

HOMESCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL & BEYOND

A GUIDE FOR HOMESCHOOLING TEENS

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BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE



So...you are about to enter your high school years. This is a time of growing independence and responsibility. This can be an exciting time for a young person as you start to feel and get treated more like an adult. You may be getting your first job, learning how to drive, and looking into colleges. It's a time for you to begin taking ownership of your education and the direction you want to take with your life.

Each of these things is a big deal. Some of these things will require some "soul searching". You don't want to end up with a career that is going to make you miserable. This guide is meant to help walk you through some of this "soul searching" so that you can make informed decisions about your future.

In this guide you will find information about:

- what courses are recommended for 9th grade - 12th grade to increase your chances of getting into the college of your choice
- identifying your personal strengths
- learning styles
- several sets of questions to steer you into writing out your **personal story**, share what are your **goals for high school**, and discover what your goals are for immediately **after high school** and why should you be preparing for those goals now.

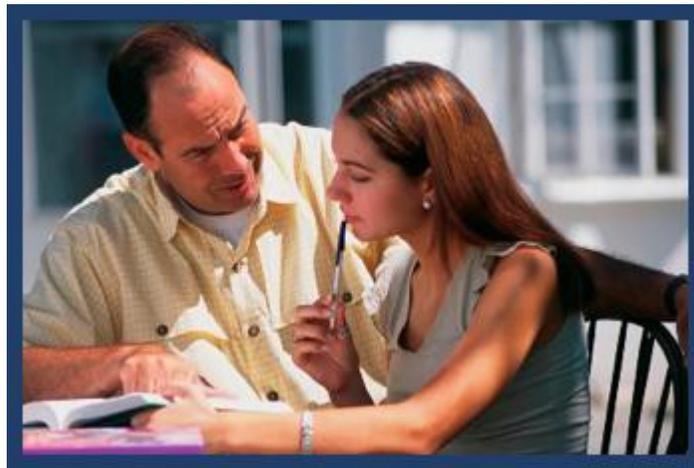
Your parents will still be there to guide and advise you, however most parents begin to allow their teens to make more and more decisions on their own. This might be a difficult process for some parents, so be patient with them. Some parents don't want to let go of the reins. They want to protect their children from danger. They still see you toddling around their house investigating everything you can get your pudgy little hands on or into your mouth, at least in their minds. Try not to get upset about this or argue with them about it. Do your best to show responsibility and they will eventually come around.



There are parents who may be at the other extreme. They may be more than ready to nudge you out of the nest encouraging you to test your wings at every opportunity. If this is your parent, be thankful. They are doing what they believe is best to prepare you for adult life.

No matter where your parents are on the protectiveness scale, you are going to eventually need to take over the driver's seat of your life. This resource is meant to give you some of the tools and confidence to do that.

WHAT'S MY GAME PLAN?



As we discussed earlier, your high school years are a time of many firsts and much decision making. Many of the decisions you make at this time will have an effect on the rest of your future. Don't let that thought freak you out. Just like a good quarterback always has a game plan so should you. Take things a step at a time. The very first step is figuring out what classes you need to take while you are still in high school.

Keep in mind that there are certain core subjects that every high school student would be wise to complete. However, there are some states in which the regulations on homeschoolers are much stiffer than for other states. It's always a good idea to [find out what the rules are in your particular state](#).

The wonderful thing about being a high school homeschooler is that you get to tailor your education toward what you would eventually like to do as a career. Your electives may consist of courses that will help you get experience in your chosen field. You may even decide to [dual-enroll in your local college](#) to get a head start on that degree. Another option would be [interning with a professional](#) to get a feel for the career you are considering.



For now, it all starts with the core subjects. For any student who is looking to enter college, you would be wise to make sure you complete 4 credits language arts, 2-4 credits math, 2-4 credits history/geography, 2-4 credits science, 2-4 credits foreign language.

It is also a good idea, if you have a clue of what college you would like to attend, to [find out what classes they require](#) that you take in high school before they will admit you into their school. I would even suggest checking this for several possible colleges.

