



College: Student's Responsibility

- College is voluntary and expensive
- You manage your own time
- You set priorities and make decisions
- You often have hours between classes; this is often a '*Freedom Trap*'
- You typically only spend 12 to 16 hours a week in classes
- You arrange your own schedule (with an advisor)
- Degree requirements can be complex, You are expected to know them
- **Guiding principle:** You take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

High School: Follow the Rules

- High school is mandatory and usually free
- Your time is structured by others
- Parents and teachers remind you of your responsibilities
- You proceed from one class directly to another
- You spend about 6 to 8 hours a day, 30-40 hours a week in classes
- Most of your classes are arranged for you
- Graduation requirements are set for you
- **Guiding principle:** You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.

College: Study is Different

- The academic year is two 16-week semesters, and a 10-week summer semester
- Classes may have more students; University classes can be 100 or more
- You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class
- You need to read before class and review notes and class material regularly
- You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing
- **Guiding principle:** It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.

High School: Attend Class

- The school year is 36 weeks long
- Classes generally have no more than 30 students.
- You may study outside class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, mostly last-minute test preparation.
- You rarely read anything more than once, and often listening in class is enough.
- Material repetition is done in class, assignments are discussed and continuously re-taught
- **Guiding principle:** You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.

College: Professors

- Professors may not always check 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 expect you to initiate contact
- Professors are trained authorities in their subject areas
- Professors expect you to be responsible for material from classes you missed.
- Professors may not follow the textbook, but expect that you read it
- Professors focus on illustrations, background information, or discussion of the text reading
- Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points
- Professors may not remind you of assignments and tests - the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded
- **Guiding principle:** College is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for your academic success.

High School: Teachers

- Teachers typically check your completed homework
- Teachers remind you of your incomplete work
- Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance
- Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist you in learning
- Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.
- Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.
- Teachers often write important information on the board to be copied in your notes.
- Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.
- Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.
- **Guiding principle:** High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and practice academic skills.

College: Exams / Testing

- Testing may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material
- Professors use pop quizzes to ensure students are reading the textbook
- Testing may vary widely per subject area; from multiple choice and short answer to oral presentations and written research papers
- A Professor may have only 2 tests in a semester and can account for over half of your overall course grade
- Professors often review material, but you need to study and prepare for the test
- Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
- Makeup tests are rarely an option; only in the event of an emergency
- **Guiding principle:** College exams determine how much a student has learned and whether he/she has performed to a level of proficiency set by academic standards.

High School: Testing

- Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material
- Teachers often let students know well in advance of upcoming tests
- Testing is typically standardized
- Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts
- Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events
- Makeup tests are often available and convenient to the student's schedule
- **Guiding principle:** High School testing sets goals for what students should know and be able to do while learning academic content.

College: Exams / Testing

- Grades may not be provided for all assigned work
- Homework and participation often account for only 15% or less of your grade
- Grades on tests and major papers usually provide the majority of your course grade
- Extra credit is rare and often will not raise a full grade in a college course
- Be overprepared - Your first test can be a "wake-up call" to let you know what is expected
- You are expected to monitor your grades
- You can drop and withdraw classes, but you are responsible to know when and how
- The academic standard for graduation and transfer is typically a 2.0 or C average
- **Guiding principle:** Results count. Your ability to pass the test(s) and complete the course-end assignment determine your grade.

High School: Testing

- Grades are given for most assigned work
- Consistently good homework and participation grades raise your overall grade if test grades are low
- Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade
- Initial test grades, if they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade
- Teachers often let you know your grades and progress
- You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher
- **Guiding principle:** Effort counts. Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."



Adapted from:

Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center at Southern Methodist University

Brunckerhoff, L. C., Shaw, S. F., and McGuire, J. H., (1993). Promoting Postsecondary Education for Students with Learning Disabilities: A handbook for practitioners. Austin, TX: Pro Ed .

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