

How to be Successful in High School

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- 1. *Make Good Use of Your Agenda:*** They give it to you for a reason. Don’t only write homework, but make sure to write down other stuff you’ll need to remember (like games, practices, study sessions, etc). In order to be a successful high school student, you need to have a busy schedule as well as an ability to stay on top of all those activities. Use your agenda to stay organized and follow through with your plans. Also, use your agenda to set time limits. If you’re spending more than an hour on that math assignment, you’re clearly not getting it, and are only hurting yourself. Stop, put it aside, and move on to other homework. Come back to it later and if you still don’t get it, explain what happened to your teacher. Chances are, they’ll be happy to help. Just make sure you’ve made an attempt to do the work.
- 2. *Stay Organized:*** Make sure you have all the supplies you need. It may help to have one 3-ring binder with pockets for each class (maybe only a folder for an elective class) with loose-leaf paper and dividers if they help. If your teacher likes to lecture, have a spiral notebook for notes – the pages are less likely to lip out than the loose-leaf. Keep papers in chronological order – they’ll be easier to find later when studying. If your binder starts to get full, transfer old papers into another binder to keep at home. This way you won’t have to lug them around, but they will be there when studying for midterms and finals.
- 3. *School Is Important:*** You don’t have to be the nerd who holes himself/herself up in his/her bedroom Friday night, or read gigantic books in the corner of the room to be considered someone who takes school seriously. The truth is, school IS important. You need it to have a good resume, and you need it to get into a good college and later get a good career that will support you for the rest of your life. It’s important to have fun and have lots of extra-curricular activities, but school should always be your number one priority. That being said, never take homework, tests, and quizzes lightly! Note that extra-curricular activities are also important for college resumes as well.

4. ***School is Important, but so is a Social Life:*** Balance is the key. You can be someone who makes straight A's in all advanced classes, but if you have zero extra-curricular activities in your application for college, you will have a much more difficult time getting accepted. It's just not attractive either way. Keep on top of your school work, but make sure you let your hair down a little sometimes to join a few clubs consistently throughout your high school years. You won't regret it.
5. ***Get Involved at Your School:*** You don't have to wear spirit colors everyday or be a cheerleader to do this. All you need to do is stay on top of things – current events, who won the basketball game last Friday, attending school functions like dances and variety shows, keeping up with plans your student council has for the school, etc. Just like keeping up with current events and politics is important, so is being active at your campus. Not only will it bond you with other people, but it's always good to have a collective unity over a student body. It shows that you care about the learning environment that you're in and that you support all the organizations at your school.
6. ***Join a Sport:*** It's easy to forget to stay in shape when the workload starts piling up, so joining a team at your school makes it one less worry in your schedule; it's already incorporated in your daily routine. If you're going for all three seasons, that's great, but make sure you're being reasonable. If you're taking all honors classes, for example, and you know you're going to have a heck of a lot of homework, you may want to consider taking a season off. Try your hardest at both your sport and your schoolwork and you should be more than great –you're healthy and on top of your schoolwork.
7. ***Figure out What Your Hobbies are and Find a Club that Matches:*** Not being an athlete is no excuse for not having something to do after school. If you are into art, join the art club. If you are into music, join the orchestra or band. Join something and be sure to stick with it for a long time; it looks good on college applications. If you're not into any of your school's clubs, ask your ASB teacher to start a new one. Most likely he/she will say yes and it's just one quick and easy process into initiating a new activity at your school.
8. ***Care about College:*** As soon as sophomore year, start visiting colleges. You don't need to decide anything yet, but it will help you decide if you want a large school or small (urban, rural, suburban, if a state school is an acceptable choice, and so on). Visit your guidance counselor a lot – they're going to have to write a letter of recommendation so the better they know you, the better a letter you'll get. They'll also be able to help with college applications and scholarships.

