

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

| IN HIGH SCHOOL | IN COLLEGE |
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| Time is structured by school officials and parents. | Students manage their own time. |
| Students can count on teachers to remind them of responsibilities and to guide them in setting priorities. | Students balance responsibilities and set priorities on their own. |
| Daily classes follow one after the other with a few minutes in between. | Students often have large time gaps between classes; class time varies from day to day. |
| Most class schedules are arranged by school personnel. | Students arrange their own schedule in consultation with their academic counselor or advisor. |
| Students are told about graduation requirements. | Graduation requirements are complex, differ from program to program and, sometimes, from year to year. Each student is expected to know those that apply to him/her. |
| <i>Bottom Line: School personnel watch out for students - guiding and correcting them if necessary.</i> | <i>Bottom Line: Students are expected to take responsibility for what they do and don't do as well as for the consequences of their decisions.</i> |
| HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES | COLLEGE CLASSES |
| Students can normally get by with studying outside of class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week and, perhaps, cramming before tests. | Students need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. A course load of 12 credits requires anywhere between 24 to 36 hours of independent study/homework time. |
| Reading is often re-taught in class; listening in class is sometimes enough. | Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class, but still show up in tests. |
| Students can remain in school despite poor academic performance. | Students can be dropped from college because of poor academic performance. |
| <i>Bottom Line: Students are usually told in class what they need to learn from assigned readings.</i> | <i>Bottom Line: It's up to the students to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption the students have already done so.</i> |
| HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS | COLLEGE PROFESSORS |
| Teachers check completed homework. | Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume the students can perform the same tasks on tests. |
| Teachers remind students of incomplete work. | Professors expect and want the student to attend their scheduled office hours. |
| Teachers provide students with information in case of an absence. | Professors expect students to get, from classmates, any notes from missed classes. |
| Teachers present material to help students understand the material in the textbook. | Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, they may use other materials to supplement the text, or they may expect the students to relate the classes to the textbook readings. |
| Teachers often write information on the board as a summary of notes. | Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting students to identify the important points in their notes. Good notes are a must. |
| Teachers impart knowledge and facts sometimes drawing direct connections to lead students through the thinking process. | Professors expect students to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics on their own. |
| 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 the student, when assignments are due, and how they will be graded. |
| <i>Bottom Line: In high school, students mostly acquire facts and skills.</i> | <i>Bottom Line: In college, students are responsible for thinking through and applying what they have learned.</i> |

| TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL | TESTS IN COLLEGE |
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| Testing tends to be frequent and covers small amounts of material. | Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. The student, not the professor, needs to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular course may have only two or three tests in a semester. |
| Makeup tests are often available. | Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, the student needs to request them. |
| Teachers are open to rearranging test dates to avoid conflict with school events. | Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities. |
| Review sessions pointing out the most important concepts are common. | Professors rarely offer review sessions, and, when they do, they expect the students to come prepared with questions. |
| <i>Bottom Line: Mastery can be seen as the ability to reproduce what students are taught.</i> | <i>Bottom Line: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what the student has learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.</i> |
| GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL | GRADES IN COLLEGE |
| Grades were given for most assigned work. | Grades may not be provided for all assigned work. |
| Extra credit projects are often available to help raise your grade. | Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course. |
| Students may graduate as long as they pass all required courses with a grade of D or higher. | Students graduate only if their average in classes meets the departmental standard specified in the catalog. |
| <i>Bottom Line: “Effort counts.” Courses are usually structured to reward a “good-faith effort.”</i> | <i>Bottom Line: “Results count.” Though “good-faith effort” is important in regard to the professor’s willingness to help students achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.</i> |
| IN HIGH SCHOOL | AT GREAT BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE |
| High School is mandatory and usually free. | College courses are paid for by scholarship, loans, and/or out-of-pocket. |
| Although student absences are recorded, students are not subject to penalty for missing too many classes. | Each faculty member has an attendance policy. Students may be dropped from class due to violation of the attendance policy. |
| Students may add or drop classes within a specific period of time. | Students may add or drop classes within a specific period of time. This timeframe includes a small window in which to receive a full refund. After that, the student is responsible for the cost of the course. |
| <i>Bottom Line: Students have no financial responsibility for the changes made to course schedules.</i> | <i>Bottom Line: Not paying attention to attendance policies or add/drop dates can be an expensive lesson.</i> |

Extracted from the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center at Southern Methodist University