

High School 1 YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Holiday helpers

Letting your teenager see you give to others during the holidays may influence her to do the same. You might make care packages for soldiers or collect hats for needy children. Ask your teen to think of ways she could help, too, such as sorting toys for a charity that distributes them to families.

You said it!

Online translators can help your teen learn to pronounce foreign words and phrases. Google Translate (translate.google.com) and Bing Translator (bing.com/translator) let him plug in English terms and hear the words spoken (click on “translate” and then “listen”). *Note:* He could use a library computer with headphones if you don't have Internet access at home.

All in fun

Enjoy family time more by finding ways to laugh together. Tell jokes regularly, read the comics out loud, and watch funny movies. Also, look for humor in daily life. (“The cat sat on the remote control and changed the channel!”) Learning to laugh over minor mishaps is a great coping mechanism for life.

Worth quoting

“Try to learn something about everything and everything about something.”

Thomas Huxley

Just for fun

Q: Why do dogs wag their tails?

A: Because nobody else will do it for them!



Put to the test

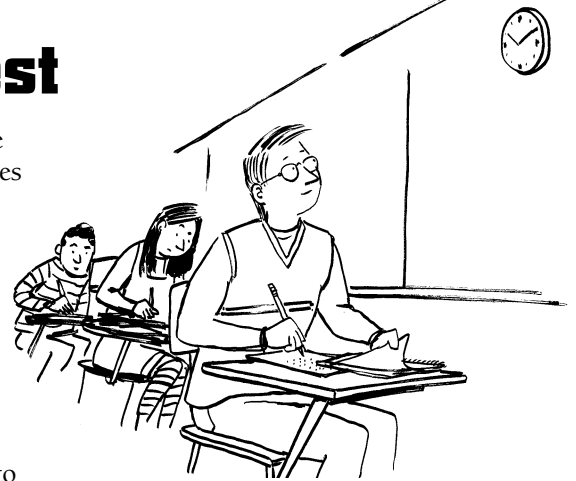
Your high schooler's knowledge can shine on test day with strategies designed to help him succeed. Share these ways to prepare for, take, and learn from tests.

Before

- One to two weeks before a test, begin going over chapters, handouts, and old quizzes. Consider setting up study dates with classmates so you're accountable to someone else for study time.
- Take advantage of in-class reviews. Ask the teacher which material will be covered so you'll know where to concentrate as you make study guides or outlines. If you're confused about material, be sure to ask the teacher for help.

During

- Size up the test before starting. Scan to see how many sections there are, how much each one is worth, and the types of questions included. Leave enough time for longer or more challenging questions, and check the clock as you work.
- Do easy questions first, and mark ones you don't know so you can go back to



them later. Other parts of the test may jog your memory and help with questions you skipped.

After

- Look up answers for questions you weren't sure of. Knowing why a response was correct or incorrect will help you understand the material and answer similar questions in the future.
- When the test is handed back, file it where you can find it. You can pull it out to review for the next exam and look for ways to improve. For example, if the teacher made notes on an essay response, you can use her comments to do better next time. 👍

Conference rundown

Participating in parent-teacher conferences is a key way to support your child's education. Make the most of them with these tips.

Begin on a friendly note. Saying something nice to the teacher can set a positive tone (“Madelyn enjoyed reading *Hamlet*”).

Cover key issues first. If your main concern is how your child is doing with homework, bring that up early so you don't run out of time. Jotting down questions in advance can help ensure that you cover your points.

Seek examples. If a teacher says something you don't understand (“Madelyn seems to lack confidence”), ask her to explain (“She doesn't raise her hand when I know she knows the answer”). Then, you can work together to solve the problem. 👍



Consider the consequences

When you're a parent, making rules comes with the territory. But enforcing those rules can be a challenge—especially when you have a teenager. Try these ideas for setting effective consequences.

Set a target

Say you want your teen to follow your rules for using the car. Think about what would lead to that result (perhaps taking away the keys if she uses the car without your permission). Also, try setting a target she can aim for to earn your trust again. Once she gets the keys back, she might get the car for only an hour three times in a row.



Define what you mean

It's one thing to tell your adolescent she'll be grounded if she's out past curfew. It's another to explain whether she'll be allowed to talk to friends on Facebook or through texting while she's grounded. Spelling this out in advance means you won't have to decide how consequences should be applied later—and your teen won't have room to debate.

Get her thinking

As part of a consequence, try giving your teen an activity that will encourage her to think about a broken rule. For example, she might have to write an essay about honesty if she lies to you. Having her focus on the importance of honesty may make more of an impression than only withholding a privilege. 👍

Tackling math

No matter how complex high school math becomes, having a plan of attack can simplify it for your teen. Pass on these four steps.

1. Find what is being asked. To understand a problem better, draw a diagram, highlight key words, or remove irrelevant information. Then, rephrase the question in your own words.

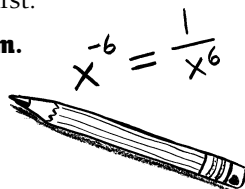
2. Choose a strategy. There may be more than one way to approach a problem. You might solve it backward, estimate an answer, or calculate with smaller numbers first.

3. Do the problem.

Break it down into steps if it requires more than one

(write an equation, fill in known numbers, identify variables). Show your work on each part so it's easier to check—and because teachers often require you to show work to get full credit.

4. Review your work. Does the answer make sense? If you estimated and the final answer is way off, go back over the steps to check for errors. 👍



Parent to Parent

Creative questions

I like to browse parenting magazines for activities to try with my 15-year-old, Sabrina. Recently, I came across an article about helping children be good thinkers by asking questions that spur them to be creative.

This sounded like an entertaining—and nonargumentative—way to start a conversation. One night while she was setting the table, I asked, “If you had to choose, would you rather be a giraffe or a mouse?” She picked a mouse, and when I asked why, she said because she would be tiny enough to squeeze through closed doors. I told her I'd rather be a mouse, too, because sore throats would hurt too much if I were a giraffe!

Since then, I've tried a few more questions, and I'm finding that it's not the answer that counts. What's interesting is hearing Sabrina's reasoning. I think she's enjoying our “game,” and I'm hoping it's helping her with creative thinking. 👍



Q & A

A future in skilled trades

Q My son says he doesn't want to go to college. He's always been good at fixing things, and I'm wondering what options I could encourage him to look into.

A Skilled trades are in demand and can pay well—and employers say there aren't enough people to fill available jobs. Examples include machinists, welders, electricians, and plumbers. Such careers can offer a faster track to an occupation and cost less to pursue than a traditional four-year degree.

If your son is interested, he should consider participating in his school's vocational education program and also taking algebra and English courses. After graduating, he may need to earn an associate's degree or a trade certification or license. That could involve six months to two years of coursework at a trade school or

community college, working as a paid apprentice, or both.

Suggest that he talk to his school counselor and call nearby community colleges to find out more. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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