

Know What to Expect in High School

People experience greater success when they know what to expect. In high school, expect to find the following:

More Courses to Choose From

Most high schools offer courses in a variety of subject areas (English, science, music, foreign language, business, art, etc.).

New Teachers and Classmates

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

More Extracurricular Activities and Athletic Programs

Most high schools have a number of clubs, activities, and athletic programs available for their students.

More Independence and More Responsibility

High school students are expected to be mature and responsible enough to handle the additional freedoms they're given.

Greater Emphasis on Academic Achievement

In high school, the courses are more difficult, and the grades are more important. High school grades help determine the kinds of jobs students can get, and the colleges they'll be able to get into.

More Social Events

There are lots of social activities in high school (games, dances, etc.). Some students also find that there's more social pressure.

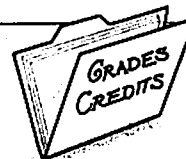
Consequences for Failing Classes

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.

Greater Need for Time Management and Organization

High school students have more activities, more homework, and more responsibilities than they've ever had before.

Follow these ten steps, and you'll have a great high school experience!



Step One - Understand Your Academic Record

It's important that you understand your high school's academic requirements and policies. It's also important for you to know what information is included in your academic record.

Academic Requirements

In order to graduate, you must fulfill your high school's academic requirements. Take a minute now and see if you can answer the questions below about the academic requirements at your high school.

1. How many credits is a year-long academic course like English worth? _____
2. How many credits do you need in order to advance to the 10th grade? _____ 11th? _____ 12th? _____ to graduate? _____
3. What happens if you don't have the credits you need to advance to the next grade? _____
4. Of the courses you're currently taking, which ones are required for graduation? _____
5. Is there a state-required test that you must pass in order to graduate? _____ If yes, when do you take it? _____

If you don't know the answer to any of the above questions, ask a teacher or talk to your counselor. If you ever have a question regarding your academic record, see your counselor.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Grade point average, or GPA, is simply the average of a student's semester (or end of term) grades, starting with the freshman year. Although there are variations, 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 grade point average. Students who have Bs in half their courses and Cs in the rest have a 2.5 GPA.

Some schools have "weighted grades" for honors, AP (Advanced Placement), and/or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses. If a high school has weighted grades, then a grade in a weighted course is worth more than it is in a non-weighted course. For example, an A in an honors course might be worth five points instead of the usual four points. *While a variety of methods are used to determine GPA, the higher your grades, the higher your GPA.*

To understand how your high school figures grade point averages, you need to know if your school uses quarter, semester, or end-of-year grades. If your school has courses with weighted grades, you also need to know how much the grades in these courses are worth. To find out what your GPA is, see your counselor.

"I'm a junior now, and I really didn't pay too much attention to my grades until this year. To be honest, I didn't even know what a GPA was until a few months ago. I'm trying to bring my grade point average up now, but it's just so hard to do as a junior. I really wish I would have thought about this earlier." James

Class Rank

Many high schools use class rank to show where students stand in relation to the other members of their class. The student with the highest GPA is number one, the student with the second highest GPA is number two, etc. Class rank is usually written as two numbers (e.g., 35/295). The first number represents a student's place in the class, and the second number represents the total number of students in the class. Because GPAs are used to determine class rank, you must have a high GPA in order to have an impressive class rank.

High School Transcript

A high school transcript is a document that details a student's academic achievement in grades 9-12. A transcript is, quite simply, a copy of a student's high school record. Although the appearance of the high school transcript varies from school to school, high school transcripts generally contain the following information:

1. Grades and credits for each course completed, beginning with grade 9
2. Attendance records
3. Current cumulative GPA and class rank
4. Anticipated graduation date
5. State graduation test scores (if required)
6. College test scores

An *official* transcript has a signature, stamp, or seal verifying its authenticity. An *unofficial* transcript is exactly the same as an official transcript, except that it has no signature, stamp, or seal. Students can usually get an unofficial transcript (to check their credits or to take on a college visit) by going to their guidance/counseling office.

Transcripts are used when a high school, organization, or college needs an official copy of a student's academic record. For example, if you were to transfer to another high school, your new high school would need to have a record of the courses you've taken, the grades and credits you've earned, etc. Your new school would, therefore, ask your current high school to send them an official transcript.

