

# Gear Up for Middle School

School  
Success

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Navigating  
the Social  
Scene

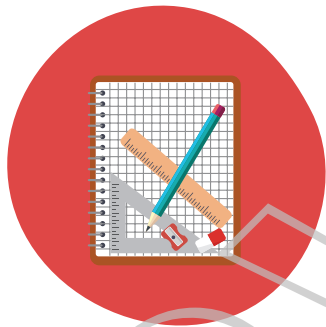
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Building a  
Better You

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Thinking  
About Your  
Future

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Activities to help  
you get middle school  
off to a great start!

# Dear Middle Schooler,

Welcome to a new and exciting adventure! Middle school is filled with new people, new opportunities, new challenges—and a lot more responsibility.

But don't worry! You can handle it, and the activities in this book are sure to help you get middle school off to an awesome start.

In this booklet, you'll practice some skills to help you get good grades in your classes. You'll learn some ways to get involved and make new friends, and you'll even start to think about your future.

Enjoy the journey!

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# Welcome to Middle School!

Middle school is sort of a big deal. Whether you're going to a new school or you're just moving down the hall, things will be different (usually in a good way).

While some things will be the same in middle school, there are probably a lot of things that will be new. Check the boxes of the things that are true for your middle school.

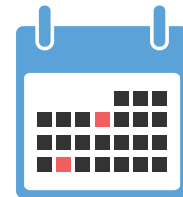
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> There are more teachers. | <input type="checkbox"/> Students change classes more often.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's a bigger school.    | <input type="checkbox"/> There are more activities.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students have lockers.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Students have a separate lunch period. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There are more students. | <input type="checkbox"/> There are students from other schools. |

## How's your attendance?

To succeed in middle school, you have to be in school every day, on time. Even if you miss just a few days here and there, your grades are likely to suffer.

- ▶ About how many days of school do you usually miss a year?

0-5     6-10     11-20     more than 20



- ▶ What are the main reasons you miss school?

I'm sick.     I oversleep.     I don't have transportation.

I'm having problems with other kids at school.     Other \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ Has poor attendance negatively affected your grades?

yes     no     maybe

Unless you have an extended illness or a health problem, you shouldn't miss more than a few days of school a year. If attendance has been an issue for you in the past, what can you do to improve your attendance this year?

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# Get Off to a Good Start



Start your middle school journey off right by getting to know your school—and learning where to go for help.

## Know your school

- ▶ What's your school mascot? \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ What are your school colors? \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ What do you do if you're absent or late? \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Do you know your school's phone policy and dress code?  yes  no
- ▶ Have you been to your school's website?  yes  no

## Know where to go for help

- ▶ Your counselor's name \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Where is your counselor's office? \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ How do you make an appointment with your counselor? \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ Principal's name \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Office secretary's name \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Who would you go to for help with each of the following?

Write **T** (teacher), **O** (office), **C** (counselor), or **?** (don't know).

- struggling in a class
- locker problem
- missed assignments
- problem with a teacher
- question about next year's courses
- question about a grade
- problem at home
- stolen wallet
- problem with another student

Don't be afraid to reach out  
Your school has a number of  
people who want to help you get  
the best education possible.  
Know who these people are and  
how they can help you.

# Get Organized

In middle school, you're going to have more classes, more homework, and a lot more to keep track of. To succeed in your classes, you need to be organized!

Check the box that best describes you.

1. I have what I need when I go to class (book, pencils, paper).
2. I have a system for organizing my papers.
3. I use a planner to keep track of my assignments.
4. I create a study plan when I have a lot of homework to do.
5. I get everything ready for the next day before I go to bed.
6. I have contact information for someone in each class.
7. I make to-do lists when I have a lot to do.
8. I keep my backpack and locker neat and organized.

Almost always	Some- times	Hardly ever
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Survey Results** – Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost always**, 1 point for each **Sometimes**, and 0 for each **Hardly ever**. **Your Score** \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 14–16, you're probably pretty organized. Keep it up! If you have less than 14 points, consider the items you marked **Sometimes** or **Hardly Ever** and work on improving those organization strategies.

