

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Motivate yourself

Knock, knock. Who's there? Second semester!

To stay energized for the second half of the year, suggest that your teen jump right back into her routine. Plus, she could focus on what she's excited about, such as a new book she'll read in English class or joining the morning announcement crew.

Classy competitor

Being competitive can give your child an advantage on the playing field or in the workplace. But explain that he should be aware of others' feelings, too. For instance, if he gets frustrated when basketball teammates miss shots, he might remind himself that no one is perfect and encourage them to shake it off.

Icy roads

If your teenager drives to school, consider whether she's ready for icy conditions. On those days, you could drop her off or have her take the bus instead. Then, let her practice driving on ice or snow in empty parking lots and on roads when she's not in a hurry—and you can be in the car to guide her.

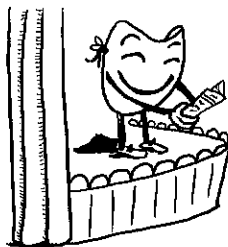
Worth quoting

"It is not how much we have but how much we enjoy that makes happiness."
Charles Spurgeon

Just for fun

Q: Why did the student get a bad grade in drama class?

A: He acted up!



Change up study time

Your high schooler may enjoy studying alone, studying with classmates, or both. But however he studies, trying new techniques can keep things fresh. Share these strategies.

Go it alone

Working alone lets your teen go at his own pace. And for some students, or for certain subjects, studying alone is better for concentration.



One fun way to study solo: Have him make up raps, chants, or movements to go with concepts. Or to remember words and phrases (chemistry terms, foreign language vocabulary), he might trace the letters with his finger and say the words aloud. If he likes to draw, he could create comic strips to illustrate what he's learning.

Try a group

By teaming up with study pals, your student can talk about material and ask or answer questions. Suggest that he keep groups small, about two to five people. They should meet somewhere

without distractions, perhaps the library or an empty classroom.

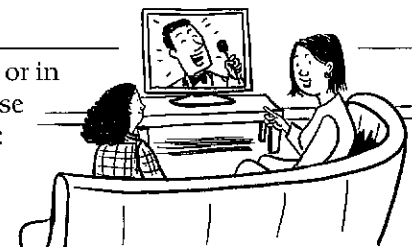
Then, they might take turns being the "professor" and explain a lesson like how to calculate the slope of a line. Or they may hold a debate. ("Was the New Deal good for America?") As they give opinions and provide evidence, everyone will learn.

Note: Creating practice tests is a great idea for reviewing material, no matter how your teen studies. He could write and take his own quizzes, or group members can make them for each other. 👍

Honesty: The best policy

Whether with friends, at school or home, or in the workplace, it's important to be honest. Use these tips to encourage honesty in your teen:

- **Explain** why you believe honesty is important. ("It's a good thing the guy in that TV show told the truth. Otherwise, his friends might not have believed him the next time around.")
- **Comment** on situations you notice. ("My coworker lied about a project and got caught. My boss wouldn't have been so upset if she'd just told the truth.")
- **Praise** your teen for showing integrity. ("I appreciate your honesty about where you went Friday night. I would much rather hear the truth from you than find out another way later.") 👍



Setting expectations

How do you get your teenager to live up to your expectations? Communicate them clearly and often. Try these ideas.

Bring them up casually. Mention your expectations in regular conversations rather than having a one-time talk. For example, if she's planning to sleep at a friend's house, you might say, "You'll feel great when your paper is done, and then you can go to Jenna's." Or if she receives a lower-than-normal test score, try, "How do you plan to bring your grade up?"



Express confidence.

Knowing you think she can succeed will make your child more likely to believe it herself. When she's working on something difficult, boost her confidence with comments like "I know you've got it in you!" Remind her of how she has risen to the occasion

in the past, such as how she got through Algebra I last year if she's struggling with Algebra II now. 👍



Family card games

Deal some family fun with these card games.

Who am I?

Let each person write the name of a person, place, or thing on an index card. Swap cards, and (without looking) hold a card to your forehead, facing out. Take turns asking yes-or-no questions to figure out who or what is on your forehead. ("Am I a place?" "Do I have wings?")

