

Top 10 Skills for High-School Students

by Clint Page



Whether you're a freshman or a senior, developing the following ten skills will help you achieve success in school, in your chosen career, and in life.

1. Time Management

You know the deal: There are just 24 hours in each day. What you do with that time makes all the difference. While high-school students average 35 hours per week of class time, college students log an average of 15 to 18 additional hours per week.

Getting your "free" time under control now will help prepare you for managing that extra 20 hours a week come freshman year of college -- when you'll need to study and want to socialize more than ever.

If you don't already, start using a daily planner. This could be a datebook you keep in your bag, an online version you maintain at home, or both. It's easy to over-schedule or "double-book" if we aren't careful. Manage your time wisely and you'll get the maximum out of each day.

2. Good Study Habits

If you've got them, great. If not - well, there's still time to develop them. Good study habits include these basics:

- Always be prepared for class
- Complete assignments thoroughly and in a timely manner.
- Review your notes **daily** rather than cram for tests the night before.
- Set aside quiet time each day for study -- even if you don't have homework or a test the next day!

3. The Ability to Set Attainable Goals

It's important to set goals, Make sure the goals you choose are attainable. Avoid setting goals that are unreasonably high -- you'll be doomed to frustration and disappointment.

4. Concentration

Listen to your teacher and stay focused. Be sure that you understand the lesson. If you don't understand something, *ask questions!* You've heard it before, but "the only dumb question is the one you don't ask" is absolutely true. If you've been paying attention, it definitely won't be a dumb question.

5. Good Note-Taking

You can't possibly write down everything the teacher says since we talk at a rate of about 225 words per minute. But, you do need to write down the important material.

Be sure to validate yourself after a test by going back over your notes to see if your notes contained the answers to questions asked on the test. If not, you need to ask to see a classmate's notes or check with the teacher for help on improving your note-taking.

Studying with a partner is also a good idea, provided that you study and don't turn it into a talk-fest (there's time for that later). Note-taking should be in a form that's most helpful to you. If you're more of a visual person, try writing notes on different colored index cards. Music can also be a good memory aid as long as you don't find it distracting. Re-writing your notes daily is another strategy. Do whatever it takes!

6. Completion of Assignments

Teachers assign homework for a reason. While it may seem like "busywork" at times, it definitely has a purpose. Put your homework to good use. Remember, you'll only get out of it what you put into it!

7. Review of Daily Notes

Don't wait until the night before the test to review your notes. Go over your notes each day while the lecture is still fresh in your mind. Add any missing pieces. Compare your notes with a classmate's notes. This isn't cheating -- it may even be mutually beneficial. Review your notes each day to reinforce your learning and build towards your ultimate goal: MASTERY of the subject or skill.

8. Organizational Skills

Keeping yourself organized will save you valuable time and allow you to do everything you need to do. Keep all your study materials (calculator, planner, books, notebooks, laptop, etc.) in one convenient location.

9. Motivation

You need to be motivated to learn and work hard, whether or not you like a specific subject or teacher. Self-motivation can be extremely important when you aren't particularly excited about a class. If you must, view it as an obstacle you must overcome. Then, set your mind to it and do it -- no excuses. Success is up to you!

10. Commitment

You've started the course, now you need to complete it. Do the best -- and get the most out of it -- that you can! Your commitment will pay off in the end.