



## Tips for a Great Year

### 6. Make good decisions

As a high school student, you're responsible for the choices and decisions you make.

### 7. Get to know your counselor

Your high school counselor can help you choose your classes, make career and college plans, and deal with any concerns you have.

*"I see my counselor if I have a problem or a question. He's helped me a lot."* Alyssa, junior

### 8. Be healthy and active

To be at your best, eat healthy foods, get regular exercise, and get plenty of sleep.

### 9. Plan for the future

Graduation may seem like a long way off, but it's not too early to start thinking about what you want to do after you graduate.

### 10. Give your best effort every day

Work hard in your classes. You want to have a high school record you can be proud of!

**Welcome to high school  
and have a great year!**

# Welcome to High School



## Tips for a Great Year

### 1. Be in school every day

Attendance is the #1 school success factor!

*"I try to never miss school. It's such a pain to make things up."* Tyler, sophomore

### 2. Get involved in school activities

Check out what activities are available and get involved in a couple. You'll have fun, meet new people, and develop new skills.

### 3. Know your school's rules

Know your school's procedures, rules, dress code, and athletic eligibility requirements.

### 4. Don't be afraid to ask for help

If you are having difficulty in a class, talk to your teacher.

*"Teachers are usually happy to help you, but you have to ask."* Jason, senior

### 5. Set goals

Setting goals is important. Get in the habit of regularly setting short-term and long-term goals for yourself.

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# What You Can Expect in High School



## Welcome to High School

Your high school years will be some of the most memorable years of your life. You will study new subjects, make new friends, and develop new skills. You'll also have a lot of fun.

Whenever you start something new, it's helpful to know what to expect. Here are some things you can expect to find in high school.

### New teachers and classmates

For many students, going to high school means going to a different, and often larger, school. For all students, it means new classes, new teachers, and new friends.

*"I was worried about going to high school, but it's great. Most of my classes are really interesting, and there's so much going on."* Ryan, freshman

### More courses to choose from

Most high schools offer a number of courses in a variety of subjects. Learn about the courses available to you, and choose your courses wisely.

*"I'm trying to take courses that will help prepare me for my future. I want to be a nurse, so I'm taking lots of math and science courses."* Mia, junior

### Greater need for organization

In high school, you have more activities, more homework, and more responsibilities. To keep up with everything, you need to be organized and have good time-management skills.

*"Between my schoolwork, soccer, and everything else I'm doing, I have to be organized!"* Josh, junior



### An emphasis on academics

In high school, the courses are more difficult and your grades are more important. Your high school grades will help determine the kinds of jobs you can get, and the colleges you'll be able to get into.

*"I'm taking college prep courses and working hard so that I can go to college. My goal is to have a 3.0 GPA when I graduate."* Maria, sophomore

### More extracurricular activities

Most high schools have lots of clubs, activities, and athletic programs for you to choose from.

*"Activities make school more fun. It's also a lot easier to make friends when you're involved in something like sports or band."* John, senior



### Consequences for failing grades

Students who fail classes may not have enough credits to advance to the next grade. These students may also find that they're not able to graduate on time.

*"I had to go to summer school because I slacked off last year. It wasn't fun."* Bella, junior

### More social events

There are more games, dances, and social events in high school. Some students feel that there's also more social pressure.

*"Find friends who have similar interests and who like you for who you are. And don't get too caught up in the social scene."* Kylie, sophomore

### More independence and responsibility

As a high school student, you are expected to be mature and responsible enough to handle the additional freedoms you're given.

# Academic Success



## Academic Requirements

**Make sure you understand your school's academic requirements.**

All high schools have specific requirements that students must meet in order to graduate. Most high schools also have requirements that students must meet in order to advance to the next grade level.

While graduation requirements vary from state to state and school to school, high school students generally must do the following to graduate:

- ▶ earn a minimum number of credits
- ▶ pass all required courses
- ▶ pass a state test (required in some states)

***As a high school student, you are responsible for keeping track of your credits and for making sure you're on track to graduate.***

If you have questions about your school's requirements or your academic record, see your counselor. Your counselor can go over your record with you and answer any questions you may have.

## Terms to Know

Every high school student should understand the terms "GPA" and "transcript."

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

*GPA is the average of a student's semester (or end-of-term) grades, starting with freshman year.*

Most high schools use a 4.0 scale in which an A=4, B=3, C=2, and D=1. Students who have all As have a 4.0 GPA. Students who have Bs in half their courses and Cs in the rest have a 2.5 GPA.

