

What to Expect

Most students feel excited, and a little nervous, when they start high school. But, if you know what to expect, you are likely to feel more confident and relaxed.

Here are some things you can expect to find in high school—and some advice to help you feel more on top of things those first few weeks.

New teachers and lots of new classmates

While this may seem overwhelming at first, remember, everyone in your grade is in the same boat. In a few short days, things won't seem so new, and you'll be on your way to knowing all of your teachers—and your new classmates.



A new schedule

Your schedule probably contains classes you've never taken before. Check your schedule carefully to make sure that it's correct.

If you think there may be a mistake, or that you are in a wrong class, see your counselor right away.



More challenging classes with more homework

Your high school courses are likely to be more difficult, but you are smarter now. It is, however, important that you work hard—*right from day one*—to make sure that your classes get off to a good start.



More extracurricular opportunities

Getting involved in school activities is a great way to meet new people and have fun. Some activities may have sign ups just days or weeks after school starts.

Find out what activities your school offers, and learn how you can get involved!

A lot more to keep up with

High school students have more activities, more homework, and more responsibilities than they have ever had before. To keep up with everything, you need to be organized and have good time management skills.

We have some great advice on organization and time management—but we'll get to that later.

Everything Counts Now

Here's a very important fact: Once you get to high school, everything counts.



Your courses now earn credits

All of your courses earn credits that go towards fulfilling your high school's graduation requirements. Many schools also have specific requirements that students must meet in order to advance to the next grade. For example, freshmen who fail classes may not have enough credits to become sophomores.

Freshman grades are part of your high school GPA

Your freshman grades will be used to figure your high school grade point average (GPA). Your Grade Point Average is important because colleges and employers will use it to help determine what kind of student or employee you will be.

Your permanent record starts now

Starting in ninth grade, the courses you take, the grades and credits you earn, and your test scores all become part of your permanent record. If and when you apply to college, a copy of your permanent record—called a transcript—is sent to the college, along with your application. *This transcript will have all of your freshman courses and grades on it.*

You want to make sure your high school transcript is one that you can be proud of.

Things You Need to Know

Your high school has rules and regulations that they expect you to know and follow. These are probably explained in your school's student handbook. If you have questions, go to the office or see your counselor. Be informed and learn what you need to know.

- **I'm late. What do I do?**

What happens if you are late or absent? Does a parent need to call if you're not going to be in school? Are there consequences for being absent or tardy a certain number of times?

- **We're not allowed to do that?**

Most school rules are common sense (e.g., no bullying, weapons, or alcohol); but some things are specific to your school, like the dress code. Go through your handbook so that you know what's acceptable, and what's out of bounds.

- **I want to play a sport. Am I eligible?**

High schools have eligibility requirements for students who want to play a sport—and often for students involved in other activities as well. If you have a concern or question about eligibility, see your coach, counselor, or athletic director.



Get Organized - 5 Great Tips



Being organized makes your day run smoother and it saves you time. It also helps you feel like you're in control and on top of things.

Get your year off to a great start by using these tips to get organized—and to stay organized.

1

Have the right tools

Just as a carpenter can't build a cabinet without a hammer and nails, you need the right tools to be a successful student. You need paper, pencils, pens, a calculator, and a backpack. You also need to have a notebook(s) for your notes, and a folder for each class.

Organize your papers

Unless your school has gone paperless, you will have lots of papers—homework, returned tests, class notes, handouts, etc. There is a saying: *A place for everything and everything in its place.* This should be true for every paper you have.



Josh, who is very organized, has the following:

- ▶ a 3-ring notebook for notes (with a tab for each class)
- ▶ a different colored pocket folder for each class
- ▶ a file at home for returned tests and the papers he wants to keep

3 Use a student planner

Many students have planners, but they don't use them like they should. Using a planner is a great way to keep yourself organized and on track! Here are a few tips.

Planner Tips

- ▶ Write each assignment under the date it's assigned. Also write in the date it's due.
- ▶ Check off assignments when they are done.
- ▶ Write in all quiz and test dates.
- ▶ If you have a large assignment or project, give yourself smaller assignments and write these in your planner.
- ▶ Write in special events, practices, appointments, social activities, and anything else you want to remember.

Subject	Monday, September 19
English	✓ Read pages 5-10 - Due Tues.
Math	✓ Do all problems on p. 25 - Due Wed
History	★ Quiz on Chapter 3
Science	✓ Do Review Questions - Due Wed
Spanish	✓ Vocabulary - page 10 - Due Tues
	Deafest 4:00
	John's birthday

4

Have routines

Have a morning routine that gets your day off to a good start, and a nighttime routine that gets you to bed on time.

- ▶ Your morning routine should include getting up early enough so that you can eat a good breakfast and not be rushed.
- ▶ Your nighttime routine should include getting everything organized and in your backpack for the next day. If there's something you need to remember to do in the morning, write yourself a note.

5

Keep it clean

When your locker and backpack are neat, clean, and organized, it's much easier to locate materials.

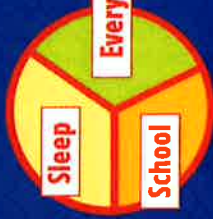
Manage Your Time

We all have the same amount of time: 24 hours a day / 168 hours a week. How we use our time is called time management.

Consider this:

In each 24 hour day, you spend about 8 hours sleeping (or at least you should) and 8 hours in school.

That leaves 8 hours for everything else.



- Eating
- Homework / Studying
- Sports / Exercise
- Entertainment
- Everything Else**
- Work / Chores
- Friends & Family
- Hobbies
- Relaxing

Here is some advice that will help ensure that you make the most of the time you have each day.

