



9th Grade



Student Guidebook

Dear TRIO 9th Graders,

Welcome to high school! During these next few years you'll study new subjects, make new friends, and develop new skills. You will also have a lot of fun!

Starting high school, however, can be a bit overwhelming...new students, new teachers, more challenging classes, and greater responsibilities.

But not to worry. This booklet is packed with information to help you succeed in high school. It will also give you some great tips and advice so that you can get high school off to an awesome start. And remember—your TRIO program is here to help you every step of the way.

Have a great year!

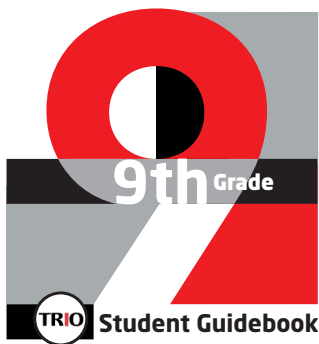


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9th grade matters – a lot!

Once you get to high school, everything counts

Now that you're in the 9th grade, your courses earn credits that count toward graduation. Your grades will be used to calculate your grade point average, and your courses, grades, and credits will all be on your transcript (an official copy of your high school record).



The habits you develop this year will set the tone for the rest of your high school career. Having an impressive high school record is very important because colleges and employers will use it to help them decide what kind of student or employee you will be.

To get high school off to a great start...

show up every day, do all of your homework, and work hard in all of your classes—right from day one. Also, understand that the grades you earn this year are very important, especially if you are planning to go to college.

In order to get the best possible grades this year, you need to develop good habits, get organized, and study smart. Read on for some tips on how you can do all of these things!

While every year in high school is important, 9th grade is often the most difficult because there's so much that's new. Work hard to have a successful 9th grade year and you will be on your way to having a high school record that you can be proud of.

develop good habits

9th grade is when you develop habits that will help you succeed in high school and beyond. To help you accomplish your goals and have a successful year, turn the following behaviors into daily habits.



Be in school every day

Attendance is the #1 school success factor. Make it a point to be in school on time every day.

Complete every homework assignment

In many of your classes, your homework grades will be a big part of your final grade—so completing your assignments to the best of your ability, and turning them in on time, is very important.

Be actively engaged in your classes

Get in the habit of asking and answering questions, taking notes, and participating in discussions. You'll learn more, get better grades, and the time you spend in class will go a lot faster.

Use your time wisely

Use the time teachers give you in class to start on your homework, and if you have a study hall, use it. You'll have a lot less to do at night.

Ask for help when you need it

Most teachers are happy to help you, but you need to ask.

Remember, you're not working hard in school for your parents or teachers. You're working hard to get good grades for you and your future.

get organized

As a freshman, you have more to juggle than ever before, and you are the one responsible for it all! To keep on top of everything, you need to be organized.

Here are some tips to help you get organized.

Use a planner every day

Use a planner to record assignments, tests, quizzes, appointments, activities, and anything else you need to remember.

Have a system for organizing your papers

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

Eliminate clutter

Put away or throw out anything you don't need.

Plan your study time

At the end of each school day, look at how much homework you have, consider the time you have available, and make a plan. Set a time to start on your homework and stick to it.

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.

Keep your backpack and locker clean and neat

When things are organized and neat, you're able to quickly find what you need. You are also less likely to lose things.



study smart

The key to success is not studying a lot—it's studying smart. Here's how you can study smart.

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 tools you need (paper, pencils, pens, a calculator, highlighters).



Get started

If you have a hard time getting started on your homework, begin with something you can finish quickly or with a subject you like.

Eliminate distractions

Turn off the TV and silence your phone. By eliminating all distractions, you force yourself to do one thing only—study.

Create a study plan

- ▶ Before you begin studying, decide exactly what you want to get done and the order in which you are going to do it. Be specific.
 - 1) study history, 2) do math worksheet, 3) read science pages 20–25.
- ▶ If you have a lot to do, prioritize your work. Start with the things that are the most important.
- ▶ If you have something to memorize, work on that first, and then go over it again at the end of your study session.

Break large assignments down

Use a planner to break large assignments (like a research paper) down into smaller, more manageable parts. For example:

Monday – create outline

Tuesday – write first draft

Wednesday – revise and rewrite

Thursday – write final report

explore interests and abilities



Now is a great time to start thinking about how your interests and abilities might translate into a career and/or a college major.

Think about your interests

Considering your interests will help ensure that you spend your life doing something you love. Here are some questions to think about.

- ▶ What are your favorite school subjects?
- ▶ What are your favorite activities or hobbies?
- ▶ Do you prefer 1) working with and helping people, 2) working with your hands and/or using tools, or 3) working with information and doing desk-type activities?
- ▶ Are there any careers or career fields you've always been interested in, or want to learn more about?

Consider your abilities

You're more likely to be happier and more successful in a career that focuses on your strengths. What you're good at doing will develop and change as you get older, but considering your abilities now can help you identify which career areas you may want to explore first.

Think about your answers to the following questions.

- ▶ What subjects do you do well in?
- ▶ What activities are you good at?
- ▶ What are some skills you'd like to improve?



To learn more about the careers related to your favorite school subjects, watch this quick video.

why go to college?



As a TRIO student, you understand that while going to college is important, it takes a lot of hard work to get there. At times, you may even 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!

More money

Statistics show that 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.

New people and 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 want to be.

A sense of accomplishment

Getting to college, succeeding in college, and graduating take a lot of hard work, motivation, and persistence. Receiving a college diploma is an accomplishment you can be proud of for the rest of your life—and a reminder that you can do anything you set your mind to!

your college to-do list

Even though choosing a college and completing college applications is still a few years away, there are things you can do now to plan and prepare for college.

