

## How College Is Different from High School

While the generalization stated in this chart may not be characteristic of your high school, they are true of high schools in general.

### FOLLOWING THE RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL

#### In high school:

Your time is structured by others.

You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.

**Guiding principle:** You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.

### GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

#### In high school:

You may study outside class as little as 1 to 2 hours a week, plus last-minute test preparation.

You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.

You may cover one unit at a time, with a strong emphasis on facts and basic ideas.

**Guiding principle:** You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.

### HIGH SCHOOL TESTS

#### In high school:

Testing is frequent and covers smaller amounts of material.

Makeup tests are often available.

Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.

**Guiding principle:** Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.

### CHOOSING RESPONSIBLY IN COLLEGE

#### In college:

You manage your own time.

You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before.

**Guiding principle:** You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

### SUCCEEDING IN COLLEGE CLASSES

#### In college:

You need to study at least two to three hours outside of class for each hour in class.

You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.

You need to review class notes and text material regularly in order to develop a coherent view of the big questions in a course.

**Guiding principle:** It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.

### COLLEGE TESTS

#### In college:

Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the professor, need 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 seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.

Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.

**Guiding principle:** Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.



### HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

#### In high school:

Teachers check your completed homework.

Teachers present exercises to help you understand the material in the textbook.

Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.

Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.

**Guiding principle:** High school is often a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and basic skills.

### GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL

#### In high school:

Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low.

Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.

Initial test grades may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.

**Guiding principle:** "Effort counts." Courses may be structured to reward a "good-faith effort."

### COLLEGE PROFESSORS

#### In college:

Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.

Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or they may expect *you* to relate the classes to the textbook readings.

Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics. They frequently ask you to study conflicting views on a subject.

Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.

**Guiding principle:** College is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through big questions and conflicting views and applying what you have learned.

### GRADES IN COLLEGE

#### In college:

Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.

Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course.

Watch out for your first tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected—but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade.

**Guiding principle:** "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.

*Adapted with permission from Southern Methodist University*