Use class time wisely

Use any extra time in class to look over your homework—and if you have a study hall, use it. Doing these things will reduce the amount of time you need to spend on homework at night.

Make To Do lists

Each day make a list of all the things you need to do, and then cross things off as they get done. At the end of each day, take the tasks that didn't get done and put them on the next day's list.

Limit time wasters

Social media, TV, and video games are fun—but they can very easily gobble up too much of your time. Schedule small chunks of time for these activities, and stick to your schedule.

Class Success

Start the year off by promising yourself that you will make the most of the time you spend in class. If you do, your classes will go faster, you'll have less to do on your own, and you'll get better grades.

Here's some advice to help make this happen.



Participate in class

Participating in class makes the class more interesting, and it helps keep your mind focused. Ask questions, volunteer answers, and participate in discussions. You'll learn more, and your teachers will be impressed.

Know your teachers

Think about what's important to your teachers. Are they strict about rules? Do they give points for participation?

Have a positive attitude

Go to your classes ready to learn and confident in your ability to succeed.



Come to class with your homework done

In many classes, homework is a significant portion of your final grade. (If you haven't read the short story that was assigned in English, you aren't going to get nearly as much out of the class discussion.)

Ask for help

Teachers are usually happy to help you, but you have to ask. If you're struggling in a class, get help early.

Top 10 Study Smart Tips

Students who “study smart” often spend less time studying, and yet they get better grades. Here’s how you can study smart.



- 10** Have a place to study that’s quiet, well lit, and comfortable.
- 9** If you have a lot to do, prioritize your work. You want to make sure that you have enough time for the things that are the most important.
- 8** Do difficult assignments first, while you’re still fresh and alert.
- 7** If you have something to memorize, work on that first. Then go over it again at the end of your study session.
- 6** Alternate types of homework (read English, work on math, read history).
- 5** If you have something that seems overwhelming, break it down into smaller parts.
- 4** Before you begin, make a plan. Decide what you want to get done and the order you’re going to do it.

Read History pages 8–15
Do math problems page 10
Read Biology pages 20–25

- 3** Always allow more time than you think you’ll need.
- 2** Set a time to start on your homework—and stick to it.
- 1** Turn off the TV and music, and silence your phone. Focus on the work you need to do.

More than Classes



Of course your classes and grades are important, but high school is so much more than classes. High school is a time for you to make new friends, develop new skills, and expand your horizons. Make the most of this opportunity to discover who you are and where your talents and strengths lie.

High school is like anything else—the more you get out of it.

Get Involved

Students who are involved in school activities generally do better academically, and they enjoy school more. Find out what activities are available at your school and become involved in one or two. It’s a great way to meet new people!

Make new friends

Go out of your way to talk to other students—the students in your classes, those you see at lunch, and the students who are involved in the same activities as you are. Smile, be friendly, and seek out students who have the same interests and values as you do.

If you’re shy, start conversations by asking a question such as “Who do you have for English?” or by giving a compliment. “That’s a really cool jacket.” Remember, everyone in your grade is new to high school, and they are all learning how to navigate this new world, just as you are.

Where to Go for Help

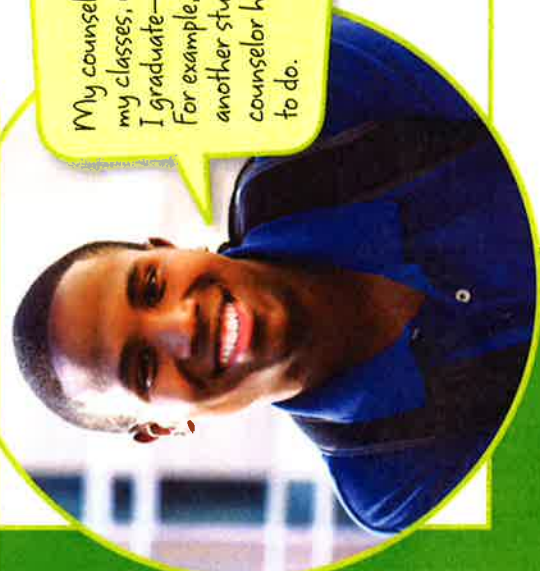
At some point, you're probably going to have a question or problem that you need help with. You can usually get your questions answered and your problems taken care of just by going to the right office, or by talking to the right person. **But you need to take the initiative.** If you have a question or need help, be sure to let someone know.

If you have a problem and don't know who to talk to, see your counselor. Your counselor can help you with any question or problem you may have.

Find out who your counselor is—and how you go about making an appointment to see him/her.

If you look around your school, you'll find teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, tutors, coaches, and secretaries. All of these people are there to help you have the best high school experience possible!

My counselor has helped me choose my classes, decide what to do after I graduate—and lots of other things. For example, I had a problem with another student once, and my counselor helped me figure out what to do.



Advice from Students

I used to not work very hard at the beginning of the semester. Then I'd have to work like crazy to bring my grades up. This semester, I got off to a good start in all of my classes. My grades are a lot better, and I'm not all stressed out.

Kayla, junior



Don't get caught up in the social scene, and don't worry about being part of the "in crowd." Choose friends who have similar interests and who you can be yourself with. Megan, sophomore



Think about the consequences of what you do. I got caught drinking during football season and I couldn't practice or play for three weeks. I felt like I let my team down—and it was so hard to watch the games and not be able to play. John, junior



I didn't like school that much last year. But this year I work in the office and I'm playing soccer. I know more people now and school's more fun. Sophia, sophomore



Don't wish your high school years away. They go really fast. Enjoy it! Owen, senior

