



8th Grade



Student Guidebook



Dear TRIO 8th Graders,

Being in 8th grade means that you'll be starting high school soon. To help you finish middle school strong and get ready for high school, use this year to improve your study habits and skills, and to become a more confident learner.

This is also a good time to start thinking about the future—what kind of career you might like to have and what kind of college you might like to go to.

Even though high school graduation is still several years away, there are many things you can do now to plan and prepare for your future. This booklet will help you get started. And remember—TRIO will be there for you every step of the way!

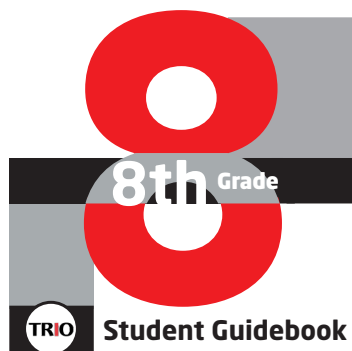


table of contents

School Success

welcome to 8th grade	4
develop good study habits	5
take good notes	6
ace your tests	7

Career Planning

think about a career.....	8
learn about your education options	9

College Planning

why go to college?	10
8th grade college to-do list	11

Be Your Best You

be smart with money	12
set goals	14
take care of your mind and body.....	15

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welcome to 8th grade!

Being in the 8th grade means that you're older and smarter, and that your schoolwork is getting harder. For you to have a great 8th grade year and be ready for high school, you need to remember that while friends are important, you are in school to learn.

Work hard in your classes this year and get the best grades you can. It will pay off in many, many ways!

Succeeding in school depends on lots of things

Your school success depends on your attendance, behavior, participation in class—and your homework, quiz, test, and project grades. Most importantly, it depends on your habits! To succeed in school, you not only need to work hard, you also need to develop good study habits.

Use this year to build on the good study habits you've created, and to develop new ones. Think about what you can do differently or better this year. For example, do you need to...

- be better organized?
- go to bed earlier?
- be more engaged in your classes?
- spend more time on your homework?

Think about what you can do this year to put yourself on the road to success.

Remember, you aren't working hard in your classes for your teachers or your parents. You are working hard in school for yourself and for your future.



develop good study habits

Here are some tips to help you develop better study habits and get the best grades possible.

Be in school every day

Attendance is the #1 school success factor. *Do not miss school unless you absolutely have to!*

Complete every homework assignment

Homework will be a big part of your grade, so make it a habit to get all of your homework done before you watch TV, jump on your electronics, or hang out with your friends.

Use a planner every day

Use your planner to record assignments, tests, quizzes, activities, appointments, and anything else you need to remember. Using a planner every day will help keep you organized and on track.

Be engaged in your classes

Ask and answer questions in class, take notes, and participate in discussions. You'll learn more and the time will go a lot faster.

Have a system for organizing your papers

Have a specific place for every paper (class notes, homework, hand-outs). Also have a file at home for papers you want to keep.

Ask for help when you need it

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

Create a study plan every day

At the end of each school day, look at the homework you have, consider the time you have available, and make a study plan.



take good notes

Most test questions come from material that's been discussed in class, so having good class notes to study from can significantly improve your test grades. Here are some tips to help you take great class notes.

Create a notetaking system

Whether you use three-ring 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.

Be an active listener

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

Review your notes

While the information is still fresh in your mind, take a few minutes to go over your notes. Rewrite anything that's confusing, fill in missing information, and highlight what's most important.



VIDEO

*For more notetaking tips,
watch this quick video.*

ace your tests

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



Prepare for tests

- ▶ **Create a study plan.** Have all textbook reading done early and create a study plan that spreads out your studying.
- ▶ **Make flash cards.** Rewrite important information from your class notes and anything else you need to remember on index cards. Take these with you and go over them whenever you have a few extra minutes.
- ▶ **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.

Be a smart test taker

- ▶ **Stay positive.** On test day, stay calm and think positive thoughts. If you're nervous, take several deep, calming breaths.
- ▶ **Write down cues.** As soon as you get your test, write anything you want to remember (names, formulas, dates) at the top.
- ▶ **Develop a plan.** Before you begin answering questions, quickly look over the entire test and decide how much time you'll spend on each section or question.
- ▶ **Don't get stuck.** Don't spend too much time on any one question. Mark it, move on, and come back to it later.
- ▶ **Check your answers.** If you have time, check your answers, even the ones you know are correct. Use all the time you're given.

think about a career

You'll be graduating from high school before you know it. Thinking about what you might want to do after you graduate, even in the 8th grade, is smart—and it increases the likelihood that you'll end up somewhere great in life.

