

College VS. High School

<p>Overview of High School: High school is <i>mandatory</i> and usually <i>free</i>. Your time is structured by others. You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities. You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities. Each day you proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day, 30 hours a week, in class. Most of your classes are arranged for you. You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate. Guiding Principle: You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.</p>	<p>Overview of College: College is <i>voluntary</i> and usually <i>expensive</i>. You manage your own time. You decide on co-curricular activities. You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before. You often have hours between classes, class times vary and you spend only 12-16 hours each week in class. You arrange your own schedule (Senior year at SUCCESS this will apply). You are responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate. Guiding Principle: You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as the consequences.</p>
<p>Succeeding in High School: School year is 36 weeks long, with some classes extending over both semesters, allowing more time to teach material. Classes generally have no more than 35 students. You may study outside class as little as 0-2 hours a week, this may be mostly last-minute test prep. You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough. You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class. Guiding Principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.</p>	<p>Succeeding in College: Academic year is divided into two 15-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for exams. Classes may number 100 students or more (on campus). You need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. You need to review class notes and text material regularly and attend class regularly. You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class. Guiding Principle: You are responsible for reading and understanding the assigned material, whether covered in class or not.</p>
<p>High School Teachers: Check your completed homework. Remind you of your incomplete work. Approach you if they believe you need assistance. Are often available for conversation before, during, or after class. Have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students. Provide you with information you missed when you were absent. Present material to help you understand the material in the textbook. Often write information on the board to be copied in your notes. Impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process. Often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates. Carefully monitor class attendance. Guiding Principle: High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills.</p>	<p>College Professors: May not always check completed homework. May not remind you of incomplete work. Expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance. Expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours. Have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research, not "teaching methods". Expect you to get information missed in class from a classmate. May not follow the textbook and expect you to relate lectures to text. May lecture nonstop, expecting you to take your own notes. Expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics, thinking for yourself and drawing your own connections. Expect you to refer to the course syllabus for assignment due dates. May not formally take attendance, but will take note of your presence. Guiding Principle: College is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned.</p>

<p>Tests in High School: Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. Makeup tests are often available. Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events. Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts. Guiding Principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.</p>	<p>Tests in College: Testing can be infrequent and cumulative, covering large amounts of material, which you need to organize in order to prep for a test. Makeup tests are seldom an option, if they are it is at your request before a test date. Tests are scheduled without regard for outside activities. Review sessions are rarely offered, but if they are you are expected to come prepared with questions. Guiding Principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.</p>
<p>Grades in High School: Grades are given for most assigned work. Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low. Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade. Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade. You may graduate as long as you have passes all required courses with a grade of D or higher. Guiding Principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."</p>	<p>Grades in College: Grades may not be provided for all assigned work. Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade. Extra credit projects are seldom available and most likely won't raise your grade. Initial tests are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected, but they may also make up a substantial part of your grade. You may graduate only if your average in classes meet the departmental standard, typically a 2.0 or C average. Guiding Principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.</p>

- **College Requires Greater Independent Learning.** Your high school teachers may have been willing to give you lots of test preparation help. They may have provided prepared study guides or even the exact questions they would ask. Although college instructors also want you to be successful, they don't give students as much study help. Sure, most professors will answer questions about course content and things you don't understand, but they will not provide you with a variety of supplementary learning materials and they certainly will not give you test questions. They expect that you know effective and efficient study strategies and if you don't know how to study for their courses, they expect you to learn how.
- **College Courses Move at a Faster Pace.** If you ask first-year college students about the differences between high school and college, one of their most common responses would be that college courses move much faster than high school classes. What might have taken a year to cover in high school will probably be covered in a semester in college. It is not uncommon for college professors to move through three, four, or more chapters in a week, expecting you to keep up. In addition, topics are generally covered in greater detail. However, college professors may also expect you to fill in many of the details on your own.
- **College Courses Require You to Think Critically.** In your high school classes, perhaps you were required to memorize lots of facts for exams. Perhaps you were discouraged from questioning either your high school textbooks or your high school teacher. But as you proceed through college, you will find yourself in more and more classes where your professor wants you to do more than memorize. You might have to critique an essay on gun control, read and respond to a historian's view of the Vietnamese Conflict, or compare and contrast conflicting scientific theories. All of these tasks require you to think critically.
- **College Classes Have Few Safety Nets.** Usually on the first day of a college class your professor will give you a syllabus. The syllabus outlines the course requirements and also generally tells you how your grade will be

determined. Something that will become clear as you read your syllabus is that many of the safety nets that you had in high school, such as extra credit assignment or other bonuses to improve your grade, have all but disappeared. This means your course grade will be determined by the grade you earn on a limited number of tests or papers.

- **College Requires You to Study Longer and More Efficiently.** You will probably find out pretty quickly that both the amount of time you put into studying and the way you study in college will have to change if you want to continue to earn high grades. Many students say that they really didn't have to study in high school. "Studying" was reading over a study guide or going over class notes for about a half-hour. Few students have ever had to read their texts and many begin college never having taken essay exams. It is important to realize that studying in college requires not only more time, but also a variety of study strategies to have at your disposal.
- **College Provides Fewer Chances for Evaluation.** In high school, it may have seemed as though you were always taking tests or writing papers. You were probably tested over small amount of material (only one or two chapters) and you had numerous chances for evaluation. If you did poorly on one test, you could usually make it up on the next one. In college, on the other hand, you will probably have fewer chances to be evaluated. At first, the idea of taking fewer tests per course in a term may seem appealing. But think about the big picture. If you have only three exams, you are going to be held responsible for much more information at one time than you were in high school. What at first seems to be an advantage - fewer tests, homework that goes unchecked, a longer period of time between exams - may actually work against you, unless you know how to stay on top of things.
- **College Gives You Greater Freedom and Greater Responsibility.** In college, no one makes you stay on top of your school work or keeps track of your comings and goings or checks to see that you have done all of your reading and studying before heading out for a night on the town. This freedom comes with a tremendous amount of responsibility. It is your responsibility to prioritize the tasks you *have* to do against the things you *want* to do.
- **College Requires You to Be Proactive.** Being proactive means that it's your responsibility to take the initiative in a variety of situations. In high school, either your teachers or your parents may have "insisted" that you get help if you were having problems with a particular course. And you may have followed their advice reluctantly. In college, however, it becomes your responsibility to know the resources that are available on your campus, so that if you do run into difficulties, or need the services of some office, you'll know how to find the information you need or where to go to get assistance. If you are proactive and find out a little about them before you need their services, it will save you time in the long run. However, you don't want to wait until you are in dire need of these resources before seeking them out. Some of these services may include:
 - **The Library** - In addition to providing resources, the library is a great place to study, to do research online, or to meet your study group.
 - **The Tutoring Center** - Drop-in tutoring is available at no cost to all registered college students who are seeking assistance in select general ed courses, including math and science. Available subjects vary by student demand and tutor availability.
 - **The Writing Center** - Drop-in tutoring is available, but appointments are encouraged.
 - **The Computer Lab** - This is a computer lab available to registered students.

HOW TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE:

- Take control of your own education: think of yourself as a scholar.
- Get to know your professors; they are your single greatest resource.
- Be assertive. Create your own support systems, and seek help when you realize you may need it.
- Take control of your time. Plan ahead to satisfy academic obligations and make room for everything else.
- Stretch yourself: enroll in at least one course that really challenges you.
- Make thoughtful decisions: don't take a course just to satisfy a requirement, and don't drop any course too quickly.
- Think beyond the moment: set goals for the semester, the year, your college career.