Colleges need to see a transcript in order to determine whether or not an applicant meets their admission requirements. Colleges, therefore, generally require that a transcript be submitted along with a student's application for admission. A transcript is also usually required when a student applies for a scholarship.

The sample transcript on the following page will give you an idea of what a high school transcript might look like.

Sample Transcript

TRANSCRIPT OF CREDITS CENTER HIGH SCHOOL

868 S. Bradley St., Dayton, Ohio 45428

Telephone: (937)255-5555

This is to certify that John R. Woods Birth Date 6-17-90 M F
of 222 Delta Lane Dayton, Ohio 45428 Entered 8-20-01
Parent/Guardian Mike and Mary Woods Withdrew _____
Student ranks 38 of 132 at end of 8 semesters with an _____ Re-entered _____
accumulative grade point average of 3.4957 based on a four point scale. _____ Will Graduate _____
An "add-on" factor of .06 is added to the GPA for each Advanced Placement course taken with an earned grade of C or higher. _____ Graduated 6-3-08

9	Sem	Sem	Yr	Cr	10	Sem	Sem	Yr	Cr
English I	B	B	B	1.00	English IIIH	B	A-	A-	1.00
Geometry H	B	A+	A	1.00	Journalism (Newspaper)	B	A-	A-	1.00
Earth Science	B+	A	A	1.00	World History	B+	A-	A-	1.00
Spanish I	A	B	A-	1.00	Algebra IIH	A-	A	A	1.00
Keyboarding	A		A	0.50	Biology	A-	B	B+	1.00
Hypercard		A	A	0.50	Spanish II	A	A	A	1.00
Physical Education	A-		A-	0.25	Economics	A-	A-	A-	0.50
Health	A	A	A	0.50	Graphic Arts I	A-		A-	0.50
Spanish I (grades 7 & 8)				A/B+ NC					
Algebra I (grade 8)				B+ NC					
11	Sem	Sem	Yr	Cr.	12	Sem	Sem	Yr	Cr
English IIIH	B	B	B	1.00	English IVH	B-	B	B	1.00
Trigonometry/Algebra IIIH	A-	B	B+	1.00	Calculus AP	C	C	C	1.00
American History	A-	A	A-	1.00	Physics	B-	C	C+	1.00
Spanish III	B	B-	B-	1.00	Spanish IV	A-	B+	A-	1.00
Chemistry	B+	C+	B-	1.00	Public Speaking	A		A	0.50
Journalism (Yearbook)	A	A	A	1.00	Government	A		A	0.50

TEST RECORD

LAST WOODS	TEST DATE	GRADE	TEST	DATE	SCORE	TEST	DATE	SCORE
	11		SAT CR	11/11/07	23	SAT W	11/11/07	23

WOODS JOHN R	ACT Assessment*	TEST DATE	11/11/07	SCORE	23
	ACT	NATIONAL			

Scale: A(94-100); B(87-93); C(77-86); D(70-76); F(below 70); P(Pass)
H - Honors AP - Advanced Placement
HH - High Honors (AP Prep) SS - Summer School
B/AC/AG - Basic Studies/Adjusted Curriculum/Adjusted Grade
College recommending grade - C
School accredited by the North Central Association and the State of Ohio
School Test Code: 610-200

Length of Period _____ 48 min

Credits required for graduation _____ 20

Signature of Principal

*When you become a freshman, everything starts to "count."
Your freshman courses, grades, and credits will be on your transcript, and your grades will be used to figure your GPA.*

COURSES

RULES

POLICIES

Step Two

Know Your School

Most high schools have a student handbook that explains their attendance and tardy policies, code of conduct, rules, dress code, etc. Make sure that you understand your school's rules and procedures, and that you know where to go for help.

School Calendar

Your high school probably puts out a calendar that shows when each grading period begins and ends, when report cards come out, and when your school will be closed for holidays and vacations. At the beginning of each year, write all of these dates in your student planner and put them on your calendar at home.

Attendance and Tardy Policies

All schools have policies that encourage regular attendance. Know what your school's attendance and tardy policies are and what you're supposed to do if you're ever absent or tardy. Does a parent need to call the school? Do you need to bring in a note? Do you need to report to the office first?