### Transcript

A transcript is a copy of a student's permanent high school record. It often includes the following information:

- ▶ grades and credits for each course completed, beginning with grade 9
- ▶ current cumulative GPA and class rank
- ▶ anticipated graduation date
- ▶ state graduation test scores (if required)
- ▶ college admission test scores (ACT, SAT)

Transcripts are used when an institution (such as a college) or a group (such as a scholarship committee) needs a copy of a student's academic record.

***"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."***  
Aristotle



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# Academic Success Tips



## Academic Success

In high school, you have a wide variety of courses to choose from, the courses are more demanding, and your grades are much more important.

The grades you earn in high school will help determine the kinds of jobs you'll be able to get and/or the colleges you will be able to get into.

Once you get to high school everything counts!

- ▶ The courses you take earn credits towards graduation.
- ▶ Your high school grades are used to figure your GPA (grade point average).
- ▶ Your grades, credits, and test scores will all be on your transcript (your official high school academic record).

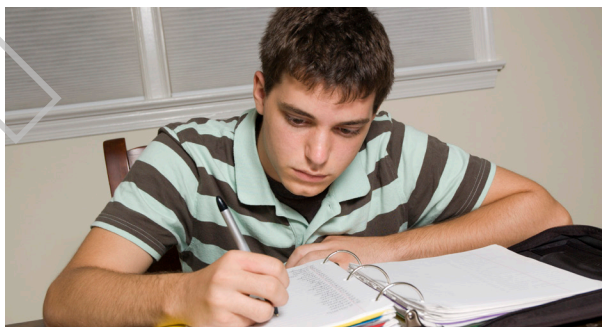
The following tips will help you succeed in your classes and have a high school record you can be proud of.

### Be organized

- ▶ Use a student planner to record assignments, tests, quizzes, and appointments.
- ▶ Keep your locker and backpack neat and clean.
- ▶ Make to-do lists and cross things off as they are completed.
- ▶ Get everything organized for the next day before you go to bed.

### Study smart

- ▶ Find a place to study that's quiet, well-lit, and comfortable.
- ▶ Turn off the TV and music—and *silence your phone*. Focus on the work you need to do.
- ▶ Make a plan. Decide what you want to get done, and the order in which you're going to do it.
- ▶ Do difficult assignments first, while you're still fresh and alert.
- ▶ Break large assignments and projects down into smaller, more manageable parts.



### Succeed in the classroom

- ▶ Be in school every day. *Attendance is the number one school success factor.*
- ▶ Ask and answer questions, and participate in class discussions.
- ▶ Keep your attention focused on what's being taught.
- ▶ Complete all of your homework.
- ▶ Take everything you need with you to class.
- ▶ Be respectful to your teachers and your classmates.
- ▶ Have a positive attitude and be confident in your ability to succeed.
- ▶ Ask for help when you need it.



### Be a good test taker

- ▶ Before you answer any questions, look over the entire test and make a plan. Decide how much time you want to spend on each section.
- ▶ If you aren't sure of an answer, go with your first instinct.
- ▶ Don't spend too much time on difficult questions—come back to them later.
- ▶ Use all of the time you're given and check all of your answers.



# Screen Time Survey

Answer the following questions to reflect on how technology is affecting your life.

Yes No

- I check my phone every few minutes.
- I often get anxious or angry if I can't use my phone and other devices.
- Once I start playing video games, I have a hard time stopping.
- I check social media all the time.
- I often stay up too late using my phone, playing video games, or watching videos.
- I text while others are talking to me.
- I feel anxious or upset when my phone or tablet battery is low.
- I check the same apps over and over again.
- I often use my phone when I'm not supposed to.
- Family members hassle me about being on my phone too much.

Give yourself 1 point for every Yes.

YOUR SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

*If you checked a lot of boxes "yes," perhaps it's time to think about (and maybe cut back on) the amount of time you spend on technology.*

# Technology & Social Media



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## Cyberbullying

**Cyberbullying is the use of electronic devices (cell phones, computers, tablets) to harass, threaten, or embarrass others. Here's what to do if it ever happens to you.**

**Don't respond.** Cyberbullies who don't get a reaction often get bored and quit.

**Block or delete.** Immediately block or delete the cyberbully's profile, number, or email.

**Tell an adult you trust.** Also tell your friends. Don't let anyone bully you into silence!

**If you are being threatened, it's serious.** If you've been threatened, it's important that you tell your parents what's going on.

