

How is College Different from High School?

Choosing Responsibility in College	Following the Rules in High School
College is <i>voluntary</i> and <i>expensive</i>	High school is <i>mandatory</i> and usually <i>free</i>
You manage your own time	Your time is structured by others
You must decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities	You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities
You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. You will face moral and ethical decisions you may have never faced before.	You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.
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	Each day you proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day--30 hours a week--in class.
You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your adviser. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are.	Most of your classes are arranged for you.
Graduation requirements are complex, and differ from year to year. You are expected to know those that apply to you.	You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.
Guiding principle: You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.	Guiding principle: You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.

Succeeding in College Classes	Going to High School Classes
The academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for exams.	The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some don't.
Classes may number 100 students or more.	Classes generally have no more than 35 students.
You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.	You may study outside class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.
You need to review class notes and text material regularly.	You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough.
You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.	You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.
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.	Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.

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<http://smu.edu/alec/transition.asp>

College Professors

High School Teachers

Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.	Teachers check your completed homework.
Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.	Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.
Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.	Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.
Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.	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.	Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.
Professors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed.	Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.
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 present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.
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. Good notes are a must.	Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.
Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.	Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.
Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.	Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.
Professors may not formally take roll, but they are still likely to know whether or not you attended.	Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.
Guiding principle: College is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned.	Guiding principle: High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills.

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Tests in College

Tests in High School

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 semester.	Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.
Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.	Makeup tests are often available.
Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.	Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.
Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.	Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.
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.	Guiding principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.

Grades in College

Grades in High School

Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.	Grades are given for most assigned work.
Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.	Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low.
Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course.	Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your 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.	Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.
You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard--typically a 2.0 or C.	You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.
Guiding principle: <i>Results count.</i> Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you <i>achieve</i> good results, it will not <i>substitute</i> for results in the grading process.	Guiding principle: <i>Effort counts.</i> Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."

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