

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

READ TO LEARN

To do well in your classes, you must be able to understand and remember the information you read.



To comprehend and retain more of what you read, follow these three steps:

- 1) SURVEY
- 2) READ
- 3) REVIEW

SURVEY

Before you begin reading an assignment, take a few minutes to survey it. This will give you a quick overview of what you'll be reading.

To survey an assignment, do the following:

- ▶ Read the section headings and everything in **bold** and *italic* print.
- ▶ Look at the pictures, graphs, and charts.
- ▶ Read the introduction, summary, and review questions.

READ

To improve your comprehension, use all the learning tools the author provides, and read with a purpose.

Use learning tools. Textbook authors provide the following learning tools to make it easier for you to understand the material they're presenting: headings, subtitles, **bold** and *italic* print, pictures and graphs, chapter summaries, vocabulary lists, review questions.

Read with a purpose. To help you stay focused, turn each section heading into a question. Keep your question in mind as you read. When you're finished, see if you can answer it.



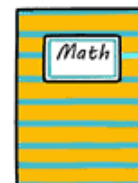
VIDEO

For more study tips, watch this video!

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

SUCCEED IN CLASS

Showing up for class isn't enough. To succeed in your classes, you need to be engaged and involved.

When you're engaged, you are more likely to learn and remember what's being taught, the time goes faster, and you have a lot less to learn on your own.



CLASS SUCCESS TIPS

Be prepared

When you come to class, have all of your homework done, and bring everything you'll need with you. Be alert, well-rested, and ready to learn.

Eliminate distractions

Put away anything that isn't directly related to what you are doing in that class.

Have a positive attitude

Walk into each class with a positive attitude and be determined to learn as much as you can. Remember, the more you learn in class, the less you need to learn on your own.

Take good notes

Most test questions come from information that's been presented in class. It is, therefore, important to have notes that are organized, complete, and neat to study from.

Taking notes also helps you pay attention and stay focused—when you're taking notes, you don't have time to think about or do anything else. *For tips on how to take good notes, watch this short video.*



VIDEO

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.

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

Overcoming Procrastination

Do you have a hard time getting started on your schoolwork or chores? The tendency to procrastinate is a common challenge for many students. Here are some effective strategies to help you overcome procrastination.

Understand the root cause

Try to identify the underlying reasons for your procrastination. It could be fear of failure, lack of interest, feeling overwhelmed, or the desire to always be perfect. Understanding why you procrastinate can help you make a plan to address it.

Develop routines

Routines can help you get things done in a timely manner. For example, getting into the routine of always doing your homework right after dinner could help you get your homework done early—and have time for other things.

Use time-management techniques

Employ time-management methods like the Pomodoro Technique (work for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break) or the “2-minute rule” (if a task will take less than 2 minutes, do it immediately).

To learn more about time-management techniques, check out this short video.



VIDEO

Top 10 9th Grade Success Tips

Want to have a great ninth grade year? These 10 tips are a good place to start!

1. Work hard in your classes.

Now that you're a freshman, everything "counts." Your freshman grades will be used to calculate your grade point average—and all of your courses, grades, and credits will be on your transcript (an official copy of your high school record).

2. Do all your homework.

Homework is a big part of your grade, and doing your homework helps you stay on track in your classes. Make it a habit to get all of your homework done before you watch TV, use your electronics, or hang out with your friends.

3. Organize your papers.

Whether you use folders, binders, or notebooks, the important thing is that you have a specific place for all of your papers (class notes, handouts, homework, returned tests).

4. Use a planner.

A planner helps keep you organized and on top of things. Use it to record assignments, tests, appointments, activities, and anything else you need to remember.

Top 10 10th Grade Success Tips

Want to have a great tenth grade year? These 10 tips are a good place to start!

1. Learn from last year.

10th grade is about building on the successes you had in the 9th grade, and fixing the mistakes you made. The mistakes you made last year can help you grow—but only if you take the time to stop, think, and learn from them.

2. Step it up.

To succeed in school and in life, you need a strong work ethic—and now is the time for you to develop and improve your work ethic. Whether it's a school assignment or a chore at home, do what needs to be done to the best of your ability.