You are expected to be in school every day unless you are ill. If you have a health problem or an extended illness, have a parent call the attendance office or the principal and explain what's going on. If you're absent for more than a day or two, try to get some work to do at home so that you don't get too far behind.

It doesn't matter whether you're in high school, college, or working at a job, you're expected to be there every day on time. You're expected to dress appropriately, and you're expected to be courteous to the people around you. You are also expected to give your best effort each day. School rules are really "rules for life."

Code of Conduct / School Rules

In order to provide students with a safe environment that encourages learning, schools need to have rules regarding student conduct and behavior. Most students understand that rules are necessary, and they follow them. For the students who don't follow the rules, there are consequences.

Consequences can range anywhere from detention to expulsion. The severity of the consequence generally depends on the seriousness of the offense and the past history of the student(s) involved. While rules vary from school to school, no high school will allow weapons, drugs, violence, smoking, alcohol, intimidation, or bullying.

All students need to take an active role in making their high school a safe, inviting place to learn. If you ever feel threatened, or if you become aware of a situation that may put you or someone else at risk, tell a teacher, principal, or counselor immediately.

If you ever have a question or concern about a rule or policy, talk to your counselor or principal.

"School rules are common sense. Just follow them." Zach

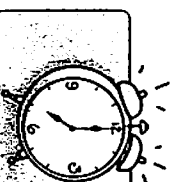
"It seems to me that school rules are only preparing us for what we'll have to deal with later." Cheri

Athletic Eligibility

In addition to their state's eligibility requirements, many schools have their own requirements that students must meet before playing a sport. Athletes, for example, may be required to maintain a minimum GPA in a certain number of classes. At many high schools, these same eligibility requirements also apply to students who participate in other activities (cheerleading, student government, etc.).

Know your school's eligibility requirements. If you have a question or concern about eligibility, see your counselor, principal, coach, or athletic director.

"I have a friend who didn't get very good grades at the end of last year. Now he's ineligible and he can't play football. He was our best lineman too." Brad



Step Three Be In School Every Day

To succeed in high school, you must have good attendance.

When you miss school, you miss lectures, notes, class discussions, homework explanations, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn't matter how good you are about making up your work, you can never make up everything you miss, even if you're out of school for only one day. *In order to get good grades, you need to be in school every day!*

If you must be absent from school, remember that you are responsible for finding out what you missed and for getting all of the work made up. You, of course, are also responsible for arranging to make up any quizzes or tests that you missed.

Since teachers usually don't have time to talk to students during class, see your teachers before or after class, and ask them when they might have time to talk to you. Once you find out what you need to do, make the work up as soon as possible.

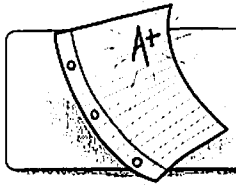
If you know that you are going to miss school, tell your teachers ahead of time and ask for assignments.

"Don't miss school. You will get behind. The smartest kid I know only has a 2.5 grade point average because of all the school he's missed." Desrae

"I try never to miss school. It's such a pain to make things up." Greg

"It's simple. The more school you miss, the less you learn. The less you learn, the lower your grade." Casey

*Good attendance will not guarantee you good grades.
If you have poor attendance, however, you are
pretty much guaranteed to get poor grades.*



Step Four - Know How to Get Good Grades

If you come to school every day and do the following, you are certain to get good grades.

Be Organized

- Use a student planner or an assignment notebook every day.
- Have a separate pocket folder for each class.
- Have phone numbers for classmates.
- Keep your locker and backpack neat.
- Get everything organized for the next day before you go to bed.

"Using a planner keeps me organized. It also helps me get things done on time." James

Manage Your Time Well

- Use any extra time in school to get started on your homework.
- Create a study plan that works for you.
- Break large assignments down into smaller parts.

"Time management is a problem for me, so each day I make a To Do list for myself. I prioritize the items on the list to make sure that I do the most important things first." Tamika

Be Successful in the Classroom

- Learn how to adapt to different teaching styles.
- Be in class, on time, every day.
- Know each teacher's class rules and procedures.
- Bring everything you need to class.
- Always do your homework.
- Participate in class.
- Don't leave class with unanswered questions.
- Treat others with courtesy and respect.

