunities

A college education can open doors and prepare you for a career that is personally satisfying, financially rewarding, and a perfect match for your interests and values. *With a college degree, the sky is the limit!*



New experiences

Going to college will give you the opportunity to study a variety of subjects, try new things, expand your skills, and meet new people. Most importantly, college gives you the opportunity to become the person you aspire to be.



More money

Four-year college graduates earn almost twice as much as high school graduates. That comes out to \$1,000,000 or more over a lifetime.

Having a higher income provides financial stability and more money for the things that are important to you, like hobbies, travel, and entertainment.

College Timeline



Not sure what you need to do each year to plan and prepare for college? This guide will help you stay on track and achieve your college goals!

9th Grade

Work hard in your classes. Your freshman grades are important. They will be used to calculate your grade point average—and all of your freshman courses and grades will be on your transcript (an official copy of your high school record).

Make a four-year high school plan. Most colleges recommend that students take the following courses in high school:

- 4 years of English
- 3–4 years of math (Algebra I & II, Geometry)
- 3–4 years of science
- 2–3 years of the same world language
- 3 years of social studies
- 1 year of fine or performing arts

10th Grade

Work hard to get good grades. The better your grades, the more college options you will have. *Grades are the first thing colleges look at when determining whether to accept an applicant.*

Develop your interests and be involved. Colleges are looking for students who are active and involved in their school and community.

Regularly meet with your counselor to discuss your college plans and get your questions answered.

THE ACT

Information & Tips

While many four-year colleges require ACT or SAT scores as part of the application process, some colleges now have test-optional policies. Unless you are certain you will not need to submit test scores, plan to take the ACT and/or SAT.

ABOUT THE TEST

The ACT consists of four multiple-choice tests: English, Reading, Math, and Science. There is also an optional Writing Test. The ACT is given in September, October, December, February, April, June, and July.

WHEN TO TAKE THE ACT

You should take the ACT in the spring of your junior year. If you want to improve your scores, you then have time to retake the ACT in the summer or fall.

HOW TO REGISTER

To register for the ACT, go to act.org. Registration deadlines are about six weeks before the test dates. After you're registered, you'll receive instructions and a ticket to get into the test.

HOW THE ACT IS SCORED

Students receive a score (1–36) for each of the four sections, along with a composite score (an average of the four section scores).

*Questions?
Visit act.org or see your counselor.*



VIDEO

To review, watch this quick video!

THE SAT

Information & Tips

While some four-year colleges require SAT or ACT scores as part of the application process, many colleges now have test-optional policies. Unless you are certain you will not need to submit test scores, plan to take the SAT and/or ACT.

ABOUT THE TEST

The SAT consists of three main sections: 1) Reading, 2) Writing and Language, and 3) Math. The SAT is given in August, October, November, December, March, May, and June.

WHEN TO TAKE THE SAT

You should take the SAT in the spring of your junior year. If you want to improve your scores, you then have time to retake the SAT in the fall of your senior year.

HOW TO REGISTER

To register for the SAT, go to collegeboard.org. Registration deadlines are about five weeks before the test dates. Once you're registered, you'll receive instructions and an admission ticket.

HOW THE SAT IS SCORED

Students receive a total score (400–1600) and two section scores: one for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (200–800) and one for Math (200–800).



VIDEO

To review, watch this quick video!

How to Pay for College



College can be expensive, but there are things you can do to make it more affordable. If you need help paying for college, learn about financial aid, fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and explore ways to cut college costs.

Learn about financial aid

Financial aid comes in four forms: grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. Grants and scholarships are considered "gift help" because they represent money that is given to students. Work-study and loans are considered "self-help." They provide money that must either be earned or repaid.

To learn more about financial aid, watch this short video.



VIDEO

Apply for financial aid

To get money to help you pay for college, do the following your senior year.

1. Complete college applications.

Complete admission applications in the fall of your senior year. Be aware of deadlines.

2. Complete the FAFSA.

In order to receive any government aid, you must complete a FAFSA. When you complete a FAFSA you automatically apply for a Pell Grant (free money). For information, visit fafsa.gov.

3. Apply for scholarships.

Search for scholarships online at fastweb.com, scholarships.com, and studentaid.gov.

FAFSA

Need Money for College?
Complete the FAFSA!

FAFSA.GOV



All college bound students and their parents (who are referred to as "contributors") should fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The FAFSA is available October 1.
Apply early for the best chance
of receiving the aid you need!



You can fill out the FAFSA on
a computer or mobile device.

Filling out the FAFSA is free.
Never pay a company or service
to process your FAFSA.



By completing the FAFSA, you
automatically apply for a Pell
Grant (free money).

Don't let the FAFSA intimidate
you, and don't assume that you
won't be eligible for any aid.