## Organize your stuff

Keeping your stuff organized makes it easier to find things. It also saves you time and makes life less stressful. How neat and organized is your stuff?

	Very organized	Just ok	A total mess
Your backpack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your folders/binders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your locker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your study area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



- ▶ Which of these areas needs the most organizational help? \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ What can you do to improve it? \_\_\_\_\_

# Manage Your Time



There's a lot going on in middle school—more activities, more socializing, and more homework. With good time management, you'll have enough time for the things you need to do *and* for the things you want to do.

## Establish routines

Having a good morning routine helps get the day off to a good start. Having a good nighttime routine helps you get to bed on time and get a good night's sleep.

▶ How can you improve your morning routine? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

▶ How can you improve your nighttime routine? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Make to-do lists

Making a to-do list is one of the best ways to manage your time. When everything you need to do is written down, you feel more in control and less overwhelmed. It's also very satisfying to cross things off your list when they're done.

**Try it!** *Matt has a lot to do, so he decided to make a to-do list. Help Matt prioritize the things he needs to do so that he's sure to get the most important things done.*

Rate each of the eight items on Matt's to-do list as an **A** (must do today), **B** (should do today), or **C** (want to do today, but it can wait).

- \_\_\_\_\_ work on my science report that's due next week
- \_\_\_\_\_ clean out my backpack
- \_\_\_\_\_ study for tomorrow's social studies test
- \_\_\_\_\_ organize my music
- \_\_\_\_\_ work on my soccer drills
- \_\_\_\_\_ do the math assignment that's due tomorrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ think about a topic for my English paper
- \_\_\_\_\_ call Grandma to wish her a happy birthday

### Control time wasters

Social media, TV, and video games can all be huge time wasters. Try to schedule small chunks of time for these activities, and stick to your schedule.

# Succeed in Class

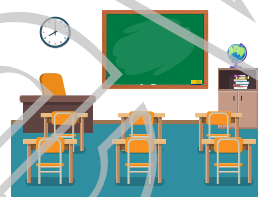
When you get the most out of the time you spend in class, you have a lot less to learn on your own, and you get better grades.

## Class success tips

Use these words to complete the following class success tips. (Answers are at the bottom of the page.)

homework participate related help refocus answer respectful

1. Ask and \_\_\_\_\_ questions in class.
2. Always have all of your \_\_\_\_\_ done.
3. Ask for \_\_\_\_\_ when you need it.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ in class discussions.
5. When you catch your mind wandering, stop yourself, and \_\_\_\_\_ on the class.
6. Be \_\_\_\_\_ to your teachers and classmates.
7. Put away anything that isn't \_\_\_\_\_ to the class you're in.



## Be aware of your body language

Our body language (gestures, posture, and facial expressions) often communicates what we're thinking and feeling even better than words do. Students who are slouching in their seat or looking out the window are sending a message that they don't care about the material that's being presented or discussed. *Messages like this don't win you any points with your teachers!*

Think about your classroom body language and pretend that you're looking at yourself through your teachers' eyes. **Circle any words you think your teachers might use to describe you.**

daydreamer	bored	disrespectful	unhappy	friendly
hard worker	engaged	attentive	organized	lonely
disorganized	confident	tired	angry	happy

- How can you improve your body language in class? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

1. answer 2. homework 3. help 4. participate 5. refocus 6. respectful 7. related



# Do Your Homework

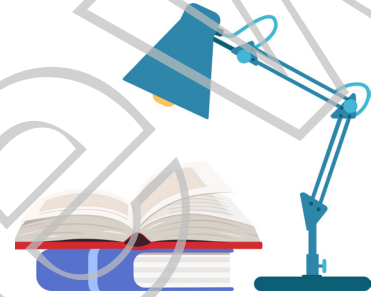
In many classes, a large portion of your grade will be based on homework, so getting your homework done—and done well—is very important!

## Be smart about how you do homework

When you study smart, your homework takes less time and your homework grades are higher.

Put a check mark by the things you can do to improve how you do your homework.