A traditional four-year plan usually looks something like this:

Ninth Grade: First Semester	Ninth Grade: Second Semester
English	English
Math	Math
Science	Science
History	History
Foreign Language	Foreign Language
Elective	Physical Education Elective

Tenth Grade: First Semester	Tenth Grade: Second Semester
English	English
Math	Math
Science	Science
History	History
Foreign Language	Foreign Language
Career Oriented Elective	Fine Art Elective

Eleventh Grade: First Semester	Eleventh Grade: Second Semester
English	English
Math	Math
Science	Science
History	History
Fine Art Elective	Career Oriented Elective

Twelfth Grade: First Semester	Twelfth Grade: Second Semester
English	English
Math	Math
Science	Science
History	History
Elective	Elective



WHAT ARE MY STRENGTHS?



This is one of the first things I'd like you to begin thinking about. If you are able to discover and tap into your particular strengths, and by the way, EVERYONE has strengths, you will be more content in the career you eventually enter.

How does one discover their strengths? Well, the best and quickest way is through the book [Strengths Finder 2.0](#). This is actually much more than just a book although you will have to have the book to get started. Inside the back cover is a special code which you will use to access an online test. This test has been carefully researched and designed to help you identify what your individual strengths are. The information contained in the book can help you to better understand your results and give you a better handle on what sort of career is best suited for you.

LEARNING STYLES

As a homeschooler, you have probably already heard about learning styles. Your parents may have even "pegged" you with a dominant learning style. Did you agree with their assessment? Whether you did or not, it can be helpful to take a fresh look at this and decide for yourself what you think your dominant style is.

By the way, can you guess why I keep saying dominant? That's right! You can use more than one learning style and you may even use a particular style when learning one subject and a totally different one for another subject.



Why does it matter what your learning style is? Well, if you know your own particular learning style, you can employ it to help you do better throughout your high school years and into college. Learning the subject matter the way you relate to it best will make learning take less effort and seem less like work. So how does one figure out what their dominant style is? Let's take a look at each one. You may need to try each style with different subjects to determine which best fit you.

Visual

This is obviously going to have to do with sight. If you like to see lots of pictures and diagrams to help you understand something, then you might be a visual learner. Other signs that you are a visual learner might include:

- You see pictures that compliment the music when listening to a song.
- You like websites that have a really cool design and have nice graphics.
- When waiting in line you are likely to look at pictures or displays nearby.
- When looking for a book to read you go for the one that has a cover that grabs you.

How would you study using the visual style? Read back over your notes, look at the section titles in your textbook, analyze drawings and graphics and perhaps create your own then label them.

Auditory

Again it's probably pretty obvious that this one deals with listening. Is it easier for you to remember things if they are taught in a lecture format? Do you repeat information back to yourself? You just might be an auditory learner. Here are more clues to how auditory learners operate:

- When you are listening to music you can't help but hum along.
- The websites you like best have areas where you can listen to music or chat audibly with your friends.
- If you are stuck in line, you are likely to strike up a conversation with people in line with you.
- You are likely to want to read a book that you've heard a friend share about.

What does a study session look like with the auditory learning style? You might have someone quiz you with facts about the material or you might find a place where you can say them aloud to yourself while not disturbing anyone else.

Tactile/Kinesthetic

This one may not be so obvious but it has to do with movement and manipulation of objects.



This is what we so often hear referred to as "hands on learning". The person who is a tactile/kinesthetic learner craves action. You might be a tactile/kinesthetic learner if:

- You have to move and dance to music, or at the very least, tap your fingers or foot.
- Your favorite websites are interactive.
- In line you will fidget, tap out a beat with your foot or hand or basically be in constant motion.
- The books you choose will have lots of true accounts.

A tactile/kinesthetic learner would study by jotting down info on index cards, making an outline or creating 3d models.

The learning styles information is adapted from:

Russ, Jill S., (2012, April 7). Figuring Out Your Learning Style. *Russ' Rockets: The Official Website of Mrs. Russ' Third Grade Class*. Retrieved April 9, 2013, from <http://mrsruss.com/Parents/learningstyles2.html>

FINDING YOURSELF



There are some teens who have known what they want to do with their lives from a very early age. This is not the norm, however. For many of us it can be a mystifying endeavour attempting to decide what vocation would best suit you. One exercise that can help is to write out your personal story. Following are some questions to help you "find yourself".

What are your favorite subjects in school?

Which subjects do you seem to really struggle with?

What activities do you find yourself doing in your free time? (*Note here: it seems that*



for many teens and kids these days, video gaming is a top free-time filler. Try to think beyond video games. What other kinds of things do you enjoy doing?)

