

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Apologies matter

Saying “I’m sorry” to your child when you make a mistake shows you care about her. If you say something you regret, don’t be afraid to apologize. Take responsibility for your actions, and you’ll teach her to do the same. Plus, she’ll feel more comfortable admitting her own mistakes in the future.

Shoplifting warning

Some teens think stealing is a harmless thrill. They may be dared by friends to try it (or to distract store clerks while their friends do it). Make sure your children understand that taking anything without paying for it is dishonest and illegal. Remind them that if they shoplift, they could be arrested.

Spelling double-check

It can be tempting for your high schooler to rely on the computer for correct spelling. But spell-check can’t guarantee an error-free paper. Encourage him to reread his work carefully and look up any words he isn’t sure of. He’ll become a better speller—and turn in better work.

Worth quoting

“Nothing happens unless first we dream.” *Carl Sandburg*

Just for fun

Teacher: What happened at the Boston Tea Party?

Jack: I don’t know, I wasn’t invited.



Successful group projects

Group projects are not only a regular part of high school today, they’re an excellent way to prepare your teen for college and a career.

Working with other students gives him valuable experience communicating, negotiating, and solving problems while exploring a topic in depth. Here are pointers to help him build collaboration skills.



Pick wisely

If the teacher doesn’t assign groups, your high schooler should choose people he feels he can work well with and whose strengths complement his. For example, a strong researcher may want to partner with a student who is a creative designer. Remind him that close friends may not be the right fit.

Lay the framework

Your teen could suggest that the group agree on the best times and places to work together. At the first meeting, members can divvy up parts and list resources they’ll need (library books,

maps, poster board). They might also set up a way to report their progress between meetings, such as texting daily or using a file-sharing site. This will help ensure that each person does his part.

Create a timeline

Setting deadlines will keep everyone on track. Your child could encourage group members to estimate how long their piece will take. Then, the group can build a schedule leading up to the due date. *Tip:* They’ll need to leave time to put everyone’s contributions (bibliography, charts) into the finished project. 👍

Foreign-language fun

Give your teenager a playful twist on practicing her foreign language with these ideas.

■ **Create a playlist.** Suggest that she find songs in the language she’s studying, perhaps online or at the library. While she listens, she will pick up words she knows and discover new ones. Plus, she’ll hear how to properly pronounce words.

■ **Act it out.** Encourage her to act out a scene from her favorite movie, saying the dialogue in the language she’s learning. She’ll work on translation and speaking skills as she puts on her skit. 👍



Ace that interview

Your teen may be eager to gain job experience and make money through summer work. Help her wow prospective employers by sharing these interview basics.

Getting ready...

- Look up directions to the business. Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early.
- Think about how your experiences make you the ideal candidate for the job. *Example:* Being on your school debate team requires a clear speaking voice—a must for answering office phones.



- Practice interviewing with family or friends so you'll be comfortable on interview day.
- Pick out what you will wear, and make sure the clothes are cleaned and ironed before the big day.

When you arrive...

- Be polite to everyone. Receptionists and other staff

may give employers their opinion of you.

- Turn your cell phone off. A phone pinging or ringing during an interview shows a lack of respect.
- Use a confident voice. Avoid unnecessary words (“like,” “um”) and “text speak” (“def,” “obvs”).
- Be enthusiastic. Tell the interviewer you'd love a chance at the job, and ask when she'll be making a decision. *Tip:* After the interview, email or write promptly to thank the person for her time. 👍

History now and then

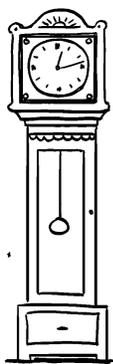
The word “history” may make your teen think of ancient times and people he never knew. Make the past more personal by encouraging him to explore your own family's yesteryear. Try these hands-on projects together.



Do a family history—digitally. Free audio recorders let family members tape themselves reading their life stories (check out audacity.sourceforge.net). You can save the sound files for listening to years down the road. Or you might make multimedia scrapbooks with pictures, sound, and video.

Find out what's in a name. Have everyone research their first names, including origins and meanings (use sites like behindthename.com). Explain why you chose your child's name—and where your own name came from.

Talk about heirlooms. Special items handed down from one generation to another can take many forms (jewelry, books, clothing, furniture). Let each person pick an item to ask older relatives about. Then, share what you discover. 👍



Q & A

Standardized test time

Q My son is nervous about the upcoming standardized tests. How can I help?

A Feeling confident and ready will go a long way toward soothing your son's nerves. Make sure that he's in school for any test prep days, and suggest that he practice at home with sample questions or old tests. All of this will make him feel more confident when test day arrives.

On that day, have him eat a balanced breakfast, arrive at school on time, and bring any supplies he may need, such as a calculator, extra batteries, or pencils.

Finally, go over any test-taking tips his teachers send home. For instance, he should begin each test by reading directions and questions completely before answering. For multiple-choice questions, he can eliminate answers that are obviously wrong. And for essays, he should jot down an outline before he starts to write. 👍



Parent to Parent No complaints!

When my daughter Anna walked in the door after school, she would automatically start talking about all the bad things that had happened that day. Calculus was confusing, a friend annoyed her, and the bus was late. Her frustration soured everyone's mood.

To improve her outlook, I told her I wanted her to start telling me one good thing about her day before

she mentioned a bad one. I explained that her complaints were not a fun way to be greeted when I hadn't seen her all day. And while I wanted her to share her feelings, she needed to focus on positive things to put negative ones in perspective.

Anna seems more aware now of when she starts to complain. In fact, if she's on the verge of venting when she walks in the door, she usually catches herself and thinks of something good to say first. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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