- spend more time on my homework
- get help from a parent, classmate, or teacher
- find a better place to do my homework
- turn off the TV or music
- be more focused while I'm doing my homework
- start working on my homework earlier
- know the assignment and have the materials I need
- limit the interruptions (phone, TV)
- other \_\_\_\_\_



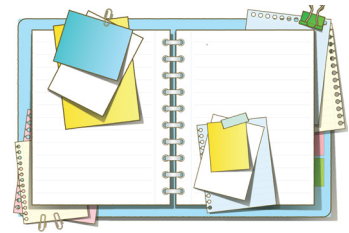
## Make large assignments easier to do

In middle school, you have longer and more complicated projects and assignments. Breaking these down into smaller parts makes them much more manageable—and helps ensure that you get large assignments and projects done on time.

**Try it!** Suppose you have to write a two-page paper for your social studies class. Today is Monday and the paper is due Friday. **Think about how you could break this assignment down and spread the work out over the week. Write down the tasks you might do each day.**

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	Social Studies paper due!

# Take Good Notes



Tests usually cover material that's been presented in class, so it's important to have good notes to study from.

Check the boxes that best describe your notetaking.

1. My notes are neat and easy to read.
2. I use abbreviations and symbols to help me write faster.
3. I underline or highlight the most important information.
4. My notes help me do well on tests.
5. I keep my notes organized in a notebook or binder.

Almost always	Sometimes	Hardly ever
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Survey Results** – Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost always**, 1 point for each **Sometimes**, and 0 for each **Hardly ever**. Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 9–10, you probably have pretty good notetaking skills. Keep it up!  
If you have less than 9 points, consider the items you marked **Sometimes** or **Hardly ever** and work on improving those notetaking strategies.

**Try it!** Check out Josh's notes. Josh begins a new page for each class. At the top of each page he writes 1) the class, 2) date, 3) page number, and 4) main topic.

*Find these 4 items in the sample notes and draw a box around each of them.*

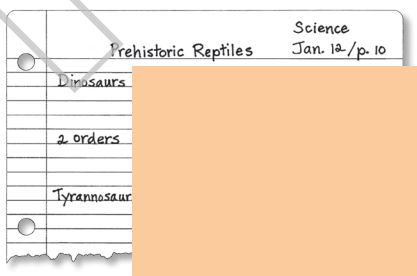
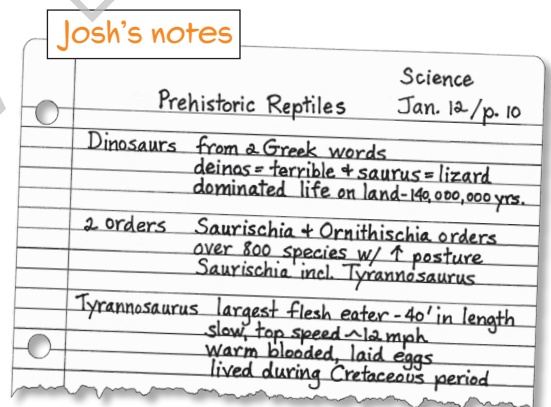
To make his notes more readable, Josh only uses one side of the paper and he skips a line between topics.

*Put an X on the skipped lines.*

To take notes faster, he uses numbers, abbreviations, and symbols. *Circle the numbers, symbols, and abbreviations in his notes.*

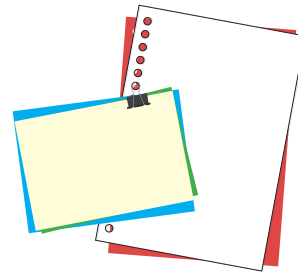
To make his notes easier to understand, Josh leaves a wide space on the left side of each page and uses it to write in **key words** (like topics, people, and events).

*Put a star by the three key words/phrases.*



Use key words to help you study  
Cover your notes and test yourself to see what you can remember about that topic, person, place, or event.  
Then check to see if you were right.

# Prepare for Tests



Middle school means harder classes—and harder tests. Having good test-prep skills really pays off.

Think about the last time you prepared for a test and answer the questions below.