3. Up your skills.

Figure out which of your skills need work and make an effort to improve them. Whether you need to be more organized or become a better writer, choose two or three skills to improve this year.

4. Make a high school plan.

Taking the right courses in high school is very important. Talk to your counselor to make sure you're taking the courses you need to achieve your career and/or college goals.

Top 10 11th Grade Success Tips

Want to have a great junior year?
These 10 tips are a good place to start!

1. Make sure you're on track.

Graduation is right around the corner! Make sure you're on track to graduate and that you're taking the courses you need to achieve your career and/or college goals. If you have any questions, see your counselor.

2. Build your interpersonal skills.

Practice talking to different kinds of people in a confident and professional manner. Soon you'll be communicating with college admissions reps, employers, co-workers, and/or professors. You want to be able to present yourself well.

3. Improve your academic skills.

Experiment with new study techniques and make an effort to improve your concentration. You'll be better prepared for future academic challenges—and you'll get better grades!

4. Develop your computer skills.

Familiarize yourself with the popular search engines, web browsers, **Microsoft Office**, and **Google Drive**. Regardless of what you do in the future, you will be using computers.

Top 10 12th Grade Success Tips

Want to have a great senior year?
These 10 tips are a good place to start!

1. Avoid "senioritis."

Senioritis means losing momentum and slacking off your last year of high school. Don't stop working too soon! Keep being the same hard-working, goal-oriented, motivated person that got you this far.

2. Stay organized.

Use a planner every day to make sure you don't forget anything—homework assignments, appointments, practices, work schedules, application deadlines, etc. Make a To-Do list each day and prioritize your tasks.

3. Think about your future.

If you aren't sure what you're going to do after high school, now is the time to seriously consider your career and education options. Talk to your parents and your counselor. Also, do some online research at bigfuture.collegeboard.org.

4. Meet with your counselor.

See your counselor to make sure you're on track to graduate—and that you're doing what you need to do to achieve your career and/or college goals.

HOW TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS



Accomplishing your goals involves careful planning, dedication, and consistency. Here are steps and strategies that are sure to help you achieve yours.

SET CLEAR, SPECIFIC GOALS

Make sure your goals are precise and measurable. Clearly define what you want to achieve, why it's important, and when you want to achieve it.

CREATE A PLAN

Break down your goals into smaller, manageable tasks or milestones. Develop a step-by-step plan to reach each milestone, including timelines and deadlines.

STAY ORGANIZED

Use tools like planners, calendars, to-do lists, and/or project management apps to organize your tasks and your schedule. Keep track of your progress and adjust your plan as needed.

DEVELOP A ROUTINE

Establish a daily or weekly routine that includes dedicated time for working towards your goals. Consistency in pursuit of your goals will help build momentum and progress.

STAY COMMITTED AND PERSISTENT

Stay dedicated to your goals, even when facing challenges or setbacks. Adapt your approach to overcome obstacles, and don't get discouraged when things don't go according to plan.

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.



VIDEO

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

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.

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

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.



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.

Friendship Problems

What You Can Do

Friendships aren't always easy and fun. In fact, even best friends can go through tough times. Do you know what to do when you and a friend aren't getting along? Friendship problems are a part of life, but there are ways to overcome them.

Shifting friendships

As people grow and change, friendships often shift. This is normal and it's OK. Students develop new interests, join different activities, and make friends with new classmates. Friendship shifts can also happen for no reason at all.

What can you do? If you feel a friendship shifting, and it's a friendship you want to keep, you can try the following:

- ▶ Talk to your friend and let them know that their friendship is important to you. They may not realize that they have been leaving you out or hurting your feelings.
- ▶ If your friend has a new interest or activity, give it a try. You might find that you enjoy it, too—and it will be something else you'll have in common.
- ▶ Let the friendship go. If a friendship is no longer making you happy or seems like too much work, it may be time to move on.

To have good friends, you need to be a good friend! Good friends are trustworthy, loyal, willing to help in a time of need, and ready to listen when a friend has a problem. Regularly check in with yourself to make sure you are being the best friend you can be.

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.