What kinds of things are you interested in?

Do you prefer being outside or inside?

Do you consider yourself to be a people person, or do you prefer to work alone?

Do you have a special aptitude for working with computers? *This is where the video gaming might be more than a time-filler.*

Are you self-motivated, or do you work better with a prescribed agenda and plenty of accountability?

Are you "artsy and creative"?

What do your parents, and other respected adults in your life have to say about your talents and aptitudes?

Are you willing to work lots of hours or would you prefer to have more time to spend with your future family?

Are you looking to become wealthy and have a big house and nice car, or will you be content to simply provide for a family?

Again, don't forget to take into account your strengths and how they relate to particular job choices.

Can you see a pattern in any of your answers? Anything that might suggest a particular line of work? Don't despair if you are still feeling lost. It may help to read up on different careers. A great place to find out about any job available in the US is to go to <http://www.occupationalinfo.org>. Go to your local library and ask your research librarian to help you. Ask people you know about their jobs and what they entail. You might even want to see if you can spend a week or so tagging along with an employee in your field of interest. Make a list of the job possibilities that interest you. You might also think about taking an aptitude test. The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is one of the most widely used and does NOT indicate a commitment to join the military.



WHAT DO I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH DURING HIGH SCHOOL?

It's also wise to examine your goals for high school. Answer these questions to help you think these through.

What electives are you hoping to take in high school?

What extracurricular activities do you want to be involved in?

Do you plan to play any sports? If so which ones?

Do you hope to have a job during high school?

Will you do volunteer work somewhere?

Are you going to take advantage of the option to take college classes for free while in high school?

What is your plan to fit all this into your schedule?

Will you have your own vehicle available to drive or will you have to rely on others to get you where you need to be?

FOR THE COLLEGE BOUND

Preparing for a 2-year College

A 2-year college degree is often also called an Associates Degree. There are high schoolers who mix college level classes with their high school classes to get a head-start on their associates degree even while they are in high school. This is called [dual-enrollment](#), and if available in your state, you can usually take advantage of it beginning in your junior year. If you already have a busy high school career planned then this may not be a recommended option for you. Also, keep in mind that as a college student you will be required to take specific classes in which the material may be more mature than you are ready to deal with.

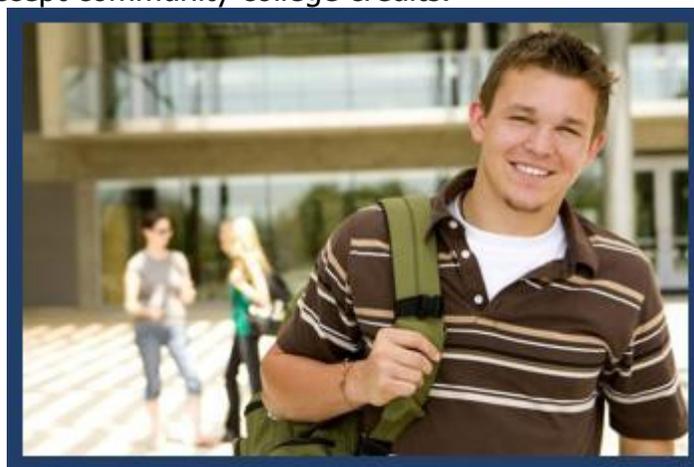
Most associate degrees can be earned from community colleges and trade schools. However,



some universities also offer them. You may have to take a college entrance exam, even if you are going to be attending a community college. Most of these exams can be taken multiple times but keep in mind that there will be a cost for taking the exam. However, you usually do NOT have to take the ACT or SAT to be accepted into a community college.

There are some advantages to taking at least some of your college coursework at a community college, even if you do not get your full associates degree there. The most important advantage is cost - - courses at a community college usually cost significantly less than their counterparts at colleges or universities. Another advantage is that you can continue to live at home while completing your coursework. As well as being an additional cost advantage, this is also especially beneficial for students who might not be emotionally mature enough to be ready to move away from home immediately after graduation.

Most community college courses are transferable to four-year institutions, but if you are planning on doing some of your coursework at a community college and then transferring to a four-year college afterward, it is important to check with the college you are interested in to make sure they will accept community college credits.



Preparing for a 4-year College

This is, of course, the way to get a bachelors degree. If your chosen career requires this level of education, you will need to plan to enroll in a full four-year college or university, or transfer to one after community college.