1. When did you study for the test? (Check all that apply.)

over several nights

right before the test

in class only

the night before

all of the above

I didn't study.

2. What study strategies did you use? (Check all that apply.)

reviewed class notes

studied with classmate(s)

other: \_\_\_\_\_

went over the textbook

made flashcards

I didn't study.

went over handouts

got quizzed by someone else

3. How did you do on the test? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What could you have done to get a better grade on the test? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Test-preparation tips

- ▶ Pay **close attention** in class the day before a test. This is when teachers often go over information you need to know.
- ▶ If your textbook has **review questions**, know all of the answers. Also, go through your textbook and make sure you know the meanings of all the words in **bold** and *italic* print.
- ▶ Try teaching material to yourself in front of a **mirror**.
- ▶ If a teacher hands out a **review sheet**, study it until you know everything on it. Then use it to come up with questions that might be on the test.
- ▶ Write down any names, dates, or facts you need to remember on **index cards**. Take these cards with you the day of the test and go over them as often as you can.
- ▶ How can you be better prepared for tests? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Set Goals



Goals give you focus, direction, and purpose. Having a goal also helps you develop a plan of action. For example, if your goal is to go to college, there are specific things you can do to help you achieve your goal—even in middle school.

## SMART goals

While goals can be short-term (get a B on your history test) or long-term (graduate with a 3.0 GPA), every goal should be **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound.

**Specific.** Specific goals are well-defined and clear-cut. Instead of, “I want to do better in school,” a more specific goal would be, “I want to get all As and Bs this term.”

**Measurable.** Measurable goals make it easier to know how successful you are. Instead of, “I won’t be so shy in class,” a better goal would be, “I will raise my hand three times in class today.”

**Achievable.** Achievable goals set you up for success because they are goals you can realistically accomplish. Improving your math grade one letter is achievable. Raising a grade from a D to an A probably isn’t.

**Relevant.** Setting relevant goals ensures that you’re working toward goals that are 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 a date they are to be accomplished. “Complete my science project by Friday” is more motivating than “Complete my science project.”

**Try it!** Write an academic and a personal goal for this grading period. For each goal check the boxes to show that it’s SMART. If you can’t check all the boxes, rethink your goal.

S  M  A  R  T

1. Your academic goal \_\_\_\_\_

S  M  A  R  T

2. Your personal goal \_\_\_\_\_

# Get Involved



Middle school isn't just about academics. It's also about making friends, developing new skills, and expanding your horizons. The best way to do this is to get involved in activities.

## Reasons to get involved

There are lots of great reasons to get involved and participate in activities in middle school. Draw a line from each Student Quote to the matching Reason to Participate.

### Student Quote

### Reason to Participate

"I'd never been in a play before, but it turned out to be a lot of fun." Lucia

"I work in the office one period a day. I like helping them out." Tyler

"Band is so much fun. We're all friends and we have a great time together." Hannah

"Being a class representative has helped me gain confidence and leadership skills." James

"I play the flute in the band and I'm getting better all the time." Tasha

"Basketball practice helps me get rid of a lot of stress. It's great to forget about school for awhile." Jasmine

"I didn't like school last year, but now I'm on the soccer team, and I like school a lot more." Carlos

spend time with friends

become a leader

try something new

provide a service

relieve stress

enjoy school more

develop your skills and talents

Which of these school activities are you interested in?

- Sports – football, soccer, basketball, etc.
- Music – band, orchestra, choir
- Theater – plays, public speaking, debate team
- Leadership – student council, class representative
- Service – office assistant, community service
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Try new things

Listen to the announcements, check the bulletin boards, and visit your school's website. Your counselor can also offer suggestions on what activities might be a good fit for you!

# Make Good Choices

In middle school, you have more freedom. You also get to make more of your own choices and decisions. Remember, YOU are responsible for your actions and the choices you make!

## What would you do?

Read each situation and circle the choice you would make.