Coping with Cyberbullying

Being harassed online can affect your physical and mental health, and it can make life very difficult. Here's what you need to know about cyberbullying, along with some tips on what to do.



Students today use all sorts of devices to communicate with each other. And while electronic communication is fun and convenient, it's also easy to misuse.

When students use their phone, tablet, or computer to harass, threaten, or embarrass another person, it's cyberbullying.

Here's why cyberbullying is especially difficult to deal with.

Anonymity: Because cyberbullies can hide their identity, they are often braver and more daring.

Convenience: Cyberbullying can be done 24/7, using any device from any location.

Distance: Cyberbullies often do not see the reactions of their targets, making them less likely to understand the pain they're causing or feel badly about what they've done.

Most cyberbullying takes place outside of school and "under the radar" of adults. This makes it more important than ever for students to speak up and take a stand against cyberbullying.

5 Ways to Prepare for a Career



Most careers require education or training beyond high school. Some careers require two or four years of college; others require only one year of training or education. In many cases, your career choice will determine which education option is most appropriate for you.

The following are post-high school education options for you to consider. Read about each of these options and think about which one might be best for you.

- ▶ Two-Year College
- ▶ Career/Trade School
- ▶ Four-Year College
- ▶ Apprenticeship
- ▶ The Military

Two-Year College

Two-year colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less. Students completing short-term programs receive certificates or diplomas. Students who complete a two-year program earn an associate degree.

Students who aren't ready to attend a four-year college can start at a two-year college, and then transfer after a year or two. Because they are less expensive, many students start at a two-year college in order to save money.

Two year colleges are an increasingly popular education option. For more information, watch this short video.



VIDEO

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!

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.

NEED MONEY

TO PAY FOR COLLEGE?

College can be expensive, but there are lots of things you can do to make college affordable. *If you need help paying for college, here's what you should do.*

LEARN ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

Several types of financial aid are available for students whose families cannot afford to pay for college. These include:

- ▶ **Grants** – money given, usually because of financial need (grants don't need to be paid back)
- ▶ **Scholarships** – money awarded for academic achievement or an outstanding talent or skill
- ▶ **Work-Study** – money earned at a part-time job
- ▶ **Loans** – borrowed money that must be repaid

Financial aid is usually awarded on the basis of **financial need**. (Scholarships are the exception.)

Financial need is the difference between the cost of attending a college (tuition, fees, books, room and board) and the amount a family can afford to pay.

For example, if a family can afford \$7,000 and the cost of attending a college is \$22,000, the student has a financial need of \$15,000.

If you need money to help pay for college, complete the college's financial aid application and the FAFSA. If these applications show that you have a financial need, the college will put together a financial aid package for you. Do not just assume you won't be eligible for aid!



Career Planning



It's never too early to begin planning and preparing for a career—and for your future. Here are some ways that you can start planning and preparing for a career now.

Think about your interests and abilities

Consider your interests and abilities when exploring careers. This will help ensure that you spend your life doing something you love and are good at.

- ▶ What are your favorite school subjects?
- ▶ What activities/hobbies do you enjoy?
- ▶ What skills or talents do you have?
- ▶ Which subjects do you do the best in?
- ▶ Is there anything you feel passionate about?
- ▶ What careers fields sound interesting to you?

Consider what's important to you

It's important to like what you do—but it's also important to choose a career that fits your lifestyle and personality. Here are a few examples of what might be important to you in a career.

- ▶ helping people
- ▶ high income
- ▶ adventure
- ▶ challenge
- ▶ job security
- ▶ physical activity
- ▶ making a difference
- ▶ travel
- ▶ working outside
- ▶ creative work
- ▶ plenty of time off
- ▶ regular hours
- ▶ being in charge
- ▶ independence

Careers in Math & Science

Do you have an interest in science and/or math? Thinking about the subjects that interest you the most in school can point you in the direction of careers that might be right for you.



Studying math can lead to a career as a math teacher, mathematician, or statistician. However, most people use their math and problem-solving skills to succeed in math-related career fields, such as business, computer science, and engineering.

Think about a career in math if...