The requirements for gaining admission to a university can be as varied as there are universities in the U.S. That being said, many universities look first and foremost at ACT and/or SAT scores. Again, you can take these tests as many times as you have the cash to pay for them. There are many ways to prepare for these tests from taking a special test prep course to hiring a tutor. Students can start taking these tests as early as 9th grade.

Most 4-year colleges will also look at prospective students' high school grades, extracurricular activities, recommendations from teachers, and the types of classes they took. They want to



see well-rounded students who challenge themselves and are community minded.

I'd like to give you some things to think about at this point. As you begin to zoom in on a possible occupation, it is great to look at specific jobs in this area. However, try not to get too hung up on one particular position. As you choose your path of study, you may want to consider widening the field.

For instance, when I was in high school, I knew I wanted to become a writer. I decided at that time that I would major in Journalism. It seemed like a logical choice at the time. However, I didn't realize that it takes a special personality to be a journalist. One that I just don't have. I would have been better served by getting a degree in English or even Liberal Arts and then possibly minoring in a more specific field. This would have given me more options when it came to getting a job after college.

If you have decided that a four-year college is the right choice for you, then your high school homeschool planning should include:

- planning out [what courses you will need to cover](#) in high school
- keeping strong records of what coursework you complete in the form of a [transcript](#)

FOR THE NON-COLLEGE BOUND

If you are NOT college bound, you may find that you have even more freedom to tailor your education. Many homeschoolers may not be aware of this, but there are no specific graduation requirements for homeschool students. Of course, you want the very best education possible to secure your future success. But isn't it nice that you aren't forced to fit an educational mold that you just aren't shaped for?

So what are some of the tributaries this path can take? [Apprenticeships](#), trade schools, getting a job, [starting a business](#), [joining the military](#), and [volunteering](#) are just a few of the roads less traveled that can lead you to your ultimate goal. You might want to check out the free e-book "[It's My Life: A Guide to Alternatives After High School](#)" for even more ideas of alternate post-graduation paths.

Vocational and Trade Schools

If you are looking at getting a job in a specific trade this may be your best route. For instance, if you want to become a hairdresser or an electrician, a trade school is pretty much the only way to gain the knowledge you will need. You will also not be compelled to take classes that have nothing to do with your field of study.





Many people opt for this avenue because you can earn your degree more quickly and without as much cost. In fact, be very leary of trade schools that cost more than typical colleges. There are many that are "for-profit" and will pretty much soak you for all they can get while not always delivering on their grandiose promises.

It is generally easier to get into a trade school than a regular college. All will require a high school diploma or GED. However, some trade schools can be particular about accepting homeschool diplomas. Again, you will need to do your homework.

You will also need to provide the admissions counselor with your standardized test scores. They may want you to take specific standardized tests as a way to determine which classes you will need to take.

Certificate Programs

This is a twist on the idea of tailoring your secondary education to your career choice. While you are focusing only on the courses that relate to your degree, this is not necessarily the same as learning a trade. Certification can enhance an already earned degree or give you the skills for a very particular vocation. Some certifications can be earned in a matter of weeks while others take longer.

Certification can be gained via online schools or at community colleges as well as traditional colleges. There are even trade schools that offer certification for specific jobs.

Joining the Workforce/Apprenticeship

There is something to be said for getting a job in the vocation of your choice and starting from the ground up. There are some employers who prefer that you come in with little or no experience so that you can learn to do things their way and before developing bad habits. I have an aunt who wanted to become a baker. She walked into a local bakery shop and filled out an application telling her future boss that she was willing to sweep floors in order to learn the business. She is now the manager of one bakery in a major bakery chain.

Some trades actually require the worker to advance through different levels of apprenticeship before they are allowed to handle all the equipment and be considered a master of the trade. In most cases the employer will expect the apprentice to continue working for them for at



least a specific amount of time after completing their training. The main advantage of this option is pretty evident. Not only are you learning the trade of your choice but you are getting paid while doing it.

[CareerOneStop](#) is a great site to find apprenticeship programs in your area.

Joining the Military

There is a good reason why many people opt to join the military. Beyond fulfilling a patriotic sense of duty there are many other advantages to spending time in the military. At the top of our list is the job training you will receive while in the service. Every branch of the service also provides GI Bill benefits which can be used after you leave the service. All this, and a chance to travel and see the world!