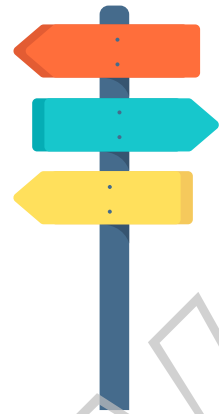
1. You are walking down the hall at school with several classmates. One of them starts making fun of another student. What do you do?
  - A) laugh and be glad they aren't making fun of you
  - B) keep quiet and just keep walking
  - C) stand up for the other student
2. You are at a store with a friend and he takes a candy bar without paying. What do you do?
  - A) No one is looking, so you take one too.
  - B) Pretend you didn't see him take it.
  - C) Tell him to put it back.
3. While out with your friends, someone dares you to take a hit of a vape. What do you do?
  - A) Wanting to be cool, you agree to try it.
  - B) You take the vape, but pass it to someone else without trying it.
  - C) Say "No thanks," and start talking about something else.

**Scoring** – Give yourself **0** points for every A answer, **1** point for every B answer, and **2** points for every C answer. Total your points. **Your Score** \_\_\_\_\_

**0–1 Points** – You easily give in to peer pressure. Work on thinking for yourself and not letting your friends influence your decisions.

**2–4 Points** – You are on the right track. Work on taking a stand more often.

**5–6 Points** – Good for you! You know how to think for yourself and you aren't afraid to say and do what's right.



## Do your own work—and don't cheat

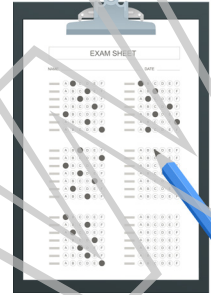
Students know they should always do their own work, but some student take shortcuts and cheat. Cheating is wrong, and it can get you into a lot of trouble. *When you do your own work, you learn more—and you can be proud of the grades you get.*

Read each of the following and decide whether or not it's cheating. Check "Yes" or "No."

1. copying someone else's homework
2. copying information word-for-word off the internet
3. having someone help you with your homework
4. having a friend tell you the questions on a test
5. having a friend give you general information about a test, such as, "There are a lot of essay questions."

Yes No

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



What are your totals?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes (Cheating)      \_\_\_\_\_ No (Not Cheating)

## Deal with peer pressure

At your age, the approval of your peers probably feels more important than ever. Whether you realize it or not, your peers can be the biggest influence on who you are—and who you will become someday.

Whether it's spoken peer pressure (being told what to do by someone else) or unspoken peer pressure (being influenced by what others are doing), peer pressure can be really hard to deal with.

**Know the difference**  
While everyone would agree that it's cheating to copy off someone else's test, some situations aren't quite so clear. Students, however, usually know when they're doing something they shouldn't.

- ▶ Have you observed friends or classmates being influenced by peer pressure? If so, how?

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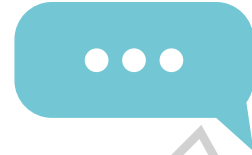
- ▶ Have you ever felt peer pressure? What happened? \_\_\_\_\_

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- ▶ Should you have done something different? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Manage the Social Scene



There are more activities and social events in middle school—and sometimes more drama. The good news is, you'll do fine with the whole social scene if you don't take it too seriously, and you make good choices.

## New friends

Having friends is really important, and middle school is a great time to develop some new friendships. Here are some tips to help you make some new friends this year.

- ▶ Look for classmates who like the same things you do.
- ▶ Be friendly. Go out of your way to be kind to everyone. Smile and start conversations by giving a compliment or asking a question. This is also a good way to find people with similar interests.
- ▶ Join something. It's easier to make friends when you're part of a group or involved in an activity.
- ▶ If you're shy, push yourself a little. Try acting as if you are more outgoing than you feel.
- ▶ How have you made friends in the past? \_\_\_\_\_

## What makes a good friend?

Friendships aren't always easy and fun. Sometimes friendships can be stressful—or even harmful. How do you know if someone's friendship is making your life better or worse?

Check the box that shows whether each statement describes someone who is a good friend – or someone who is not a good friend.