- ▶ you do well in advanced math courses.
- ▶ you enjoy solving problems and like mathematical challenges.
- ▶ you are good at analyzing facts and figures.
- ▶ you enjoy working with money.
- ▶ you find statistics interesting.

Here are just some of the careers that require advanced math skills.

Accountant	Mechanical engineer
Automotive technician	Mortgage broker
Aviation mechanic	Plumber
Computer programmer	Realtor
Database administrator	Software developer
Electrical engineer	Stockbroker
IT systems manager	Surveyor

Careers in English & the Arts

Do you have an interest in English or the arts? Thinking about the subjects that interest you the most in school can point you in the direction of careers that might be right for you.



Studying English in college will help develop your critical thinking and communication skills. Many top companies hire English majors specifically for these skills.

Consider a career in English if...

- ▶ you like reading fiction and nonfiction.
- ▶ you regularly write in a journal.
- ▶ you enjoy doing crossword puzzles and playing word games.
- ▶ you prefer working with and talking to people.
- ▶ you like being creative.
- ▶ you write essays, poetry, and short stories.

Here are a few popular careers in English.

Actor/actress	Journalist/reporter
Author	Lawyer
Columnist	Librarian
Communications specialist	Paralegal
Court reporter	Public relations specialist
Customer service rep	Radio/TV announcer
English teacher	Sports writer

Careers in Social Studies & World Languages

Do you have an interest in social studies or world languages? Thinking about the subjects that interest you the most in school can point you in the direction of careers that might be right for you.



Studying social studies helps us understand who we are. Social studies courses look at how people lived and interacted in the past, and how we live and interact today. It provides a solid background for a number of career fields.

Think about a career in social studies if...

- ▶ you're interested in helping others.
- ▶ you have an interest in government.
- ▶ you spend time thinking about how you can make the world a better place.
- ▶ you make time to watch and/or read the news.
- ▶ you enjoy discussing and debating ideas.

Social studies provides a solid background for a number of careers. Below are just a few.

Attorney	Park ranger
Cartographer	Police officer
Conservationist	Politician
Criminologist	Public health worker
Customs agent	Social worker
Economist	Stockbroker
Family counselor	Tour guide

Growth vs. Fixed Mindset



Sometimes your successes, failures, talents, and shortcomings are defined by how you look at them—and by the mindset you have.

A fixed mindset is the belief that you either are or aren't good at something. A growth mindset, on the other hand, means you believe that with effort, you can develop and improve your skills and abilities. Here are some examples.

Fixed mindset	Growth mindset
If you aren't good at something right away, you probably just don't have a "knack" for it.	Anyone can be good at something as long as they practice and work hard at it.
It's better to stick with what you know so you don't fail.	Stepping out of your comfort zone helps you learn and grow.
Failure is something to fear.	Failure is an opportunity to learn.

Ways to Build a Growth Mindset

- ▶ Turn off the fixed mindset voice that tells you you're going to fail.
- ▶ If something doesn't turn out the way you want, instead of getting frustrated or giving up, think about how you can do it differently.
- ▶ Know the power of the word yet.
I don't understand it...yet.
I don't know how to do that...yet.
I'm not good at this...yet.



VIDEO

For more, watch this quick 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.

REASONS TO SAY NO TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL



INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Consistently refusing alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and vapes can be hard, but it's one of the best decisions you will ever make.

Here are a few reasons why you should say no to drugs, alcohol, and nicotine.

WHY YOU SHOULD SAY NO TO DRUGS

All drugs have severe negative effects on developing brains.

Marijuana use in adolescence is linked to long-term impaired memory, thinking, and learning, as well as decreased verbal ability. Lung irritation from vaping marijuana can cause lung infections and long-term breathing issues.

Opioids like prescription painkillers, heroin, and fentanyl are incredibly addictive and dangerous. *188 Americans die from opioid overdoses every day.* Young and inexperienced users are especially at risk.

Misusing substances like prescription painkillers, stimulants, cold medicine, and inhalants can cause nausea, vomiting, memory issues, long-term brain damage, and death. Never use any substance for anything other than its intended use.



VIDEO

Saying no can be difficult in the moment. Watch this video to learn about refusal skills.

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