

Understanding the Difference Between High School & College

This brochure is available in alternate formats upon request.

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Adapted from information developed by:
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High School: Following the Rules	College: Being Responsible
High School is mandatory and usually free	College is voluntary and expensive
Time is structured by others	Students must manage their own time
Permission is needed to participate in extra-curricular activities	Students decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities
Parents and teachers are available to remind students of responsibilities	Students must balance responsibilities and set priorities; students may face moral and ethical decisions never faced before
Each day students proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day, 30 hours per week, in class	Students have free hours between class times and spend only 12-16 hours per week in class
Most classes are prearranged	Students arrange their own schedules which tend to look lighter than they really are
Services are delivered to the students	Students must seek out services
The case manager &/or parent act as advocate	Students act as their own advocate
There is regular contact & meetings with parents	There is no parent contact without the student's permission
Homework may involve 1-2 hours per day	Rule of thumb: 2 hours studying for each hour of class
Students are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate	Graduation requirements are complex & differ from year to year
Guiding Principle: Students will usually be told what to do and will be corrected if behavior is out of line.	Guiding Principle: Students are expected to take responsibility for what they do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of their decisions.

Preparation Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take 4 years of high school math Take college preparatory, enriched, and honors courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take elective courses that develop background knowledge such as sociology, psychology, geography, anthropology, philosophy, biology, chemistry and physics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strong communications skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take college preparatory courses in critical reading and study skills
Classroom Tips for Success in College
Attend all classes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive on time Do not leave early
Be prepared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and process text before class – formulate questions to have clarified Review previous notes Do problems, brainstorming, outlines
Sit close to the front: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen actively Take notes Ask questions
Seek assistance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit instructor during office hours with questions/concerns Get peer tutoring assistance Get a study partner Go to learning centers – reading, writing, or math
Hand in work on time and do not miss exams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have work ready to hand in on due date Do not use excuses to rationalize lack of preparation
Be realistic, use a calendar, and follow course syllabi: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule assignments, tests, projects Schedule study time – 2 hours of study for each hour in class Honestly account for family, social life, work, class, study, and transportation A 15-credit semester load = a full-time job



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Going to High School Classes	Succeeding in College Classes
The school year is 36 weeks long; classes may extend over 2 semesters	The academic year is divided into two 15-week semesters plus finals week
Classes generally have no more than 35 students	Classes may have a larger number of students
Students are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed and often re-taught in class	Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class
Guiding Principle: Students usually are told in class what needs to be learned from assigned readings.	Guiding Principle: It's up to students to read & understand the assigned material.

Grades in High School	Grades in College
Grades are given for most assigned work	Assigned work may not be graded
Consistently good homework grades may raise an overall grade when test grades are low	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade
Extra credit projects are often available to help raise a grade	Extra credit projects cannot generally be used to raise a grade in a college course
Initial test grades, especially when low, may not have an adverse effect on a final grade	Initial test grades may account for a substantial part of the course grade, even if the results were poor.
Students may graduate as long as they have passed all required courses with a grade of "D" or higher	Students may graduate only if the grade average in classes meets the department standard – typically a 2.0 or "C"
Guiding Principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."	Guiding Principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help students achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.

Tests in High School	Tests in College
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material	Testing is usually infrequent and may cover large amounts of material; a particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester.
Makeup tests are often available	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, they need to be requested
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events	Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts	Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect students to be active participants and come prepared with questions
Guiding Principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what is taught in the form it was presented, or to solve the kinds of problems that were shown in class.	Guiding Principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what has been learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

Special Education in High School	Disability Services in College
The relevant disability law is the "Individuals with Disability Education Act" (IDEA)	The relevant disability laws are "Section 504" of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the "Americans with Disabilities Act" (1990, 2008)
Schools must make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs	Colleges are prohibited from discriminating against qualified students because of a disability
Behavior can be viewed as a manifestation of the disability and accommodated within limits	Students must meet the essential standards – educational, behavioral, and others – established by the college or university
Guiding Principle: The environment is fit to the student.	Guiding Principle: The student fits the environment.

High School Teachers	College Professors
Teachers check completed homework	Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume students will be able to perform the same tasks on tests
Teachers remind students about incomplete work	Professors may not remind students of incomplete work
Teachers approach students if they believe assistance is needed	Professors are usually open & helpful but most expect students to initiate contact if assistance is needed
Teachers are available for conversation before, during, or after class	Professors expect & want students to attend their scheduled office hours
Teachers are trained in teaching methods to assist in teaching students	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research
Teachers provide students with information missed because of absences	Professors expect students to get notes from classmates when classes are missed
Teachers present material to help students understand the material in the textbook	Professors may not follow the textbook; to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss current research
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied to individual notes	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting students to identify the important points. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it; good notes are a must
Teachers tell students and remind them what is expected of them, when things are due, and how they will be graded	Professors expect students to read, save, & consult the course syllabus which spells out what is expected of students, when things are due, & how students will be graded
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance	Professors may or may not take attendance, but they still likely know if students attended their class
Guiding Principle: High school is a teaching environment in which facts and skills are required	Guiding Principle: College is a learning environment in which students take responsibility for thinking through and applying what has been learned