**If you witness cyberbullying, do something.** If you see or hear about cyberbullying, intervene to stop it, support the person who was targeted, and/or report it to an adult.

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.

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# Technology & Social Media

**There's a lot to love about technology, but like everything in life, it's not perfect.**

While technology and social media can add a great deal to your life, they can also have some negative effects—especially on things that truly matter, like your relationships and your future.

It's important for you to pay attention to **how** you are using your devices, and to **how often** you're using them. It's also important for you to be careful, smart, and safe online.

***Your online life today can impact you for the rest of your life—positively or negatively. The choice is yours.***

## Make Good Decisions

Your parents and teachers want to keep you safe from all that's negative, false, or harmful online, but there's only so much they can do. You need to make good decisions for yourself.

### Be smart

- ▶ Create hard-to-guess passwords, change them regularly, and don't share them with anyone other than your parents.
- ▶ Don't download copyrighted music or videos from unauthorized platforms. It's illegal.
- ▶ Sending and receiving "sexy" pictures of yourself and/or classmates can be illegal. *Never send or share inappropriate photos or messages.*
- ▶ Most importantly, think for yourself. If something doesn't feel or sound right to you, it probably isn't. Use common sense and trust your instincts.

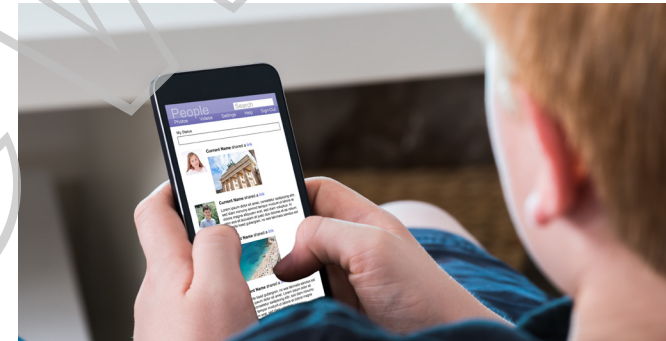
### Be safe

- ▶ Don't put personal information (address, school, favorite hangout, phone number) online.
- ▶ Do not meet face-to-face with someone you've met online.



## Digital Citizenship

Being a good digital citizen means that your online behavior is responsible and positive. It also means that you think critically about what you read online.



### Be positive and kind

- ▶ Be extra polite to people online. They can't see your expression or hear your tone of voice, so what you say can easily be misunderstood.
- ▶ Remember that permanent means *permanent*. Somebody will always have access to what you've sent or posted, and it can always be recovered. Only send or post things you feel comfortable with people seeing *forever*.
- ▶ Be smart. Only use social media for positive comments, kind words, and to support others.

### Think critically

- ▶ There's a great deal of information that is deceptive, misleading, or false online. Be sure to double check facts, especially for information found on social media sites.
- ▶ Think independently, clearly, and rationally, and consider the motivations of the author.



## College Timeline

Doing the following will help keep you and your college plans “on track.”

### 9th Grade

- ▶ Work hard to get good grades. Your freshman grades will be used to figure your GPA.
- ▶ Get involved in school activities.

### 10th Grade

- ▶ Take college prep courses and do your best.
- ▶ Increase your involvement in activities and develop your talents and skills.

### 11th Grade

- ▶ Start checking out your college options.
- ▶ Consider taking the PSAT/NMSQT in October and the ACT and/or SAT in the spring.
- ▶ Meet with your counselor to review your academic record and discuss college plans.
- ▶ Make college visits in the spring and summer.

### 12th Grade

- ▶ Take the ACT or SAT in the fall, if necessary.
- ▶ Complete college applications.
- ▶ If you need help paying for college, complete a FAFSA. For information, visit [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov).

## Paying for College

College can be expensive; however, there is a great deal of financial aid available. There are also lots of ways to cut college costs.

Financial aid comes in the following forms:

- ▶ **Grant** – money given, usually because of financial need (grants do not need to be repaid)
- ▶ **Scholarship** – money awarded for academic achievement and/or talent
- ▶ **Work-study** – money earned by working at a part-time job
- ▶ **Loan** – money that must be repaid

If you need help paying for college, talk to your counselor or contact the financial aid office at a college you’re considering. They can help you figure out how you can make college affordable.

