



ACReS
Academic Career and Readiness Skills

**Degrees Open Doors
to Success**

Unit

6



National PASS Center
Genesee Migrant Center
3 Mt. Morris-Leicester Road
Leicester, NY 14418
(585) 658-7960
(585) 658-7969 (fax)
www.migrant.net/pass

Authors: Kate Warner
Linda Shanks
Sally Fox
Valerie Putney

Editor: Sally Fox

Proofer: Donna Katter

Formatting: Eva McKendry
Kate Warner

Graphics: Eva McKendry
Kate Warner
Linda Shanks
Sally Fox
Valerie Putney

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High School

Words to know:

- ✓ high school diploma

A *high school diploma* or a GED is the minimum education required for a good job. For some people, high school is the end of formal education. For others, it is the beginning. No matter how you regard high school, use it to your advantage. Learn skills that will help you find a job. Develop habits that will help you be successful at that job and in life.

High school teaches you skills. It provides the background of the culture you live in. It helps you develop good work habits, such as

- completing a task
- meeting a deadline
- thinking and problem solving
- managing your time in order to do all that needs to be done
- working well with others
- doing a task with little or no supervision

Attendance and doing assigned work are the two keys to success in high school. Going to school every day is very important. When you miss school, you miss information. You miss explanations and discussions of a topic. As a result, you might not understand all that you need to. You put yourself at a disadvantage when you miss school.

Completing homework and projects on time is part of your job in high school. So is preparing for tests. Assignments help you learn. They make you think and reason. They make you improve your reading and writing skills. They are good practice for life after high school.

Planning for Life after High School

Use your high school counselor to help plan for your future. Your school counselor can

- help you decide which high school program is best for you
- show you options for future employment and education
- help set up a plan to meet your goals during and after high school
- help you apply to colleges
- offer opportunities and ways to pay for education or training after high school
- provide a safe place for you to talk about problems or issues you may have

Every high school in the United States requires its students to complete a basic series of classes. They include English, math, social studies, and science. Additional classes can be taken. They are based on your interests and plans. Your counselor can help you decide what courses or programs you should take.

If you decide to attend college, there are certain courses to take and steps to follow. They are included in the checklist guide that begins on page 16.

A college education may not be your goal. You may want to work in a field that does not depend on a college degree. Vocational training might be the option for you. Vocational training programs prepare students for work in many different areas.

Students learn in the classroom and by practicing themselves. Training programs can include:

- Advertising art and design
- Agricultural science
- Auto mechanics
- Business and computer technology
- Carpentry
- Computer design and graphics
- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts
- Floral design
- Human services
- Masonry
- Practical nursing
- Urban forestry

Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss your options. Most vocational training programs begin in the sophomore or junior year of high school. Graduates of such programs receive a certificate of completion. Some programs may have connections to local businesses in the area. Both the certificate and those connections are useful in finding jobs.

You should start preparing for your future even before you enter high school. The following checklist is offered as a guide. It can be used by anyone who wants education or training after high school.

Before High School:

- Try to take classes that match your abilities. Try to include a foreign language and the arts.
- Develop strong study skills.
- Think about the job or career you would like to have when you are grown up.
- Start thinking about which high school classes will best prepare you for your future.
- Find out if you can choose your high school. Or find out what programs your future high school offers. Decide which high school or program is best for you. If you have a choice, choose the school or program that is best for you.
- Investigate different ways to save money — buying a U.S. Savings Bond or opening a savings account in a bank, investing in mutual funds, etc.

High School:

9th Grade

- Take classes that match your abilities.
- Get to know your career counselor or guidance counselor. Share your goals for after high school. Discuss the high school programs that will help you achieve those goals.
- Talk to adults in professions that interest you. Ask them what they like and dislike about their jobs. Find out what kind of education is needed for each kind of job.
- If you decide on vocational training, set up a plan with your counselor.
- If you decide on college, make sure you will be taking the classes you need. Explore college resources that are available in your school. Use your counselor's help.