"To get good grades, I study, I do all of my homework, and I ask questions if I don't understand something." Antonio

Take Good Notes

- Be an active listener (think about what's being said).
- Recognize and write down important information.
- Take notes that are neat and easy to read.
- If you're absent, get copies of the notes you missed.

"I remember things better if I write them down, so I take notes whenever I can. Later, I go back over my notes and I highlight the information that's most important." Melissa

Know How to Read a Textbook

- Before you start to read, look over the headings and the words in **bold** and *italic* print.
- Read the assignment.
- Review what you've read.

"I have a couple of classes with a lot of reading. I really try not to get behind - it's just too hard to catch up." Marcus

Study Smart

- Find a good place to study.
- Organize your study time.
- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Allow more time for homework than you think you'll need.
- Know how to use a computer to write papers and do research.
- Use "tricks" to help you memorize things.

"Before I start to study, I make a plan. I figure out what I need to do and the order I'm going to do it in." Min-Jung

Use Test-Taking Strategies

- Have everything you need for the test (pencils, calculator, etc.).
- Before you start, look over the entire test and develop a plan.
- Mark the questions you want to return to.
- Check your answers and use all of the time available.

"As soon as I get my test, I write any facts, dates, or equations that I need to remember at the top of my test. Then when I need the information, it's right there." Cheri



Step Five Set Goals

Setting goals is important for people of all ages. Get in the habit of setting both short-term and long-term goals.

Setting goals helps you determine where you want to go and what you want to accomplish. Goals give you focus, direction, and purpose. Having a goal also helps you determine a plan of action. For example, if your goal is to go to college, there are specific things that you must do in order to achieve your goal.

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: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Timed.

Let's say, for example, that you've decided that your goal for the semester is to "try harder in math." This goal is not specific, it's not measurable, and there's no timetable. A much better goal would be to "get a B in math this semester." This goal is specific, it's measurable, and it's timed (there's a timetable with a definite end). This goal is also action-oriented, and it's realistic.

At the beginning of each term, set three academic and three non-academic goals for yourself. Once you've set your goals, make a list of the specific things that you need to do to reach each goal.

"For every class I take, I set a goal based on what grade I think I can get. This gives me something to work for and it keeps me focused on what I want to accomplish." Maria

"I'm always setting goals for myself. For example, my new goal is to save enough money to buy a used car by the end of next summer." Marcus

Write your goals down.

Studies have shown that you are more likely to achieve a goal that's written down.



Step Six Get Involved

High school is like anything else - the more you put into it, the more you get out of it.

Students who are involved in activities do better academically and they enjoy high school more. Being involved in school activities provides you with the opportunity to do the following:

Spend Time with Friends and Meet New People

"Marching band has changed my life. We are all friends and we just enjoy being together. It is so much fun." Meghan

Become a Leader

"Being on student council has helped me gain confidence and develop the skills that I need to be a leader." Shinichi

Enjoy School More

"I didn't really like school that much last year. This year I'm an office assistant and I'm on the track team. I know more people now, and school is a lot more fun." James

Provide a Valuable Service

"My work on the school newspaper is really important to me. I've made lots of new friends, and I feel like I am doing something useful." Melissa

Try Something New

"My speech teacher told me that I should try out for the school play. I'd never been in a play before, but I ended up getting one of the leads." Brad

Relieve Stress

"I get rid of a lot of stress during soccer practice. It's great to be with my friends and just forget about school for a while." Tamika

Have Activities to Put on Applications

"Last summer I got a great job at a camera store. I know that the main reason I got the job was because I take pictures for our school yearbook. My counselor also tells me that my activities will look good on college and scholarship applications." Maria

Develop a Variety of Skills and Talents

"I'm in orchestra and although I'm not the best musician, I'm getting better - and I'm having a really good time." John

Have Fun

"School activities are half the fun of high school!" Kelly

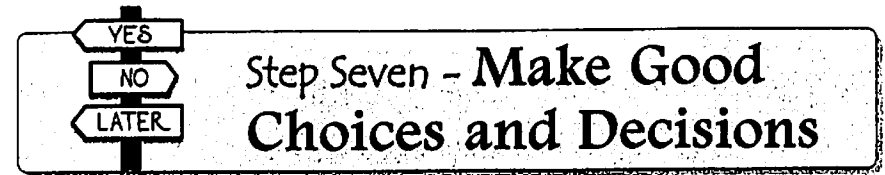
I have been a high school counselor for twenty years. Each year I ask all my seniors to complete a questionnaire before they graduate. The last question on this questionnaire is, "What do you wish you would have done differently in high school?"

