

HIGH SCHOOL
vs.
COLLEGE



HOW IS COLLEGE DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

High school is a **TEACHING ENVIRONMENT** in which you acquire facts and skills. College is a **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned. Understanding some of the important differences between high school and college may help you achieve a smoother transition.

FREEDOM

HIGH SCHOOL

Your time is usually structured by others.

High school is mandatory and usually free.

You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities.

You need money for special purchases or events.

You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.

Guiding principle: You will usually be told what your responsibilities are and corrected if your behavior is out of line.

COLLEGE

You manage your own time.

College is voluntary and expensive.

You must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities and how many clubs/organizations you can handle.

You need money to meet basic necessities.

Guiding principle: You are old enough to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

Guiding principle: You are old enough to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

CLASSES

HIGH SCHOOL

Each day you proceed from one class directly to another.

You spend 6 hours each day – 30 hours a week – in class.

The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some do not.

Most of your classes are arranged for you.

Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.

Teachers carefully monitor your academic progress in their class.

You are provided textbooks at little or no expense.

You may not be responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.

COLLEGE

You often have hours between classes: class times vary throughout the day, week and evening.

You spend 15 to 22 hours or more each week in class (full-time student). Students with lab-intensive programs may spend even more hours in class and/or lab.

The academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for exams. Classes conclude at the end of each semester.

You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your academic advisor.

Professors may or may not formally take attendance, but they are still likely to know whether you have attended.

You are responsible for keeping track of your own grades, monitoring your own progress, and asking questions when necessary.

You need to budget substantial funds for textbooks.

Graduation requirements are complex and different for different majors. You are expected to know those that apply to you.

GET NOTICED!!

Some ways to get noticed as a "good" college student:

- ★ Read and understand the class syllabus.
- ★ Attend class regularly.
- ★ Come to class on time.
- ★ Come to class prepared.
- ★ Participate actively in class.
- ★ Ask questions about unclear material.



- ★ Take advantage of your professors' office hours.
- ★ Utilize support services.

Some ways to get noticed as a "not-so-good" college student:

- ★ Talk in class while your instructor is trying to lecture.
- ★ Let your cell phone ring in class – worse yet – answer the phone call.
- ★ Sit in the back of the classroom when there are empty chairs in front.
- ★ Behave as if you are bored by what your professor is trying to teach.
- ★ Pack up your books noisily before class is over.

TEACHERS/PROFESSORS

HIGH SCHOOL

Teachers check your completed homework.

Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.

Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.

Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.

Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.

Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.

Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.

Teachers impart knowledge and fact, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.

Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.

Teachers lead student learning by asking questions.

COLLEGE

Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.

Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.

Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.

Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.

Professors have been training as experts in their particular areas of academic specialty.

Professors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed.

Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or, they may expect YOU to relate the classes to the textbook readings.

Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.

Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.

Professors expect students to generate their own questions.

STUDYING

HIGH SCHOOL

You may study outside of class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.

You often need to read or hear presentations only once to learn all you need to learn about them.

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 needed to learn from assigned readings.

COLLEGE

You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.

You need to review class notes and text material regularly.

You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing, which may not be directly addressed in class.

Guiding principle: It is up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you have already done so.

PERFORM WELL!!

The ability to perform well is dependent upon your willingness to:

- ★ Be savvy – not clueless! Know what your teachers expect you to do, then do it. And seek help when you need it.
- ★ Work hard – don't be perceived as a slacker. Make it a point to work harder than your classmates.
- ★ Take an active role in the learning process. Don't just sit back and passively expect to be taught.



TESTS

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.

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.

COLLEGE

Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the professor, need to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester.

Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.

Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.

Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.

Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

GRADES

HIGH SCHOOL

Grades are given for most assigned work.

Consistently good homework grades may help 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 passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.

Guiding principle: Efforts counts.

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 cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course.

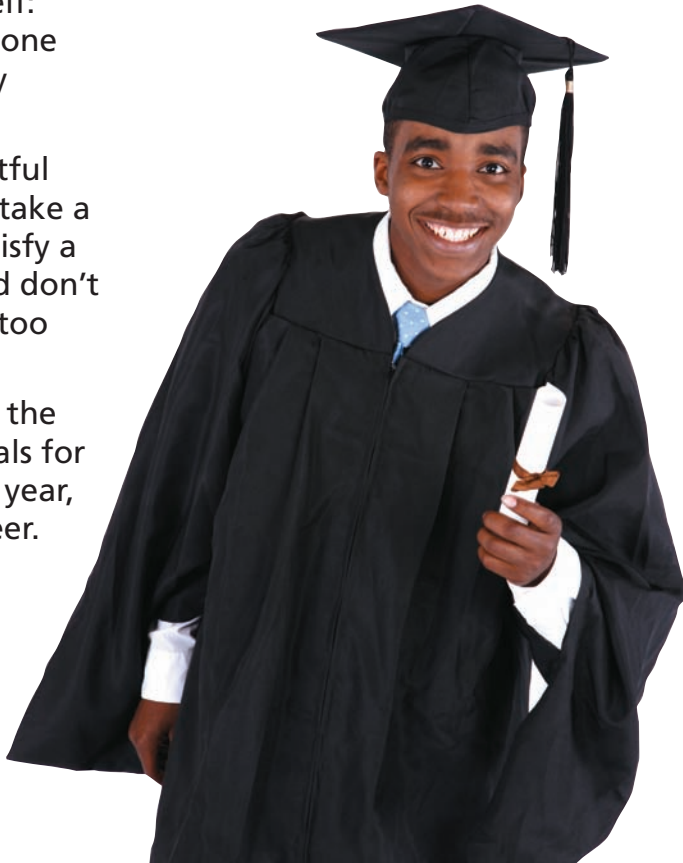
Watch out for your first tests!!! These tests are "wake-up calls" to let you know what to expect on future tests. They also may account for substantial parts of your course grade.

You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental and university standard – typically 2.0

Guiding principle: Results count. Good effort may be important in regard to the professors' willingness to help you achieve good results; it will not substitute for results in the grading process.

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 this semester, the year, your college career.





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