

TIME MANAGEMENT

CAREER PLANNING

Leadership

WELCOME TO HIGH SCHOOL

WHERE EVERYTHING COUNTS

GPA

HOMEWORK

GRADES

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

So this is high school! Congratulations on making it to the Big Time. Is it everything you thought it would be? Chances are, you've got a lot to take in at the moment. Finding your classrooms, getting to know a bunch of new students and teachers, figuring out how to balance a jam-packed schedule, all while you're facing an ever-changing list of social possibilities and a family who keeps asking you how everything is going. They have no idea!!!

What some students don't figure out until it's too late is the Freshman Year is the Most Important Year. Everything you do from the day you walk through the school doors COUNTS! Whether it's grades, GPA, managing your time effectively, being an active leader, choosing classes or planning for your future, **EVERYTHING YOU DO IN HIGH SCHOOL YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR FOLLOWS YOU UNTIL YOU GRADUATE AND BEYOND.**

So, what are some things you need to think about to help you succeed in high school and prepare for your future?

- **Homework Counts!!** Blowing off even one or two assignments has a huge impact on your overall grades.
- **Know how to calculate your Cumulative GPA.** Every grade you earn in every class you take is counted together from freshman to senior year and is displayed on your high school transcript. Colleges and employers request these transcripts when you are applying for college or work. Make sure your transcript is impressive. Remember, **EVERY GRADE COUNTS.** If you start off with a low GPA your freshman year, it's tough to push it up to where you want it later. But, if you start out strong your freshman year, it's much easier to keep it where you want it to be.
- **Organization is the key to keeping on top of assignments, projects, and tests and still leave you time for social activities.**
- **School should be more than arriving at the first bell and leaving at the last.** Make time to become involved in some of the clubs and activities the school has to offer. The Guidance Office and Activities Office has a list of clubs and activities that you are welcome to join. Being involved also helps build your leadership and social skills. These activities also help you build a resume for college or work applications.
- **Plan for your future now.** Counselors will be helping you over the next four years to assist you in researching career possibilities. Make sure you are taking courses that will get you where you want to be. If college is in your future, make sure you are taking appropriate college prep courses. Take courses that will help you in your future career.

Grades

Look at how blowing off an assignment or two can hurt your grade.

Your grade after Math Assignment #1

The assignments are worth:		You Earned	So your grade is:	
Assignment #1	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B
Overall Grade	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B

Your grade after Math Assignment #2

The assignments are worth:		You Earned	So your grade is:	
Assignment #1	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B
Assignment #2	10 points	9 points	9/10 or 90%	A
Overall Grade	10 + 10 = 20	8 + 9 = 17	17/20 or 85%	B

Your grade after Math Assignment #3

The assignments are worth:		You Earned	So your grade is:	
Assignment #1	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B
Assignment #2	10 points	9 points	9/10 or 90%	A
Assignment #3	10 points	6 points	6/10 or 60%	D
Overall Grade	30 points	23 points	23/30 or 77%	C

Wow! Look how one poor assignment grade dropped you to a "C"!!

Your grade after Math Assignment #4

The assignments are worth:		You Earned	So your grade is:	
Assignment #1	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B
Assignment #2	10 points	9 points	9/10 or 90%	A
Assignment #3	10 points	6 points	6/10 or 60%	D
Assignment #4	10 points	10 points	10/10 or 100%	A
Overall Grade	40 points	33 points	33/40 or 83%	B

Good Job! Your "A" brought you back up to a "B". But what happens if you blow off an assignment completely?

Your grade after Math Assignment #5

The assignments are worth:		You Earned	So your grade is:	
Assignment #1	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B
Assignment #2	10 points	9 points	9/10 or 90%	A
Assignment #3	10 points	6 points	6/10 or 60%	D
Assignment #4	10 points	10 points	10/10 or 100%	A
Assignment #5	10 points	0 points	0/10 or 0%	F
Overall Grade	50 points	33 points	33/50 or 66%	D

From a grade of "B" to a grade of "D" for one blown assignment!

What about a Big Point Project? What can that do to your grade?

Your grade after Math Assignment #6

The assignments are worth:		You Earned	So your grade is:	
Assignment #1	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B
Assignment #2	10 points	9 points	9/10 or 90%	A
Assignment #3	10 points	6 points	6/10 or 60%	D
Assignment #4	10 points	10 points	10/10 or 100%	A
Assignment #5	10 points	0 points	0/10 or 0%	F
Big Point Project	50 points	45 points	45/50 or 90%	A
Overall Grade	100 points	78 points	78/100 or 78%	C

Very Nice! You brought your grade up from a "D" to a high "C".