1. someone who you can trust with your true feelings
2. someone who always brings a lot of drama into your life
3. someone who tries to get you to do things you don't want to do
4. someone who listens to you
5. someone you feel like you can be yourself around
6. someone who talks badly about other friends behind their backs

Good friend      Not a good friend

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Bullying

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, hurtful, and repeated. Making your school bully-free needs to be a team effort, and everyone must do their part.

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false.

True False

### Physical bullying

- 1. Examples of physical bullying include hitting, shoving, kicking, and elbowing.
- 2. Hazing is a form of bullying.
- 3. Bystanders shouldn't get involved.

### Emotional/social bullying

- 4. Excluding someone from a group is an example of social bullying.
- 5. Students who get bullied usually deserve it.
- 6. Saying something insulting or embarrassing isn't bullying if it's true.



### Cyberbullying

- 7. If you receive a threat by text or email, you should delete it immediately.
- 8. Cyberbullying is often done anonymously.
- 9. Cyberbullying can be very harmful, even though no one is physically hurt.

The answers are upside down below. Give yourself 1 point for each correct answer.

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

► What are some things you can do if you witness a classmate being bullied? \_\_\_\_\_

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► What would you do if someone was bullying you?

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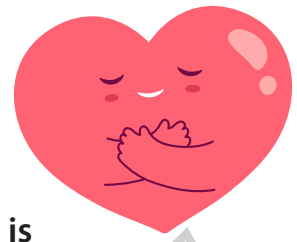
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**Speak up and speak out**  
If you are being bullied, tell a parent, teacher, or counselor what's happening. Also tell your friends. If you see someone being bullied, tell someone.

1. true 2. true 3. false 4. true 5. false 6. false 7. false 8. true 9. true

# Build Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. When you have low self-esteem, you may feel like you aren't good enough or don't measure up—even though that's not true. Middle school is a great time to work on building your self-esteem!



## How strong is your self-esteem?

Yes No

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you acknowledge both your strengths and weaknesses?                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Are you able to confidently say "no" when you don't want to do something? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Are you easily influenced by others?                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Are you able to express your needs to others?                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you feel confident most of the time?                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do your positive experiences outshine your negative ones?                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Do you generally have a positive outlook?                                 |

The more you checked "Yes," the better your self-esteem likely is. If you checked several "No" boxes, or you just want to feel better about yourself, the following tips are a great place to start.

- ▶ **Accept and believe in yourself.** Appreciate and accept yourself as a unique individual. Believe in your skills and abilities.
- ▶ **Practice positive self-talk.** When you have thoughts that are negative or critical, make the choice to think differently. Fill your thoughts with positive, encouraging messages.
- ▶ **Develop your skills.** Developing your skills and becoming more accomplished at something is a great way to improve your self-esteem.
- ▶ **Accept that you are a work in progress.** If you tend to be hard on yourself, cut yourself some slack. No one is perfect. Just strive to do your best.

How can you keep your self-esteem strong this year? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Develop a Growth Mindset

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

## Fixed vs. growth mindset

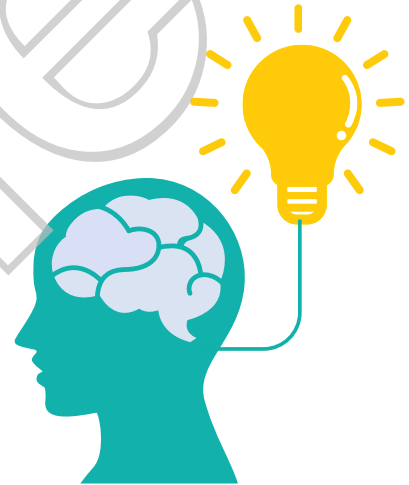
When you have a **fixed mindset**, you believe that either you are or you aren't good at something. A fixed mindset tells you there are limits to what you can accomplish—and that who you are right now is who you will always be.

If you have a **growth mindset**, you believe that with effort, you can improve your skills and abilities—and that there are no limits to what you can accomplish.

Read through the following statements and mark whether you think each is an example of a fixed or growth mindset.