Consider your interests and abilities

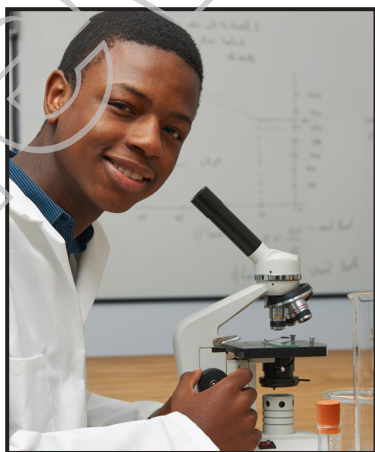
You don't have to know what you want to do right now. The key is to be curious and to ask yourself lots of questions, such as:

- ▶ What subjects do I like and get good grades in?
- ▶ What talents and skills do I have?
- ▶ Would I rather help people, work with tools, or do desk-type activities?
- ▶ Do I want to go to college?

Learn about different careers

To be able to choose a career field that will be a good match for you, you also need to learn about your career options. The perfect career for you may be one you've never even heard of! Here are some things you can do to get started.

- ▶ **Talk to people.** Talk to the adults in your life about their careers—what they do, how they got into their careers, what they like and don't like, and whether they have any advice for you.
- ▶ **Read and research.** Learn as much as you can about the careers that interest you. For information on hundreds of careers, check out the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* at [bls.gov/ooh](https://www.bls.gov/ooh).



learn about your education options

While you are considering what kind of career would be a good fit for you, also think about your education options.

These are the ways most people prepare for a career.

Four-year college

A four-year college education can provide students with a wide range of career opportunities. Four-year colleges vary in size, cost, admission requirements, and areas of study (majors) offered.

Two-year college

Two-year colleges provide affordable one- and two-year career programs. Students can also start at a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year college.

Career and trade schools

Career and trade schools offer training in a variety of career fields. Some programs last only a few weeks; others take up to two years to complete.

Apprenticeships

Apprentices learn a skilled trade through classroom instruction and job training. The majority of programs are in construction and manufacturing.

Military

The U.S. military offers enlistees free job training in over 2,000 job specialties. The military also has a number of programs to help students pay for college.



why go to college?

Maybe you already know what you want to do after high school. Maybe you have no idea. Both are okay. But this is a good time to learn about how going to college can help you prepare for a great future.

As a TRIO student, you know that college is a goal you should work toward. But do you ever wonder if going to college is worth the work it takes to get there? *Here are some reasons why going to college is a goal that is definitely worth working toward!*



You will have 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. With a college degree, the sky is the limit!

College graduates earn more money

Four-year college graduates earn almost twice as much money as students who only have a high school diploma. That comes out to \$1,000,000 or more over a lifetime!

College provides opportunities to develop and grow

Going to college gives you the opportunity to study lots of different subjects, make new friends, and become more independent.

A sense of accomplishment

Getting to college, succeeding in college, and graduating take a lot of hard work and persistence. Earning 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!

8th grade college to-do list

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

Work hard in your classes

In addition to working hard to get good grades this year, also work on improving your academic skills. To be successful this year, and in high school, you need to be organized, manage your time well, and know how to study smart.

Get involved

When you're involved in your school and community, you learn new skills, meet new people, and have fun. Take time this year to develop your interests and talents and expand your horizons.

Be prepared for high school

In high school, you will have more reading and writing to do. You'll be expected to have good computer skills and be able to take good classroom notes. Take time this year to read more, and to improve your writing, computer, and notetaking skills.

Choose your 9th grade courses wisely

When choosing your high school courses, be sure to choose the ones that will put you on the path to college. Be sure to also include all of your school's required 9th grade courses.

Get support

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



be smart with money



For better or worse, much of our lives revolves around money. But more important than how much money you have is how well your money helps you reach your goals—and how well it supports you on your life’s journey.

What is financial literacy?

Basically, financial literacy is understanding money matters: earning, spending, saving, and growing your money. It’s also about using that knowledge to make smart financial decisions.