But what if the Project had been worth only 10 points?

Your grade after Math Assignment #6

The assignments are worth:		You Earned	So your grade is:	
Assignment #1	10 points	8 points	8/10 or 80%	B
Assignment #2	10 points	9 points	9/10 or 90%	A
Assignment #3	10 points	6 points	6/10 or 60%	D
Assignment #4	10 points	10 points	10/10 or 100%	A
Assignment #5	10 points	0 points	0/10 or 0%	F
Big Point Project	10 points	9 points	9/10 or 90%	A
Overall Grade	60 points	42 points	42 or 70%	C

You still have a "C", but it's a very low C. It wouldn't take much to drop you back down to a "D". The moral of this story is to always try your best. Make sure you understand how many points each assignment and project and test is worth. The more points it is worth, the bigger the impact the grade will have on your overall grade in class. Which means.... You need to make sure you try to do your best on the assignments, projects and tests that are worth a lot of points. If you don't give your best effort, it will be very, very hard to pull your overall grade back up to something you can be proud of.

(But that doesn't mean you should slack off on small assignments—all assignments COUNT toward your overall grade.

Your High School Transcript and What It Means To You

Believe it or not, most students never see their high school transcript until they are ready to send one to a college or possible employer. Students do not always understand how important that piece of paper is to their future. It is a legal document that will be on file for the next 75 years! People looking for employment years after they graduate are often asked by their prospective employers to send in a copy of their transcript—even people who have earned a college degree. So, you will want to make sure you are building a TRANSCRIPT you will always be proud of!

So what does a transcript look like? What information is on it that colleges and employers are looking for?

1. The names of the courses and the grades you earned are listed on the transcript. Colleges look to see if the student took challenging courses and courses that prepare them for college and the student's chosen major of study.
2. Attendance: The number of days absent demonstrates to employers and college admissions personnel a student's commitment to academic excellence, perseverance, and persistence toward graduation.
3. Grade Point Average (GPA): Each semester course grade is assigned a numeric value (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1) and then averaged. The Cumulative Grade Point Average is the average of ALL grades from all semesters. Remember that just like daily class assignments, it is hard to pull up your cumulative GPA if you blow off a class and receive a poor grade. Always do your best work at all times. EVERY CLASS COUNTS!
4. Class Rank: Based on the cumulative grade point average, class rank indicates a student's place (first, second, third, etc.) compared to all the students in his class.
5. Credits/Units: Students earn $\frac{1}{2}$ credit for each semester of a course that is completed with a passing grade. Francis Howell High School requires 24 credits to graduate (4 units of Communication Arts, 3 units of Math, 3 units of Science, 3 units of Social Studies, $\frac{1}{2}$ unit of Health, 1 unit of PE, 1 unit of a Fine Art, 1 unit of a Practical Art, $\frac{1}{2}$ unit of Personal Finance).

Look at the next page for view an example of a Francis Howell High School Transcript.

Organization and Study Skills

Organization is not something that does not necessarily come naturally to people. It's a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. Time management is part of this skill. The following is a list of tried and true suggestions for keeping organized and keeping on top of school work and managing your life. If you make some of these a habit, you will find you can balance school, activities, and your social life without any of them suffering.

Build a Monthly Calendar

This calendar allows you, in one quick glance, to get a clear picture of what you have to do in the weeks to come. Students find that using the daily planner given to you at the beginning of school is very useful, but they can't see the month-at-a-glance. Consider buying a large monthly planner with large blocks to enter all assignments, due dates, test dates, and activities so you can see the whole month at one time.

- As soon as you learn about test and exam dates, as well as a paper, assignment, or project deadline, enter them on the calendar.
- Enter all other major events such as clubs, sports, church, and family activities on the calendar. This way you can see which days are already full so you can plan when to study or work on projects ahead of time in order to meet deadlines.

Be Organized

- Use your assignment notebook. Check it before you leave school to make sure you have any books and assignments needed to complete an assignment.
- Have a separate folder for each class
- Have phone numbers for classmates in case you have a question.
- Keep your locker and backpack clean.
- Get everything organized for the next day before you go to bed.

Manage Your Time Well

- Use class time and study halls to get started on your homework.
- Create a study plan that works for you
- Break large assignments down into smaller, easily accomplished parts.
- Learn to set priorities on things like projects, assignments, etc.