Fixed Growth

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. No one in my family is good at that.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. I'm going to figure this out.          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. This is too hard for me.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. I'd really like to get better at this. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. I'll never be able to do it.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. My brain doesn't work that way.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. I want to learn how to do that.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. I'm not very good at this yet.         |



See below for answers.

▶ In what areas of your life do you have a fixed mindset? \_\_\_\_\_

▶ How can you turn that fixed mindset into a growth mindset? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Fixed 2. Growth 3. Fixed 4. Growth 5. Fixed 6. Fixed 7. Growth 8. Growth


# Deal with Stress

Middle school can sometimes be stressful, but there are lots of things you can do to reduce stress and feel more relaxed.

## Are you stressed?

Stress is your body's reaction to change, demands, or difficult situations. Stress is a part of life, but too much stress can have a negative impact on the way you feel, your relationships, and your success in school.

Think about the stress you have in your life and answer the following:

- | Yes                      | No                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you often feel overwhelmed?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have trouble sleeping?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you often feel frustrated, nervous, or angry?                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you get a lot of headaches or stomachaches?                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a hard time relaxing?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you eat too much or too little?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you feel dread or panic when thinking about everything you have to do? |
- 

How many did you check "Yes?" \_\_\_\_\_

Each of the above can be an indicator of stress, and the more times you checked "Yes," the more stress you are likely dealing with.

## Relaxation tips

Regardless of how much stress you have in your life, the following tips will help you relax and feel calm.

### 1. Take care of your mind and body

Get eight hours of sleep, eat healthy, and get regular exercise.

- Do you get enough sleep each night?  yes  sometimes  hardly ever
- How healthy is your diet?  very healthy  just ok  not great
- Are you physically active?  yes  sometimes  hardly ever

## 2. Confront your stressors

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

What in your life causes you stress? \_\_\_\_\_

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What can you do to deal with these stressors? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 3. Take time for yourself

Do something that has made you feel calm or happy in the past. Listen to music, go for a walk, play with a pet, or spend time in nature.

What do you do when you want to relax and feel calm? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 4. Get support

Confide in others when you're feeling stressed. Whether it's a friend, family member, spiritual leader, or counselor, it's much healthier to share your concerns than it is to go it alone.

Who can you talk to when you're feeling stressed? \_\_\_\_\_

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## 5. Try deep breathing

Close your eyes, relax your body, and imagine a relaxing scene, adding as many details as you can. Breathe in deeply, count to four, and exhale. Repeat several times.

**Try it!**

### Let it go

Remember, some things in life are beyond your control. If you are stressed over things you can't control or change, try to let those worries go completely.

# Think About Your Future: College

Graduation from high school is several years away, but it's not too early to start thinking about what you want to do after you graduate. Maybe you already know what you want to do, or maybe you have no idea. Both are ok!

While you don't need to make any decisions now, the choices you make in middle school can affect your high school years—and your future.

## Your college thoughts

Maybe you haven't thought too much about college yet—and that's okay. Over the next several years, you'll learn a lot about college, and about how continuing your education after high school will provide you with more options and opportunities in life.

List three things you know about college.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Write down one reason you think going to college might be a good thing for you to do.

\_\_\_\_\_

▶ Write down one question you have about college. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Check the box that describes how you feel about going to college.

- I definitely want to go to college and plan to work hard to get there.
- I think I want to go to college, but don't know enough about it.
- I don't know yet if college will be right for me.
- I'd like to go to college, but don't think I will be able to because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- I don't think going to college is right for me because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Your college to-do list

If you do want to go to college someday, there are some things you can do in middle school to get ready.

**1. Work hard in your classes.** Doing well in your classes and getting good grades pays off in lots of ways. And if you're considering going to college, it's very important that you work hard in your classes now so that you'll be ready to take college prep classes in high school.

What can you do this year to get the best grades possible? \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Get involved.** When you're involved in your school and community, you learn new skills, meet new people, and have fun. Participating in school activities and developing your interests and talents is a great way to spend your free time.