- 9. Care about your Grade Point Average:** Your GPA is as important to you as your parents credit score is to them. A low credit score prevents your parent from being able to get a loan, rent an apartment, get a credit card, and get a cell phone, and so on. Your parent's credit score is their lifeline. It opens and closes doors. Your GPA is your lifeline. With a HIGH GPA many options are available after graduation. You will have choice about which colleges you can attend. A low GPA limits your options. There is a program out there for everyone, but having a choice makes the walk across the stage a sweet victory.
- 10. Make Friends with Everyone:** There's too much going on to worry about cliques, who is friends with whom, who the popular people are, etc. The best thing to do is just be friends with everyone. Be confident and be yourself. Get into the habit of saying hi to people and not being afraid to talk to new classmates. The more comfortable you become with a more diverse group of people, the more people will like you and the more you will accustom yourself to the art of versatility later in life.
- 11. Don't Compare yourself with Others:** Again, it cannot be stressed enough that there's already too much on your plate to worry about trivial stuff like this. High school is only a competition with yourself. Every day you should only be trying to get better, not worrying about how the girl sitting in front of you has nicer clothes, is getting better grades, has a hotter boyfriend, etc. Ten years from now, this won't matter. Focus on yourself. Focus on what you can do to make yourself better. Then, most importantly, go for it.
- 12. Don't Procrastinate:** This is probably the number one curse of all high school students. It's hard and it's okay if you do it every once in a while. But when big tests, exams, and essays come, don't make it a habit. You'll only be sorry in the end, especially in college with jumbo papers and insane amounts of reading will become the norm. It's best to accustom yourself to getting things done early and out of the way rather than waiting until the last minute.
- 13. Eat Breakfast and Lunch:** It sounds stupid, but you'd be surprised how many people skip breakfast or lunch. Not only is this dumb, but it's uncool and unhealthy. First of all, waffles are yummy. If you don't have time to eat breakfast at home, take some at the bus stop or buy some at your cafeteria before the first period. It's important to jump start your metabolism the right way so it is running smoothly throughout the whole day. Lunch is important to prevent your stomach for grumbling during your last

periods. A full stomach keeps you focused. Skipping meals actually slows down your metabolism and makes you gain more weight, not less.

- 14. *Stay Healthy both Inside and Outside of School:*** Don't fall for the vending machine trap. Most of the food in there is just unhealthy and disgusting. Go for soy chips or anything whole grain if the vending machine is all you have at the moment. Don't fall for the Vitamin Water trap either – it's loaded with sugar. At home, take an afternoon snack to keep your stomach full until dinner time – invest in fruits, nuts, and healthy chips. Loading on junk food during the day is not only unhealthy but will only give you a temporary "energy" for homework or that 10-page paper you have to write tonight.
- 15. *Get Enough Sleep:*** This is easier said than done, but sleep has so many benefits. If every high school kid got around 7-10 hours like they should, everyone would be a much happier camper. Try to get things done and out of the way so that you get your much needed shuteye. Not only will you be more alert during the day, but it helps improve your complexion and your figure, and of course you'll be much more likely to pay attention in your boring classes, and as a result, ace them. Of course, this is not always possible, especially during junior year. If you're taking 3+ AP's and are in all those clubs and sports, there are chances you will be up until 1AM doing homework – if that happens, skip clubs/sports the next day and nap! You are no good to anyone when you are severely sleep deprived. Naps are wonderful things. Also, caffeine can help you keep focused – but there are potential side effects, and addiction can hurt you in the short and the long term.
- 16. *The Only Trend you Should Follow is Yourself:*** This doesn't mean you should then go to school the next day wearing pantyhose on your head. You should have your own style and your own identity, so that you make your mark in high school the right way and not as a nondescript Ugg-wearing replica of every other girl out there (or guy, if you are reading this. You probably don't wear Uggs though). Be original, and don't be afraid to be yourself. It's cliché but it's essential. People are more likely to remember you and want to be friends with you if you are intriguing and different.
- 17. *Try to Go Out During the Weekends:*** You endured 5 agonizing days of school, and the time has come to cut yourself some slack. During the weekend, if you have friends to go with go somewhere and have a blast. Even if you don't have many friends, spend the weekend relaxing and doing what you like to do. Let yourself loose and energize yourself so when Monday comes, you're tired of fun and ready to focus again. But

remember that school is the top priority, so don't do this if you have a ton of homework this weekend.

18. *Never Give Up:* Again, cliché, but important. High school is all about making a fool of yourself but picking yourself back up, trying again, and making friends along the way. Learn to laugh at yourself when you make a mistake. Don't beat yourself up over the occasional C or D (heaven forbid an F) on a test or quiz. Tell yourself to study harder and strive for an A the next time. If your team lost a game, tell yourself to push yourself a little harder at the next practice. Learning this will soon apply outside of school and into other parts of your fantastic life. Learn from your mistakes and you will go a long way.