Random acts of silliness

Shuffle a deck of playing cards (face cards removed), and place in a stack. Draw a card, and the person to your right gives you a direction using the number. *Example:* "Sing 5 lines of a song." After three rounds, vote on the best, silliest, or most original directions.



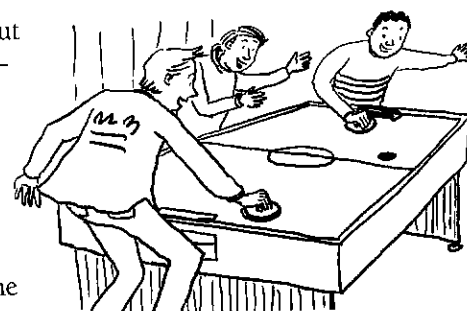
Old favorites

Maybe you grew up playing canasta, but your teenager has never heard of it. Give him a chance to beat you at your own game by showing him how to play. If he wins, you can always challenge him to a rematch. 👍

Parent to Parent

Teen-friendly hangout

My house is the "hangout house" for my kids and all their friends—and I'm thrilled! Why? Because when they're here, I know where they are, what they're doing, and who they're with. What's the secret to making kids want to hang out at your house? Here's what worked for me.



I try to smile when I see my kids come in—and their friends, too. Teens are hungry for acceptance and approval, so I always want to make them feel welcome here. Then, I give my kids and their friends a place to lounge. Having their own space helps them feel comfortable and like they belong. Teens have different moods on different days. I make an effort to be sensitive to these changes and give them some privacy when they need it or attention when they seem to want it. That way, they know I understand and respect them. 👍

Q & A

On track with course selection

Q My daughter will soon be signing up for next year's classes. How do we know she's taking the right ones?

A While your daughter needs certain courses to graduate, the rest depend on her interests and what she's thinking about for the future.

Have her look into requirements for options she's considering, such as trade school, four-year college, or the military. Then, when she meets with her

school counselor, they can discuss class offerings that fit into her plans.

Of course, she may not know what she wants to do next—it's totally normal to be unsure in high school and even beyond. In that case, she should aim for a well-rounded schedule that includes a mix of challenging courses and ones that are easier for her.

Also, even if her school doesn't require it, taking PE is a great way to release stress and to ensure she gets some physical activity in her day. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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Testing 1-2-3

It's test day! Is your teenager ready? Here are answers to questions parents often have about test taking in high school. Share this advice with your child to help him feel confident and perform well on test day.



Q What does my high schooler need to keep in mind as he prepares for tests?

A The first order of business is to know what will be on a quiz or an exam. Your teenager should pay close attention during class reviews and take any practice tests the teacher or textbook offers.



To review notes, your child might type highlights from each day's material into a computer file. Typing his notes will help him remember them better, and he can use the file as a study guide.

Encourage your teen to pace himself. Cramming is stressful and usually doesn't result in real learning—only a temporary (and often spotty) memory of the material. Instead, he should start preparing for tests as soon as they are announced.

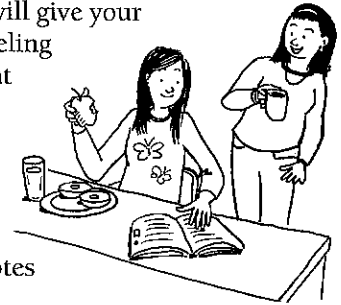
Q Besides studying, what else should my child do before a test?

A Urge her to get ready the night before. She can load up her bag with any necessary test gear, such as pencils and

eyeglasses. If permitted, she could bring a calculator (with extra batteries), a healthy snack, and a water bottle.

Also, eating a good breakfast will give your teen energy and keep her from feeling anxious or shaky. Remind her that caffeine could cause her to feel nervous and jittery during a test.

Suggest that your high schooler get to class early. She'll have a few extra minutes to take out supplies, look over notes one last time, and get focused.



Q How can my teen feel confident before and during an exam?

A Teach him relaxation techniques he can do during the test. Deep, slow breaths and positive thoughts can increase his confidence. *Example:* "I am going to do well because I am prepared."

