

What are the differences between High School and College?

IN HIGH SCHOOL (IDEA) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	College (ADA) Americans with Disabilities Act
Education is a RIGHT and must be provided within appropriate environments to ALL individuals.	Higher education is NOT A RIGHT. Students must meet certain admissions criteria and meet the requirements of an academic program, regardless of disability status.
School districts are responsible to identify students' disabilities.	Students must SELF-IDENTIFY to appropriate, designated disability support offices.
School districts must provide free testing, evaluation, and transportation to programs.	Students must provide transportation as well as current and appropriate documentation. If the documentation is insufficient, students may obtain evaluations at their own cost.
School districts develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to address students' developmental and educational needs.	No IEPs are developed in college, though support services akin to IEPs from high school do not apply in college and need not be submitted for services.
School districts are responsible for providing all IEP supports and services.	Students are responsible for activating and using approved services every term.
Fundamental alterations of programs and curricula are required to be provided by teachers and the school.	Colleges do not provide accommodations that fundamentally alter the requirements of a course or program of study.
Personal services for medical/physical disabilities are required to be provided by the school.	No personal services are required to be provided by the institution.
Guiding Principle: High schools provide a high level of centralized support and take responsibility for making sure you get support.	Guiding Principle: Colleges provide decentralized support to varying degrees and it is your responsibility to ask for help and advocate for yourself.

IN HIGH SCHOOL	IN COLLEGE
High school is <i>mandatory</i> and usually free.	College is <i>voluntary</i> and often <i>expensive</i> .
Your time is structured by others.	You manage your own time.
You need permission to participate in extra-curricular activities.	You must decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities.
You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.	You will receive a syllabus for each course and must balance your responsibilities and set priorities yourself.
Each day you proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day--30 hours a week--in class.	You often have hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening and you spend only 12 to 16 hours each week in class
Most of your classes are arranged for you.	You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your adviser. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are.
You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.	Graduation requirements are complex. You are expected to know those that apply to you.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told what to do and will be redirected if you are on the wrong track.	Guiding principle: You are responsible for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES	IN COLLEGE
The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some don't.	The academic year is divided into four separate 7-week terms (at WPI), with a week off between each term.
Classes generally have no more than 35 students.	Class lectures may number 100 students or more.

You do most of your studying in class, with homework as a back-up.	You do most of your studying outside of class (at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class) with lectures and other class work as a guide.
You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough.	You need to review class notes and text material regularly.
You are provided with textbooks at no expense.	You need to budget substantial funds for textbooks.
You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.	You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.	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.

COMPARISON OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND COLLEGE PROFESSORS	
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HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	COLLEGE PROFESSORS
Teachers check your completed homework.	Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours and meet with them outside of class.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research, not necessarily
Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.	Professors expect you to get materials from classes you missed from classmates, by attending office hours or from online.
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	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 <i>you</i> to relate the classes to the textbook readings.
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Professors expect you to think about and synthesize meaning from material presented.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus; the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.	Professors may not formally take roll, but they are still likely to know whether or not you attended.
Guiding principle: Teachers bear much of the responsibility for your learning.	Guiding principle: You bear the responsibility for your learning while your professors serve as guides, mentors, and resources.

TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL	TESTS IN COLLEGE
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	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 term.
Make-up tests are often available.	Make-up tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them; ahead of time if possible.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
	Guiding principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL	GRADES IN COLLEGE
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.	Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course.
* Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your <i>first</i> tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected-- but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades.
You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.	You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard.
Guiding principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."	Guiding principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you <i>achieve</i> good results, it will <i>not substitute</i> for results in the grading process.

The information on this page is adapted from and courtesy of Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center at Southern Methodist University for use at:



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