What activities are you planning to get involved in? \_\_\_\_\_

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What skills or interests do you want to develop this year? \_\_\_\_\_

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**3. Try something new.** Find out what kinds of activities, programs, and sports are available at your school and in your community. Middle school is a great time to try something new to see if you like it.

What's something new you would like to try this year? \_\_\_\_\_

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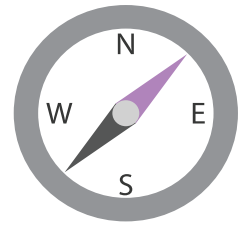
**4. Read.** Reading improves your vocabulary, provides you with new information and ideas, stokes your imagination, and broadens your view of the world. It also makes you a better, more successful student. Whether you enjoy reading novels or comic books, the more you read, the better.

What are your favorite things to read? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Think About Your Future: Career



Middle school is a great time to explore your career options, and start thinking about what kind of career you'd like to have someday.

## Your interests

When you're thinking about a career, it's important that you consider your interests—you want to have a career with activities and tasks you enjoy.

Circle the activity (A, B, or C) that's most appealing to you in each of the following 10 groups.

A	B	C
1. listen to people	repair cars	develop work schedules
2. give advice	cook meals	organize files
3. take care of people	build cabinets	write reports
4. coach kids	grow plants	design a building
5. guide tours	drive and deliver goods	plan events
6. interview people	work in a factory	create a budget
7. assist customers	assemble electronics	develop a website
8. manage people	inspect product quality	enter data in a computer
9. sell products	make art	write articles
10. speak in public	operate machinery	conduct research

Review your answers. Did you circle mostly As, Bs, or Cs? \_\_\_\_\_

Tasks in the A column are about working with **people**. They represent careers in which you spend most of your time talking to, teaching, or caring for others.

Can you think of a career in this category? \_\_\_\_\_

Tasks in the B column are about working with **things**. They represent careers in which you mostly work with your hands building, repairing, or creating.

Can you think of a career in this category? \_\_\_\_\_

Tasks in the C column are about working with **information**. They represent careers in which you spend most of your time on a computer dealing with information, data, words, and/or numbers.

Can you think of a career in this category? \_\_\_\_\_



## Your abilities

Considering your abilities, skills, and talents is very important when determining which careers will be a good match for you. *You are likely to be much happier and more successful in a career that focuses on your strengths!*

Sasha is thinking about being a science teacher, and she's wondering if she'd be good at it. So she wrote down the skills, abilities, and traits she thinks a good science teacher should have. She then put a check mark beside the ones she feels are a good match for her. She also put an X next the skills she needs to improve, and wrote down what she could do to work on those skills.



### Skills a Science Teacher Needs

- good with people ✓
- patient ✓
- creative ✓
- public speaking X *Speak up in class more*
- organized ✓
- good at science ✓
- good at explaining things to people X *Tutor my sister*

Think of a career that interests you and make a list of the traits, skills, and abilities you believe are necessary for that career.

**A career that interests you** \_\_\_\_\_

▶ What traits, skills, and abilities are needed for this career? \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Which of these traits, skills, or abilities do you want to work on developing this year? \_\_\_\_\_

▶ What will you do to help develop it? \_\_\_\_\_

# Reflect

We've covered a lot in this activity book, and you've done a lot of work to complete it. Great job! Here we'll reflect a little on what you've learned—and look ahead to the future!

What is your best memory from elementary school? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are you most looking forward to in middle school? \_\_\_\_\_

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What makes you nervous about being in middle school? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is there anything you need help with or have questions about? \_\_\_\_\_

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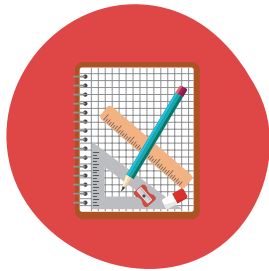
## Enjoy the journey

In middle school, you have new routines, new classes, new teachers—and there's a whole lot more going on. You're going to learn a lot, grow a lot, and have lots of fun!

Of course, succeeding in middle school takes hard work. For tips on how you can succeed in your classes and have a great middle school experience, watch this short video.



# Gear Up for Middle School



PREVIEW

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