- Start with top priority items—don't get sidetracked by the little things that will nibble away your day.
- Fight procrastination (putting it off)—do it now if it is important.
- Learn to say 'no' when you have something important to do.
- Take advantage of Early Release Tuesdays and visit the Math, Writing, Science, or other labs available to you to receive additional tutoring on assignments.

Take Good Notes

- Stay actively engaged when you are in class to maximize your learning.
- Be an active listener—as you listen, think about what's being said.
- Recognize and write down important information.
- Take notes that are easy to read.
- Get a copy of the class notes if you're absent.

Know How to Use Your Textbook

Not knowing how to use your textbook effectively can waste your time.

- **SCAN** the assignment to get an overview. Read the titles, subtitles, and everything in bold and italic print. Look at the pictures, graphs and charts, go over the review questions, and read the summaries.
- **READ** the assignment. When your reading has a purpose, your comprehension improves, and it's easier to stay focused. To give your reading purpose, try turning each boldfaced subtitle into a question. For example "Global Warming changes weather patterns" can be turned into the question "How is global warming changing weather patterns". Keep this question in mind as you read. Look at bold or italic print and then ask yourself why is this word, person, place or event important?
- **REVIEW** what you've read. After reading the material, take a few extra minutes for review. When you review, you lock the information into your brain before it has a chance to evaporate. Go back to subtitles, briefly restate the purpose or point of each section using your own words. Look at the words in bold and italic print and think about what they mean and why they are important.
- **REVIEW** again a day or two later. When you go to study for the test, you'll be amazed at how well you already know the material.

Study Smart

Students who 'study smart' find that they spend less time studying, and yet they get better grades.

- Find a good place to study. It doesn't matter where you study as long as you have a surface for writing, it is well lit, and it's comfortable.
- Some students need it to be quiet when they study; others work better with music. Research shows that listening to classical music can actually improve your concentration. You, of course, must determine what works best for you.
- Get Started. Don't put it off until later, don't make excuses, and don't wait until you're in the mood. Begin with something simple or a subject you like, and just get started.
- If you have something to memorize, work on that first, and then go over it again at the end of your study session.
- Know when and how to take breaks. Students learn the most during the first and last ten minutes of a study session. After studying for 20 minutes, try taking a short break.
- Know how to study for tests. Know what the test is going to cover. Pay particular attention in class the day before a test. If a teacher gives you a review sheet, study it until you know everything on it. Have all your reading done ahead of time. If your textbook has review questions, know the answers to all of them.
- You really know something if you can explain it in your own words.
- Write down names, dates, formulas, and/or facts you need to remember on an index card. When you review these, you move information from short-term memory into long-term memory.
- Use acronyms to help you memorize. For example, ROY G BIV can help you remember the colors of the light spectrum (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet).

Be In School Every Day—Attendance Counts!!

When you miss school, you miss lectures, notes, class discussions, homework explanations, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn't matter how good you are about making up your work, you can never make up everything you miss, even when you're out for only one day. In order to get good grades, you need to be in school every day. EVERY DAY COUNTS!

If you must be absent from school, remember that YOU are responsible for finding out what you missed and for getting all of the work made up and for arranging to make up quizzes, tests, or presentations you missed.

Get Involved

- Use your freshman year as a time to find out every activity that is offered at Francis Howell High School.
- If you really enjoy an activity and want to become better at it, think about spending some time in high school developing that skill or talent.
- After you look at every activity that is offered at school, think about exploring one or two things that you've never even tried before. It would be a shame if it turns out that you would be really good at something, but you never found out because you never tried.
- Even if you're not interested in a particular activity, make sure you stay aware of all the activities offered at school. People change. You might become interested in some things later that you're not really interested in right now.
- Make sure you explore what is offered in your community.

Make Plans for Your Future

Right now you may not know what you want to do with your future—or exactly how to get ready for it. That's okay. You have plenty of time to figure out what INTERESTS you, WHAT YOU ARE GOOD AT, and how these things add up to a career. In the meantime, consider the following:

- What interests you the most.
- What you are good at or have talents in.
- Take math classes all through high school. The further you go in math in high school, the better your chances of earning a college degree.
- Take challenging courses. Ask your teacher for a recommendation for honors or Advanced Placement courses.
- Take courses that will prepare you for college or a career.
- Make good grades. Even if you don't go to college, your high school grade point average is still important because it predicts future income. *High school grades do not predict income right after high school, but they do strongly predict long-term income.* If you don't go to college, an increase of one letter grade (from a 'C' to a 'B') in your high school grade point average typically increases income by 13% by age 28. So even if you don't go to college, improving your high school grades from Cs to Bs improves your chances that you will be able to support a family.