Every year for the past twenty years, the number one response to this question has been, "I wish I would have gotten more involved in school activities." Mrs. Johnson

All high schools have some, if not all, of the following: theater programs, athletic teams, leadership organizations, music programs, service organizations, and special interest clubs. Students can also usually work as office aides or teacher assistants. There is definitely an organization, club, team, or activity for everyone.

Find out what extracurricular activities are available at your high school and become involved in two or three. You will make new friends, you'll gain new skills, and you'll be doing something positive for your school. You will also have a lot of fun!

If you don't know what activities are available, or if you need additional information, go to the office or talk to your counselor. Also, listen to announcements, and check your school's Web site.



Step Seven - Make Good Choices and Decisions

When you make good choices and decisions, you reap the rewards. When you make poor choices and decisions, you suffer the consequences.

You're required to make lots of decisions in high school. It is, therefore, important that you have good decision-making skills. To help you make decisions that are going to be right for you, go through these four steps whenever you have a difficult decision to make.

- 1) Determine what your choices are.
- 2) Write down the positive and negative things about each choice.
- 3) Make sure that you have all the information you need.
- 4) Think about your choices, and then make a decision.

Tonya needs to take a course that's now being offered in summer school. She has two choices: A) Take the course in summer school, or B) Take the course next year. To help her make her decision, Tonya made a list of the positive and negative things about each choice.

A. Taking the Course in Summer School - POSITIVES

1. I get the class out of the way in 3 weeks.
2. My best friend, Jennifer, is taking the same class.
3. I'll have room in my schedule next year for art.

Taking the Course in Summer School - NEGATIVES

1. I have to get up at 7:30 A.M. for 3 weeks.
2. There's no air conditioning, so it'll probably be hot.
3. Summer school costs \$200.

B. Taking the Course Next Year - POSITIVES

1. I like the teacher who will be teaching the class.
2. I'll probably learn more if I take the class for a semester.

Taking the Course Next Year - NEGATIVES

1. This class requires a lot of reading, and I already have three classes next year with lots of reading.
2. I don't have room for this class in my schedule.

Tonya looked at her two options and realized that before she could make a decision, she needed to find out if her mother would be willing to pay for summer school.

After Tonya explained to her mother why she wanted to consider summer school as an option, her mother agreed to pay for it. Tonya then carefully considered the positive and negative aspects of each choice, and she made her decision. She decided to take the course in summer school.

We asked our high school seniors about the decisions that high school students have to make. Here are a few of their responses.

"You have to decide what's important to you and how you want to spend your time. I'm on the soccer team, and between homework and soccer, I don't have much free time. But I don't really mind because I am doing what I want to do." James

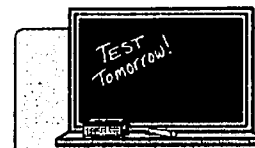
"You need to decide what you're going to do after you graduate. This has definitely been the hardest decision I've had to make in high school." Zach

"You have to choose your friends. You have to choose your classes. Most importantly, you have to choose what kind of person you want to be." Desirae

In high school, you have more freedom, and you also make more of your own choices and decisions. Of course, with this greater freedom and independence comes greater responsibility.

As a high school student, you must be prepared to accept responsibility for your actions and for the choices and decisions that you make.

Make your decisions carefully, and make sure that your choices are consistent with your values and your goals.



Step Eight - Know How to Handle Stress

A little stress helps us stay alert and focused. Too much stress can keep us from doing and feeling our best.

When you're feeling stressed, try one of the following relaxation techniques:

- 1) Take a deep breath, and then slowly release it. Do this until you feel your body relax.
- 2) Starting at the top of your head, flex and then relax each part of your body.
- 3) Think of a place where you feel very relaxed and calm. Close your eyes and visualize being in that place.