For additional college information, visit the following websites:

[collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org)      [act.org](http://act.org)  
[educationplanner.org](http://educationplanner.org)      [finaid.org](http://finaid.org)

*For personal advice regarding your college plans, talk to your high school counselor.*

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## High School Success

# Planning for College



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## Choosing the Right College

## Admissions Criteria



# Planning for College

**A college education will open doors and provide you with a wide range of career choices and opportunities. Going to college, however, takes planning and preparation.**

### College Prep Courses

**If you want to go to college, take the recommended college prep courses and work hard to get good grades.**

Most 4-year colleges recommend that students take the following courses in high school:

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

**When choosing a college, consider the following.**

#### Type of College

- ▶ 2-year colleges offer affordable one- and two-year career programs. Students can also start at a community college and transfer to a 4-year college.
- ▶ 4-year colleges offer more courses and activities. A 4-year college education can open doors and prepare students for a wide variety of careers.

**Size** – Large colleges offer more programs and majors; small colleges are more personal.

**Location** – Looking for a college close to home? In your home state? In a big city? Close to nature?

**Academic Programs** – All colleges offer a variety of majors; but if you want to study a specific subject, you need to find a college that offers that major.

**Cost** – College costs vary greatly. When calculating college costs, include tuition, fees, room and board, books, and personal expenses.

**Admissions Requirements** – Some colleges accept all high school graduates. Others are very selective. Look for colleges that accept students with academic records similar to yours.

**Colleges use some, if not all, of the information listed below when determining whether or not to accept an applicant.**

#### GPA (Grade Point Average)

Colleges consider a student's GPA in college prep courses to be the most important admissions criteria. Colleges know that students who do well in high school are more likely to succeed in college.

#### Strength of Subjects

College admission officers examine high school transcripts carefully to see if students have taken the recommended college prep courses.

#### Test Scores

The majority of 4-year colleges now have a test-optional policy; however, ACT/SAT scores are required by some colleges. Unless students are sure they will not be required to submit test scores, they should take the ACT or SAT.

#### Extracurricular Activities

Colleges are most interested in seeing meaningful involvement, commitment, and evidence of leadership. Quality is more important than quantity.

#### Recommendations

Colleges often ask for letters of recommendation from counselors and/or teachers.







# Your career plan

To make a career plan, state your career goal, and then list the specific things you need to do to reach your goal.

For example, here is Carlo's career plan

*My Career Goal: Engineering Technologist*

*Steps to reach my goal:*

- 1) *Take math and science courses in high school.*
- 2) *Get a summer job to save money for college.*
- 3) *Apply to the community college my senior year.*
- 4) *Study engineering technology in college.*
- 5) *Get an engineering technology job.*

Your Career Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to Reach Your Goal

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For information to help you plan your career, go to [careeronestop.org](http://careeronestop.org). For personal advice, talk to your high school counselor.

*Things happen for people who make them happen. Take control of your life, make a plan, and work hard. You are sure to find success!*

# Career Planning



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## STEP 3 – Consider your education options

Students today have a number of ways they can prepare for a career. Which of the following options will be the best choice for you?

### Four-Year College

A four-year college education (bachelor's degree) can provide students with a wide range of career opportunities.

### Two-Year College

Community colleges offer affordable career programs. Students can also start at a community college and transfer to a four-year college.

### Career and Trade School

Career and trade schools offer short-term training in a number of career fields. Some programs last only a few weeks; others take a year or more to complete.

### Apprenticeship

Apprentices learn a skilled trade through classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

### Military

The U.S. military offers enlistees free job training in over 2,000 job specialties.

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Career Planning

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## STEP 1 – Do a Self-Assessment



A career that's perfect for one person may be totally wrong for another. You need to choose a career that's going to be a good match for *your* interests, talents, abilities, and values.

Here are a few questions to help you get started with your self-assessment.

1. What classes do you like the best? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What activities and hobbies do you enjoy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What talents and skills do you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you want a career that requires  
 1 or 2 years (or less) of additional education  
 2 to 4 years of college
5. What's important to you in a career (such as money, adventure, helping people)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Career Planning

A career plan is a map for your future! You wouldn't go on a trip without information on where you were going and how to get there. If you did, who knows where you would end up.

It is the same with your career. To prepare for your future, you need to know where you're going and how you're going to get there. You need to have a career plan!