However there is a flipside! This is not a decision to be made frivolously. There are things you should seriously consider before joining the military:

- Are you willing to die for your country? Are you willing to kill for your country?? Both are very real possibilities.
- Are you at least nominally fit?
- Are you willing to relinquish your choices on when you sleep, when you eat, where to live, and where you work for the number of years you are in the service? You will basically BELONG to the government for the time you are in the military.
- Are you willing to spend extended periods of time away from your family?
- Are you willing to endure grueling physical training paired with verbally abusive superiors?
- How are your parents going to feel about you joining?

As someone who has never served in the military, I'm sure others could add to this short list. The point is, count the cost before you join.

If you are okay with all of the above then the next step is speaking to a recruitment officer. You will be expected to take the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) for which it is advisable to prepare as much as possible. This test designates what options you will have available while in the service.



There are several personal documents which you will likely need to provide to your recruiter. These include a government issued ID such as your drivers license, your social security card, your high school diploma, your birth certificate, any college transcripts, marriage license, medical documents, court documents and adoption documents.

PREPARING FOR THE MILITARY WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL

Since you are still in high school, there are additional ways that you can prepare for a military career. Aside from attending a military academy, unless that's what floats your boat, you can join a JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps). This can help you to gain many of the disciplines you will employ when you join the military.

JROTC may not be an option for homeschoolers in every state. The reason for this is that most JROTC programs are closely tied to the school system in which they are offered. This can result in homeschoolers being denied access. If this is the case, an alternative is the Civil Air Patrol.

Civil Air Patrol of course affiliated with the Air Force. They provide emergency services, cadet programs, and aerospace education. Their cadet programs provide plenty of activities to fit a wide range of interests.

Advancing through both JROTC and Civil Air Patrol will provide higher ranks upon joining the military. It is important to note, however, that membership in either of these programs does not force the participant to join the military later on.

SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, & OTHER FINANCIAL HELPS

When it comes to scholarships and other financial aid, most teens have guidance counselors to help them sort it all out. As homeschoolers we don't have that luxury. So where does a homeschool teen begin looking for scholarships and such? That is actually a loaded question which cannot be fully addressed here. However, I will try to give you a few tips to get you pointed in the right direction. For this section, it may help to consider your parents as your guidance counselors. That should not be difficult since that is what they have pretty much been your whole life.





Scholarships

Just like we discussed in the section on getting into college, the best way to get a scholarship is to make good grades and show that you are a leader. People who award scholarships want to feel that they are making a good investment in someone who will make a difference in the world.

As far as finding scholarships, the internet can prove a huge resource for research. It may behoove you to go through an online scholarship search engine. Just make sure to authenticate the information they are providing. Things change quickly in the world of scholarships. What you are viewing may already be outdated so be careful to find a search engine that keeps their information consistently up to date. [Fastweb](#) and [Scholarships.com](#) are a couple to get you started.

Grants

A grant is similar to a scholarship in that you will never have to pay it back. Grants are a bit different than scholarships in that they are usually based on financial need rather than how well the student performs. Grants can also be awarded to people of specific ethnicities or are part of a specialized student group (such as disabled learners, first generation college students or single moms). Some grants are given to pupils who are going into certain trades or careers.

You will need to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application For Federal Student Aid). The best time to submit this is early in January since that is when the limited funds become available. You can go online to complete the FAFSA at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. There may be other forms to fill out as well to be sure that you don't miss out on any financial help that may be available to you. There are plenty of sites online to help you.

Loans

There are no end of financial institutions willing to hand out student loans. Unless you have scored an all expenses paid scholarship or your parent's invested in a prepaid college plan for



you, chances are that you will need to seek out some sort of student loan. Obviously, this is money that will need to be repaid once your education is complete. For that reason it might be best to seek out the advice of your family CPA or the financial aid counselors at each college you are applying to when it comes to this portion of paying for your college expenses.

YOU CAN DO IT!

I hope that after reading this handbook, you feel that you have the information to get started in the right direction for you and your goals. This is an exciting time in your life. Embrace it! Remember that you are not expected to do this all on your own. There are adults you can go to for advice and encouragement. Work hard to make good grades while you are still in high school. Make note of your personal strengths and begin to exercise them. Keep good records of your achievements. Then set your goals high and soon even you will be amazed at what you are able to accomplish!