Whenever you're under a lot of stress, spend time with your family and friends and talk to them about what's going on. Talking is good because it helps you sort things out. Also, try to keep a sense of humor and take time for the things that have helped you feel calm and relaxed in the past (listening to music, going for a walk, taking a hot bath, reading a good book, playing with a pet, etc.).

Whenever you're feeling stressed, it's important that you take good care of yourself. Get plenty of sleep, eat right, and get some exercise. (Physical activity can actually reduce stress.)

We asked our group of high school students what they do to relieve stress. Here are a few of their responses:


"To relieve stress, I read a book." Amanda

"I go to a quiet place and listen to music." Katie

"I get rid of my stress on the basketball court." Marcus

"I go outside and take a walk." Shinichi

If you are ever under so much stress that you can't sleep or eat, or that you feel depressed, talk to a parent or to your counselor. They can help you.



Step Nine Use Available Services

In order to get the most out of your high school experience, take advantage of the many people, services, and resources that are available to you.

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. If you have a question, concern, or problem, go and talk to the appropriate person. If you don't know who to talk to, see your counselor. Your counselor can help you figure out how to deal with any problem you may have.


"Many of my teachers have offered their own time to help me with my schoolwork. If you just ask, teachers are usually happy to help you." Lindsay

"I see my counselor if I have a problem with a class or a teacher, or if I have a question about something. He's really helped me out a lot." John

The person who can help you the most with any problem or concern is a parent. If you have a problem with a subject, teacher, class, or with another student, tell your parent(s) immediately.

If you don't feel that you can go to a parent, talk to another adult you trust.

If you are dealing with any of the following, please talk to a parent, counselor, or trusted adult immediately: alcohol, drugs, a pregnancy, an abusive relationship, an eating disorder, problems at home, a health concern.



Step Ten - Plan and Prepare for Your Future

To prepare for your future, get the best education you can.

When you graduate from high school, you want to be able to look ahead to a future that's full of opportunities and choices. There are, of course, many factors that will determine what kinds of opportunities will come your way. The most important determining factor, however, will be your education. *The better your education, the more choices and opportunities you'll have!*

Here is one counselor's story about a student who came very close to seriously limiting his options.

Two weeks ago a student named Jeremy came to my office and told me that he'd "had enough" and that he wanted to quit school. I tried to talk him out of it, but Jeremy was 18, and he'd made up his mind. He withdrew from school that day.

Three days later, I looked up, and there was Jeremy in my doorway. He sat down in my office, looked at me and said, "Man, they won't even give me a job at a gas station because I don't have a high school diploma. I think I need to come back."

Fortunately, Jeremy quickly realized that without his diploma, his options were going to be very limited. What Jeremy also needs to realize is that while a high school diploma is essential, his options will be far greater if he continues his education after graduation.

Choose Your High School Courses Carefully

While you are in high school, take as many English courses as possible. Everyone needs to know how to read, write, and communicate effectively. You should also take as many math courses as you can. Most career fields rely on math to some extent, and many careers rely heavily on math. Every student needs to have good general math skills, and, if possible, some algebra and geometry.

Take as many social studies, science, and foreign language courses as you can in high school. These courses will expand your mind, and they'll provide you with knowledge and insight into the world in which we live. Also look for courses that relate to any of the career fields you're considering. For example, if you're interested in a career in business, take as many business courses as possible.

In addition to your academic courses, take courses that will improve your computer skills, and look for courses that will allow you to express yourself creatively. *Most importantly, make sure that you're taking all of the courses that you need to fulfill your high school's graduation requirements.*

If you're in a class that's not right for you, or if you need help deciding which courses to take, see your counselor. Your counselor can help you decide which courses are going to be best for you.

"During high school, I mostly picked courses that my friends were taking and courses that didn't look too hard. I'm a senior now, and I recently decided that I want to be a nurse. Nursing will be a perfect career for me, but I haven't taken a lot of the courses that I need to get into the nursing program at our community college.

If I would have thought about this earlier, I could have taken Algebra, Biology, and Chemistry during high school. I feel like I just wasted a lot of my high school." Maria

Choose a Career That's Right for You

A job is employment that provides you with income. A career, on the other hand, is something that is both financially and personally rewarding. A career is employment that you enjoy, it's work that you want to get better at, and work that you plan to do for an extended period of time.