To develop a career plan, go through the following steps:

STEP 1 – Do a self-assessment.

STEP 2 – Research your career choices.

STEP 3 – Consider your education options.

STEP 4 – Create your career plan.

*Make your career plan based on who you are today, but know that you can always choose a different career path in the future.*

## STEP 2 – Research Your Career Choices

Below are seven career fields and some examples of each. Which of these fields seem like a good fit for you?

**Business** – accountant, banker, business manager, paralegal, receptionist, salesperson

**Education** – principal, professor, teacher (high school, middle school, elementary)

**Healthcare** – dental hygienist, nurse, paramedic, pharmacist, physical therapist, veterinarian



**Human Services** – child care worker, firefighter, flight attendant, police officer, social worker

**Science and Technology** – biologist, chemist, computer support specialist, engineer technologist, environmental scientist, systems analyst

**Skilled Trades** – carpenter, construction worker, electrician, machinist, mechanic, plumber, welder

**The Arts** – actor, dancer, disc jockey, graphic artist, interior designer, musician, photographer

*Choose a career field that looks interesting and learn about the careers available in that field. For information on a career, visit [www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh).*



## Don't go it alone

Your teachers, counselor, and principal all want to see you graduate. Work with them, and don't hesitate to ask for help.

► **Talk to your counselor.**

Your high school counselor can help you come up with a plan for graduation.

If you are struggling in school, perhaps there's a career or vocational program that would be appropriate for you.

If you are behind in credits, your counselor may recommend summer school or an online course. If you aren't able to graduate with your class, that's OK. Graduating a semester or year later is better than not graduating at all.

► **Have a support person at school.**

Find someone at your school you can talk to and who will support you. This may be your counselor, or it may be a teacher or coach.

► **Ask your family for their support.**

Talk to family members and let them know that your goal is to graduate from high school. Ask for their help and support.

*"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."*

Walt Disney

## Dropping out is never the answer

Most of the students who consider dropping out of school have a hard time in their classes, a difficult personal life, or both. As a general rule, one or more of the following statements describe their situation or how they feel:

- I don't fit in at school.
- I have difficulty with schoolwork.
- I have friends who have dropped out.
- I need to care for younger siblings.
- I don't feel safe at school.
- I must work to help support my family.
- I often drink alcohol and/or use drugs.
- I must deal with difficult situations at home.
- I am a parent myself.

If you can relate to any of the above, you are not alone. While all of the above make finishing high school more difficult, with help, you can overcome any obstacle and graduate.

If you are dealing with problems or issues that make staying in school difficult, get some help. You don't need to go it alone.

# Make Graduation Your Goal



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# Graduation Rewards



## Make Graduation Your Goal

Graduating from high school and getting your diploma is definitely a goal worth striving for.

Having a diploma will provide you with greater opportunities and numerous rewards. Graduating from high school is an achievement that you can be proud of for the rest of your life!

*The rewards that come with getting a high school diploma make it well worth the effort!*

Approximately one out of every ten students doesn't finish high school. It's almost impossible, however, to find someone who's dropped out of school who doesn't regret it.

Here are six reasons why it's important to stay in school and graduate.

### 1. Greater income and better lifestyle

High school graduates earn an average of 40% more than those who don't finish high school. High school graduates who continue their education earn even more. A greater income means a better lifestyle—nicer car, better place to live, and extra money for travel and vacations.

### 2. More job options

The unemployment rate for high school graduates is about half what it is for dropouts. Graduates also have better jobs to choose from.

*Many employers consider a high school diploma to be a minimum requirement. They see having a diploma as an indication of a person's ability to work hard and follow through.*



### 3. More education options

A high school diploma is your ticket to a wide range of educational opportunities. With a high school diploma, you can go to a two-year or four-year college or university.

### 4. Greater career opportunities

High school dropouts generally don't have careers. They have jobs.

With a diploma and just one or two years of additional education, you can have a promising career in healthcare, human services, computer science, business, or a skilled trade.

### 5. Greater knowledge and skills

The knowledge you gain and the skills you develop in high school will help you throughout your life.

Whether it's having the math skills to set up a budget, the skills to write a good letter, or the ability to talk intelligently about what's happening in the world, your high school courses will help you become a more capable, confident, and interesting person.

### 6. Sense of pride

Perhaps the biggest reason to stay in high school and graduate is a sense of personal satisfaction and pride.

*Having your high school diploma is an accomplishment you can be proud of!*