Work hard in your classes

If you're considering going to college, you want to have an impressive high school record when you graduate—which means that you should try to get good grades in all of your classes this year. Having a strong freshman year will help ensure that you will have lots of college options and opportunities when you graduate.

Be involved and develop your interests

Participate in school activities, and if you have a specific interest, talent, or passion, take time this year to develop it. Also participate in activities outside of school (athletics, church, scouting) and do some volunteer work if you can.

Think about what's important to you

Do you want to go to a two-year or four-year college? A college close to home, or one with a specific major? To find colleges that will be a good match for you, visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org.

Make informal college visits

Visit colleges and imagine yourself as a student there. Walk around the campus, go to a sporting event, and eat in the student union.

Think about what you want to study

In college, you'll choose one subject to study in-depth. This will be your major. Start thinking about your interests, talents, and abilities in terms of possible majors.



Take the right classes

In order to be prepared for college-level work, 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



Make a four-year plan

A four-year plan is a list of the courses you plan to take each year in high school. Your plan should include the courses that are required for graduation, and as many of the above recommended courses as possible. If you haven't made a four-year plan yet, now is the time to do so. For help and advice, see your counselor or TRIO teacher.

Be careful with your internet use

Don't post anything on social media apps or sites that you wouldn't want a college admissions officer to see. Admission officers do check these sites!

Start a college savings account

If you haven't started saving for college yet, begin now. Also, encourage your parents to look into 529 plans (college savings plans).

Get support

Tell your family, counselor, and TRIO teacher that you want to go to college, and ask for their help and support.

For tips on how to build an impressive high school record, watch this short video.



understand your college options



Most careers require education and/or training beyond a general high school education. Some careers require four or more years of college; others require only one or two years of additional education. In many cases, your career choice will determine which education option is best for you.

Four-year colleges

A four-year college education, or bachelor's degree, can open doors and prepare students for financially rewarding careers.

Four-year college students take a variety of courses. About half of a college student's courses are in their major—the subject they've chosen to study in-depth. The rest of their courses are made up of required general education courses (like English, math, and science) and electives (the courses they want to take).

Colleges have specific requirements for admission. College entrance requirements vary greatly. Colleges with an open admissions policy accept all high school graduates until spaces are filled. In contrast, highly selective colleges seek students with impressive academic records.

Students need to be academically prepared. Students who haven't taken several of the recommended college prep courses may want to consider starting at a community college or at a four-year college's branch campus. The requirements for admission are less competitive, the classes are smaller, and there's less pressure.

Two-year colleges

Public two-year colleges (often called community colleges) provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less.

Students prepare for a specific career. Students in one- and two-year career programs, like dental hygiene, law enforcement, and engineering technology spend most of their time taking the courses they need to prepare for their specific career field.

Classes are small and affordable. It generally costs much less to attend a two-year college than it does a four-year college. Classes are typically small and taught by instructors who have worked in a related field.

All high school graduates are welcome. Students need only a high school diploma to enroll in most programs. Two-year colleges also do not require the ACT or SAT. However, to ensure that students enroll in courses appropriate for their ability level, many colleges require that all incoming students take a placement test.

Students can transfer to a four-year college. Students who want a four-year degree can take their general education courses (such as English, history, and math) at a two-year college, and then transfer to a four-year college after a year or two. Because they're less expensive, many students start at a two-year college to save money. A two-year college is also a great option for any student who isn't quite ready to attend a four-year college.

*For more on your education options,
watch this short video.*



be money smart



As a 9th grader, you likely don't have a job or bills to pay, but you probably make choices about how to spend the money you have. Here are some tips on how to make smart money choices.

Recognize needs vs. wants

To be a smart consumer you must understand the difference between needs and wants. Needs are things that are necessary in your life, such as food, clothing, and shelter. Wants are things you don't have to have—they are things you would just like to have or do, like a larger TV, new phone, or concert tickets.

Businesses work hard to convince you that you don't just want what they're selling—you *need* it. Smart consumers are aware of these sales tactics and don't let them influence their spending decisions.

So, before you spend your hard earned dollars, ask yourself, "Is this something I need?" If it's not, make sure you're being selective, and that you are spending your money on things that are really important to you.

Keep track of your spending

To help ensure that you don't spend money on things you don't need or can't afford, try keeping a record of everything you buy. You can keep a paper log or use a budgeting app like Mint.

Paying for college

Don't ever think that you can't afford to go to college. Financial aid is available and there are many ways to cut college costs. If you need information or advice on how you can make college affordable, your TRIO teacher can help!

build a growth mindset

Sometimes your successes, failures, talents, and shortcomings are defined by how you look at them—and by the mindset you have. If you have a growth mindset, you can turn the things you think you can't change into opportunities for growth and discovery!



Fixed vs. growth mindset

If you have a **fixed mindset**, you believe that you either are or aren't good at something. You also believe that there are limits to what you can accomplish. *"I'm not good at math. I never have been, and I never will be."*

If you have a **growth mindset**, you believe that with effort, you can develop and improve your skills and abilities. You also believe that there's no limit to what you can accomplish. *"I know if I study and ask my teacher for help, I can get this."*

The power of YET

When you feel frustrated because something isn't going well, or you can't get something quite right, adding the word **yet** reminds you to be patient, stay hopeful, and keep at it.

Take a moment to look at these two sentences.

I don't understand this.

I don't understand this YET.

*See the difference in the second sentence—how adding the word **yet** changes the meaning?* Adding the word **yet** to a statement shows that you have a growth mindset, and that you aren't going to give up. Doing well in high school can be hard, but know that you have what it takes!



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TRIO

Student Guidebook

This booklet is filled with helpful tips and expert advice on how you can have an amazing freshman year!

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