

Skills Needed For Success in High School vs. College

High School Homework

- ◆ Many students can study very little outside of class (0-2 hours per week) and still do very well.
- ◆ Usually reviewing material once is all students need. Sometimes they only need to listen in class.
- ◆ Careful note-taking during lectures is often unnecessary.
- ◆ Reading that students are assigned to do outside of class is typically short and is then re-taught in class.
- ◆ Teachers tend to tell students what they need to know.
- ◆ When work is procrastinated, it can usually get finished in the end with few negative consequences.
- ◆ If handouts or other materials are needed for tests, students can be given extra or replacement copies.

College Coursework

- ◆ Students should study 2-3 hours for every hour they are in class each week.
- ◆ Material is much more complex. Students need strong study skills and must continually review material.
- ◆ Note-taking strategies should be learned and used for every lecture.
- ◆ Course readings can be lengthy and are often not taught in class. College-level reading skills should be used.
- ◆ Instructors usually expect students to determine what is important.
- ◆ Time management is essential! Putting off coursework usually ends in stress and poor results.
- ◆ Students need to organize their course materials well because instructors will not issue new copies before exams.

High School Teachers

- ◆ Teachers check to make sure students have completed homework.
- ◆ Teachers contact students who are struggling or are missing work.
- ◆ If someone is absent, teachers will tell that student what was missed and what must be made up.
- ◆ Class time often focuses on covering the textbook material.
- ◆ Teachers usually remind students when assignments are coming due.
- ◆ Teachers reward students for trying, even when their grades don't always match their efforts. They provide extra credit opportunities to raise grades.

College Instructors

- ◆ Homework is often not graded but must be done to understand concepts.
- ◆ Students must contact instructors if they need assistance or extensions.
- ◆ Students should tell instructors when class will be missed. Also, absence is not an excuse for being unprepared!
- ◆ Classes don't just review; they discuss material further or apply it.
- ◆ Students must keep and check their syllabi to know what is coming due.
- ◆ Instructors may be more willing to help students who show effort, but there is not usually extra credit available when grades aren't strong.

High School Tests

- ◆ Tests occur frequently and cover minimal course content.
- ◆ If you miss a test, you can usually make it up later.
- ◆ Teachers often consider school events or students' other obligations when scheduling tests.
- ◆ Tests are about memorizing and repeating back information taught.
- ◆ There are typically lots of review sessions done in class before a test, giving students an idea of what they will be tested on.

College Exams

- ◆ Courses may only have only 2-4 exams that cover a lot of material.
- ◆ Missed exams cannot not usually be made up without prior arrangements.
- ◆ Professors do not consider your other obligations when scheduling exams. Students must plan ahead for exams.
- ◆ Students must learn how to apply concepts to other situations for exams.
- ◆ Instructors do not always use class time for review or say what will be on exams. Organizing and preparing for review time is up to the students.

High School Grading

- ◆ Grades are given frequently, and most assigned work is graded so that students are aware of where their grades stand in a class.
- ◆ Smaller assignments (homework, quizzes, etc.) can raise overall class grades significantly when other assignments do not go well.
- ◆ The first couple of tests in a class are sometimes easier than later tests. If the scores are low, students don't always take action because they can often do extra credit later.
- ◆ Attendance is typically checked every day, but a lack of participation will not usually affect the overall grade in the class.

College Grading

- ◆ Not all work is graded, so students must keep in contact with instructors to know how they are doing in a given course.
- ◆ Students must put more effort into the larger assignments (exams, papers, etc.) because they often account for most of the overall course grade.
- ◆ Beware of the first round of tests. They are often very different than students expected. Don't wait to get help! Go to the professor or a tutor right away, and try new study skills.
- ◆ Instructors may check attendance without announcing it, and class participation sometimes contributes significantly to overall course grades.

This handout was created by Kristin Burkhardt, Assistant Director of Learning Services at Mount St. Mary's University. For an appointment at the Mount's Learning Services, please call 301-447-5006.

Some information in this handout was taken from Southern Methodist University: <http://smu.edu/alec/transition.asp>.