VIDEO

For information on how to get money
for college, watch this video on financial aid.

High School Career Planning

Education Options

Most careers require education or training beyond a general high school education. In many cases, a career choice will point to a specific education option. For example, someone who wants to be a lawyer needs to go to a four-year college.



Students who haven't chosen a career often know what they want to do (e.g., go to college, join the military). They then consider the careers that option enables them to pursue.

Consider These Five Options

Read about each of these education options
and think about which sound best to you.

1. Community and Technical Colleges

These colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less. Students can also start at a community or technical college and then transfer to a four-year college after a year or two.

2. Four-Year Colleges

A four-year college education can open doors and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. Students who want to go to a four-year college should take college prep courses in high school.

High School Career Planning

Career Clusters

Career Clusters are groups of careers with similar features. Exploring the 16 Career Clusters will help you figure out which career areas you want to explore further.



Which is a good fit for you?

Below are the 16 Career Clusters, along with a brief description of the kind of work people do in each. Put a ✓ by any Career Cluster you might be interested in.

- Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources:** farm, fish, and work to improve the environment
- Architecture & Construction:** design, build, and maintain homes and structures
- Arts, A/V Tech & Communication:** design, create, perform, and produce multimedia content
- Business Management & Administration:** plan, oversee, and organize a business
- Education & Training:** teach in schools, libraries, museums, and businesses
- Finance:** manage and work with money
- Government & Public Administration:** make laws and provide public services
- Health Science:** work in the healthcare field treating people and animals

Self Assessment

To be successful in a career, you need to do something you enjoy and are good at. It should also be something that aligns with your values (what's important to you).



This quick self assessment will help you examine your interests, abilities, and values, and choose a career that will be a good match for you.

Consider Your Interests

1. What are your two favorite school subjects?

2. Name two hobbies or activities you enjoy.

3. Name one activity you become so involved in that you lose track of time.

4. When and where are you the happiest?

Using AI

Dos and Don'ts for Students

AI (artificial intelligence) can be a valuable tool for learning. However, as with any technology, there are certain dos and don'ts that students should be aware of. The following tips will help ensure that you use AI ethically and responsibly.

- Do** Use AI for educational purposes.
You can ask AI questions and get detailed answers and explanations. You can also use AI to generate ideas for a paper or project, or to help you solve a tough math problem.
- Do** Be critical of AI-generated content.
When using AI-generated content, review the results carefully and cross-reference the information with other reputable sources to ensure accuracy.
- Do** Protect your personal information.
Be cautious when providing personal data to AI applications. Only share information that's necessary for educational purposes.
- Do** Ask questions and seek help.
If you don't understand how an AI system works or have concerns about its usage, don't hesitate to ask your teachers or school administrators for clarification and guidance.

VAPING

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

"Vaping" is the popular term used to describe the use of e-cigarettes or nicotine vaporizers. You might know people who vape, or you may have even tried it yourself. Regardless of your experience with vaping, it's important that you learn the facts about vaping—and why it's a bad idea.

THE FACTS

- ▶ According to a recent survey, 63% of 15-24 year olds who use vapes either didn't know that vapes contain nicotine, or they didn't realize how much nicotine vapes actually contain. *A single vape pod can contain as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes.*
- ▶ Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as tobacco cigarettes. Studies have also shown that teens who vape are four times more likely to start smoking tobacco cigarettes.
- ▶ Nicotine use during adolescence (regardless of the method) has been shown to impact brain development. In addition to nicotine, e-cigarettes often contain a number of other potentially harmful ingredients.
- ▶ The long term health effects of vaping are still unknown.
- ▶ Vaping is a costly nicotine addiction. Between starter kits and refills, vape users spend an average of \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year.



ALCOHOL

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Simply put, underaged drinking is a dangerous practice with a number of risks. Here, you'll learn the facts and the risks, and why it's a good idea to say no to drinking.

THE FACTS

- ▶ Every year there are more than 100,000 alcohol-related emergency room visits by young people between the age of 12 and 21.
- ▶ Drunk driving kills 10,000 people each year.
- ▶ Underaged drinking is illegal, and offenders often face legal consequences (e.g., arrest, fines). If found drinking and driving, the consequences can be very serious.

THE RISKS

Underaged drinking increases the risk of:

- ▶ physical and/or sexual assault
- ▶ the disruption of brain development
- ▶ school absences and lower grades
- ▶ accidental injury
- ▶ legal problems
- ▶ long term health risks, including high blood pressure, stroke, liver and heart disease

BINGE DRINKING

90% of underaged drinkers engage in binge drinking (consuming four or more drinks in about two hours). *Binge drinking makes the risks of consuming alcohol even more dangerous.*