In 8th grade, you don’t have a job or bills to pay, but you probably make choices about how you spend the money you have. In order to make smart choices now and in the future, it will be helpful for you to have some basic financial knowledge.

Needs vs. wants

Whenever you are thinking about spending your money on something, it’s important to determine if it’s a *need* or a *want*. As you might guess, *needs* are something you need and *wants* are something you would like to have, but can do without. Here are some examples:

- ▶ **Needs:** calculator for math class, new shoes because you outgrew your old ones, school supplies, winter coat, haircut
- ▶ **Wants:** new bike, video game, tickets to a sporting event, posters for your room

A lot of needs aren’t necessarily “fun,” or things you want to spend money on, but it’s always good to spend money on the things you need first. *Understanding the difference between needs and wants is super important for your financial success.*

Spending and saving

Keeping track of how much money you have and how much you spend will help ensure that you're being smart with your money.

Here are a few smart spending tips:

▶ Get a savings account

Most banks and credit unions will allow a parent to open a savings account for a child under a certain age. This is called a *custodial account*. Not only does it help you keep your money safe, but the bank may "pay" you a small amount to keep your money there. This is called *interest*.

▶ Track what you spend

To make sure you don't spend money on things you don't need or can't afford, try keeping a record of everything you buy. When you write down and review all of your purchases, it's easy to see how much money you have, and how much you spend. You can also see how small purchases can quickly add up.

▶ Set money aside

You never know when you will have something special you want to do or buy. When you earn or are given money, set a small amount aside. When something comes up, you'll already have some money saved for it.

▶ Set savings goals

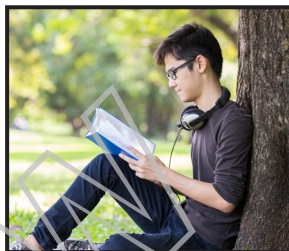
If you have a major purchase in mind that you'd like to make, determine how you will earn the money and then set a goal for when you will have the money you need.



Concerned about money for college? Don't ever think that you can't afford it. There's a lot of financial aid available and there are many ways to cut college costs.

set goals

Get in the habit of setting goals and working hard to achieve them. Set both short-term goals (get a B on tomorrow's test) and long-term goals (go to college).



Setting SMART goals

Goals help you determine where you want to go and what you want to accomplish. They give you focus, direction, and purpose. Having a goal also helps you determine a plan of action.

While goals can be short-term or long-term, every goal should be **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.

Specific. Specific goals are clear and precise. Instead of *I want to do better in school*, a more specific goal would be *I want to earn a 3.0 GPA*.

Measurable. Measurable goals make it easier to know how successful you are. Instead of *I will get in shape*, a better goal would be *I will be able to walk a mile in 20 minutes*.

Achievable. Achievable goals set you up for success because they're goals you can actually accomplish. Improving your math grade one letter is achievable; raising a grade from a D to an A in one semester probably isn't.

Relevant. Relevant goals are goals that are practical and worthwhile. For example, learning a new computer program is a more worthwhile goal than beating a video game score.

Time-bound. Time-bound goals have deadlines. *Complete my science project by Friday* is more motivating than *Complete my science project*.

take care of your mind and body

While your health can be impacted by things you can't control, you can control how well you look after it. Here are some tips to help you keep your mind and body healthy and strong.

- ▶ **Get enough sleep.** The amount of sleep you get impacts your physical health and your mood. A student your age should be getting at least eight hours of sleep a night.
- ▶ **Get moving.** Regular exercise is key to a healthy body and mind. Exercise helps you look and feel your best—and it's a natural mood-booster.
- ▶ **Deal with stress.** Stress can really take a toll on your mental and physical health. Take time each day to do things that help you feel calm and relaxed.
- ▶ **Limit technology use.** Too much time staring at a screen isn't good for your mind or body. It also means that you're not taking advantage of all that real life has to offer.
- ▶ **Be smart with social media.** Seeing the fun, exciting things people put on social media can make you feel bad about your own life. Remember, people only share the best parts of themselves on social media.
- ▶ **Get support.** If you're having a hard time, tell someone. Whatever it is, you don't have to go through it alone.

For some calming techniques, check out this short video.





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This booklet is filled with helpful tips and expert advice on how you can have a fun and successful 8th grade year!

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