

What is the Difference Between High School and College?

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
High school is mandatory .	College is voluntary .
Time is structured by others.	Students manage their own time.
Parents and teachers remind students of their responsibilities and help set priorities.	Students must balance responsibilities and set priorities. Students will face moral and ethical decisions never faced before.
Class schedule is arranged for students.	Students are responsible for arranging their own course schedule in consultation with an advisor.
Others will make sure that students are meeting graduation requirements	At the college level Graduation requirements are complex, differ from year to year and student to student. Students are expected to know those that apply to them and track their own progress.

CLASSES

There is usually little regular studying necessary for classes.	The rule of thumb in college is: spend 2-3 hours studying outside of class for each hour in class. (3 hours in class each week = 6-9 study hours each week).
Reading and other assignments are usually reviewed in class.	* Students may be expected to do substantial work, reading, writing and research outside of class to supplement class discussion. This material may not be reviewed in class but students will be expected to know it for testing and discussion.

INSTRUCTORS

Teachers check students' completed homework.	Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume students can perform the same tasks on tests.
Teachers allow make-up late work and remind students to do so.	Students may not be able to make-up missing work without a documented excuse.
Teachers approach students if they believe they need assistance.	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect students to initiate contact if assistance is needed.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Professors expect and want students 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 provide you with information missed when students were absent.	Professors expect students to get any notes from classes students missed from their classmates.
Teachers present material to help students 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 students are studying. Or they may expect <i>students</i> to relate the classes to the textbook readings.

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Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting students to identify the important points in their notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading students through the thinking process.	Professors expect students to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take time to remind students of assignments and due dates.	Professors expect students to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of them, when it is due, and how they will be graded.
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.	Professors may not formally take roll, but they are still likely to know whether or not students attend. Additionally, students can earn a failing grade (FX) due to excessive absences even if they have good test scores.
* Guiding principle: High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills.	* Guiding principle: College is a learning environment in which students take responsibility for thinking through and applying what they have learned.

EXAMS

Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	Testing can be infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. Students, 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.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests may not be an option without sufficient documentation supporting.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Because of the large number of students and events it is not possible to schedule exams in this manner.
Guiding principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what students were taught in the form in which it was presented to them, or to solve the kinds of problems they were shown how to solve.	Guiding principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what has been learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

GRADES

Grades are given for most assigned work	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work
Consistently good homework grades may raise students' 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 students raise your grade.	Extra credit projects are rarely available.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on the final grade.	Watch out for <i>first</i> tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let students know what is expected--but they also may account for a substantial part of the course grade. Students may be shocked when they get their grades.

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<p>Students may graduate as long as they have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher</p>	<p>Students may graduate only if their cumulative GPA is 2.0 or higher and they have completed all necessary requirements</p>
<p>Guiding principle: <i>Effort counts</i>. Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."</p>	<p>* Guiding principle: <i>Results count</i>. Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help students <i>achieve</i> good results, it will not <i>substitute</i> for results in the grading process.</p>

*Adapted from Southern Methodist University's web page