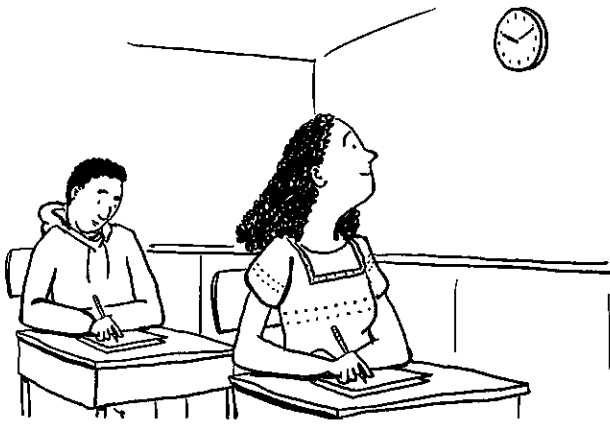
Help your child avoid distractions by suggesting that he keep his eyes on his own paper and not worry about students who finish before he does. Remind him that faster doesn't mean better.

Finally, encourage your teen to stay active by making time for 30–60 minutes of exercise each day. That will give him more energy and help him feel less stressed.

Q What test-taking strategies can I share with my high schooler?

A Help her budget her time. When she receives the test, she should do a quick survey of the entire exam and consider how long she will need for each section. She'll want to allow more time for harder portions or those that are worth the most points.

continued



Advise your child to read all directions carefully. She should never assume that she knows what the instructions say. For instance, some questions may have more than one correct answer.

Your high schooler can use any extra time to go back to skipped questions and look for careless mistakes. She might redo math calculations or double-check dates on history quizzes, for instance.

Q What special advice can I give my child for different test formats?

A For true-false tests, it's helpful to circle key words in the question. If any part of a choice is false, the whole thing is false. Encourage your teen to watch for tip-off words like *never*, *always*, *all*, *none*, or *only*—they often indicate a “false”

answer. Words like *usually*, *sometimes*, and *generally* may be clues that a “true” choice is correct. He should answer every question—there's at least a 50 percent chance a guess will be right.

When taking a multiple-choice exam, your child might read the question and try to answer it before looking at the options. Then he can read the choices, eliminate those that are clearly wrong, and select the one closest to his initial idea.

Remind him not to leave any answers blank (if there's no penalty for wrong answers). Even if he doesn't know the answer, he has a 25 percent chance of success when there are four choices.



For essay questions, suggest that your teen make an outline of main ideas and supporting facts. All of his points should be backed up with examples, and he shouldn't stray from the topic. Encourage him to reread the question halfway through and at the end to make sure he has answered all parts. Finally, he should go back and proofread carefully—spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors can lower his score.

SAT and ACT success

Are you hoping your teen will go to college? Here are valuable hints for helping her prepare for college entrance exams.

Q Which test should my child take?

A She should check requirements at the colleges she might want to attend. Many students take both the SAT and the ACT and send in their best scores. Your teen can also get advice from her school counselor.

Q What do the tests include?

A The SAT has three parts: critical reading, math, and writing. It includes essay, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions. The ACT has four multiple-choice sections: English, math, reading, and science. There's also an optional writing portion on the ACT (your child can check at act.org to see which colleges require or recommend it). *Note:* In spring 2016, the SAT essay portion will become optional. If your teenager will take the SAT



then, he should find out whether the colleges he's applying to require it.

Q How should my high schooler get ready for these tests?

A Have her start early! As a sophomore and junior, your teen can take the preliminary SAT (PSAT). In her junior year, she might take a test-prep course at school, the library, or a community center. She can also take practice tests to familiarize herself with the format and questions. These are available online (sat.collegeboard.org for the SAT and act.student.org for the ACT) and in SAT or ACT manuals (available at libraries and bookstores).

Q How can I help my teen have a positive attitude toward the exam?

A Encourage him to think of the SAT or ACT as a final leg of his high school career. He should look forward to the pride and relief he'll feel when the test is over—and the results that can help him get into the college of his choice.

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