In order to choose a career that's going to be right for you, you need to consider your abilities (what you're good at), your interests (what you like to do), and your aptitudes (what you have a natural talent for). You also need to consider what's important to you (money, work environment, travel, job security, etc.).

There is a great deal of career information available today in bookstores and online. These sites provide excellent information.

www.mapping-your-future.org

www.bls.gov/oco

Remember, no career path is permanent or irreversible. Make your career choices based on who you are today, but know that you can always choose a different career path in the future.

Preparing for Your Career

Eighty percent of today's careers require education or training beyond a general high school education. Prepare for your career by choosing one of the six educational options described below. For additional information on these options, see your counselor.

1. High School Career and Technology Programs

Most high schools offer career and technology programs in a variety of career fields (the building trades, business, computer technology, etc.). These programs are particularly appropriate for students who prefer a more practical, "hands-on" approach to learning. While students in these programs generally have the skills they need to get a job as soon as they graduate, almost two-thirds choose to continue their education after high school.

If you think you might like an educational program in which you "learn by doing," see your counselor for information on the career and technology programs available at your school.

2. Four-Year Colleges

A four-year college education, or bachelor's degree, can open doors and provide a wide range of career options and opportunities. Four-year colleges vary in their size, costs, requirements, and in the majors they offer. All four-year colleges, however, want students who are prepared for college-level work.

Students who plan to go to a four-year college need to take college prep courses in high school. They also need to sign up for the right tests and complete the required forms. (See pages 23 and 24.)

3. Community and Technical Colleges

Community colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less. Business, law enforcement, real estate, and engineering technology are just a few of the careers that students can prepare for by going to a community college. Students can also go to a community college and then transfer to a four-year college.

A number of states now have public two-year technical colleges. These colleges also offer affordable, career-oriented programs, and many of their credits will transfer to a four-year college.

4. Career and Trade Schools

Career and trade schools offer short-term training programs in a wide variety of career fields (e.g., auto body technology, cosmetology, dental assisting, welding). While some programs last only a few weeks, others take up to two years to complete. Career and trade schools can be expensive, and you need to check their accreditation carefully. To find the career and trade schools in your area, go online or look in the yellow pages of your phone book under "Schools."

5. The Military

The military trains young men and women so they can serve and protect our country. The military offers qualified individuals a good salary and free job training. The military also provides discipline and structure, as well as opportunities for career advancement and travel. In addition to the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, there are opportunities in the Reserves and the National Guard. For information, go to www.todaysmilitary.com.

6. Apprenticeships

Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider applying for an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn a skilled trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Apprenticeship programs usually last 2-6 years. Because most programs have a limited number of openings, apprenticeship programs can be difficult to get into.



If you are thinking about playing a sport in college, talk to your counselor and to your coach about your intentions.

Colleges are affiliated with athletic associations that have their own rules, regulations, and eligibility requirements. Basic eligibility guidelines for the NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA are outlined below.

NCAA - (over 1,000 member colleges) - Division I and Division II colleges can offer athletic scholarships; Division III colleges (mostly smaller, private colleges) cannot. Division III athletes do not need to meet NCAA academic requirements.

Athletes going to Division I and II colleges must have a minimum GPA in a specified number of *core courses*. They must also have the required ACT or SAT score. ACT/SAT requirements for Division I eligibility are based on a sliding scale. The higher a student's core GPA, the lower the test score required. Athletes should take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring of their junior year.

To initiate the eligibility process, athletes need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. This should be done at the beginning of an athlete's junior year. For additional information, go to <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter>.

NAIA (over 300 member colleges) - NAIA colleges can award full or partial scholarships. To play a sport or receive an athletic scholarship, an athlete must meet two of the following three NAIA requirements: 1) have the required ACT or SAT score; 2) have an overall GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale; 3) graduate in the top half of his/her class. For more information, go to <http://naia.cstv.com>.

NJCAA (over 500 member colleges) - Division I and Division II junior colleges can offer scholarships; Division III colleges cannot. There are no academic eligibility requirements for athletes entering junior colleges. For additional information, go to www.njcaa.org.