10th Grade

- ❑ Take classes that match your abilities. Make sure they are part of your plan for high school. If you have decided on vocational training, it may start this year.
- ❑ Continue to talk to adults in professions that interest you. Ask them what they like and dislike about their jobs. Find out what kind of education is needed for each kind of job.
- ❑ Become involved in extracurricular activities. These are activities done before or after school.

They can be academic, such as:

- working on the school newspaper
- being a member of a school club
- being elected to student government

They can be athletic, such as:

- playing on a sports team
- being a cheerleader

They can be based on your interests, such as being a member of the:

- photography club
- drama club
- band
- chorus
- technology club
- chess club

Or, they can be community based, such as:

- volunteering at nursing homes or the hospital
- participating in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
- participating in 4-H clubs
- being a member of your church group.

Choose activities that interest you and help you explore career interests.

If you have decided to go to college, meet with your career counselor or guidance counselor. Discuss colleges and their requirements.

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). You must register early. A fee is required. If you need help paying the fee, see your guidance counselor.
- Take advantage of opportunities to visit colleges and talk to students there.

11th Grade

- Take classes that match your abilities and your goals. Vocational training programs begin.
- Continue your extracurricular activities.
- Continue to discuss college options and requirements with your counselor.
- Decide which colleges most interest you. Visit their online websites for information. Your guidance counselor can help.
- In the fall, register for the SAT test or the ACT test. Most colleges in the United States require that you take one of these tests. In addition, many colleges have their own entry exam for incoming students. These tests require a registration fee. If you need help paying it, see your guidance counselor. Take the SAT or ACT exam in the spring.

- ❑ Talk to college representatives at college fairs.
- ❑ Visit any colleges you can. Talk to students there.
- ❑ Consider people to ask for recommendations — teachers, counselors, employers, etc.
- ❑ Investigate possible sources of financial aid – federal, state, local, and private programs. Your guidance counselor should have many of these resources. Visit the student aid website of the U.S. Department of Education at studentaid.ed.gov. **Research your options there. Or, call the Student Aid Hotline at 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).** Talk to your guidance counselor for more information.
- ❑ Find out more about the domestic Peace Corps, called AmeriCorps. This is a service organization that can help pay for college costs. Their online address is www.americorps.gov. You can submit any questions to their staff at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/questions/app/ask>. Or, call them at 1-800-942-2677.
- ❑ Search for possible scholarships from organizations. Try corporations, labor unions, professional associations, religious organizations, and credit unions.
- ❑ If you qualify, search for scholarships for women, minorities, or disabled students.

12th Grade

- ❑ Take classes that match your abilities and goals. If you have room in your schedule, take advanced classes or optional, pre-college classes.
- ❑ Meet with your counselor early in the year to discuss your plans.
- ❑ Complete all necessary financial aid forms for college, including the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Most of these forms can be obtained and filled out online. Your guidance counselor can help.
- ❑ If you have not decided on a college yet, continue your search. Visit college websites online or write to them for information, applications, and deadlines.
- ❑ If possible, visit the colleges that most interest you.
- ❑ If you have not taken the SAT or ACT test, register for it and take it. Most colleges in the United States base admission on one of these tests. Many colleges also have their own entry exam for incoming students. Each test has a registration fee. If you need help paying the fee, see your guidance counselor.
- ❑ Prepare your college application carefully. Follow the instructions, and pay close attention to deadlines! Be sure to ask for letters of recommendation at least two weeks before application deadlines. Be sure to submit the necessary documents with your application. These can include your high school transcript and letters of recommendation.

High school is an important part of your education process. Use it to gain knowledge, skills, good habits, and friends. High school can set you on the path toward job-training, college, and lifelong learning. It is the first step toward being a successful adult.

1. List three ways in which high school can prepare you for life.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. When should you start preparing for your future? _____

3. Why are vocational training programs important? _____

Notes:

∞ End of Lesson 2 ∞