

10 Tips for Your Freshman Year

Provided by the College & Career Center

1. **Focus on School** —your freshman year will be full of new friends, experiences and school subjects. Take the time to see what classes are being offered that peak your interests or take a class that is new to you. Your freshman year is the base of your weighted and unweighted gpa^{*i}. Make the time to talk to your advisor, counselor, buddy, and/or the college and career specialist
2. **Think about the future** — you might be thinking “I’m just a freshman!” Your time in high school will fly by. Before you know it, you’ll be a senior and wondering “where did the time go?” This is a good time to think about what you want to do after high school. You have options. There is community college, university, trade school, the armed services and the general workforce. What peaks your interest?
3. **Find subject help/get involved** – Are you having trouble with a particular subject? Talk to your teacher, buddy, or check out YouTube channels by Crash Course or the Khan Academy. Sometimes, having someone other than your teacher explain a subject or topic, can make the difference. High school has the opportunity to provide you with opportunities and new experiences. Join a club, extracurricular activity, volunteer within your community, attend West-MEC Classes (Certificate program)ⁱⁱ, and possibly Dual enrollment classes (earning college credits while in high school)ⁱⁱⁱ.
4. **Don’t overwork yourself/the big picture** – It can be easy to want to be a part of every group. Pick a few things that you enjoy or could enjoy and stick with them. You’ll want to balance your school, home, passions and if you work, that too. Think about the big picture – Life After High School. What does it look like to you?
5. **Be prepared for higher expectations/ financial planning** – parents, guardians, and teachers will have expectations of you. What are your expectations for yourself? Better grades? Attend college? Travel around the country or world? How will you do that? Why would I bring traveling up? What you achieve in high school can pave the way for dreams and goals. If you’re planning on college or trade school, start thinking about saving for school.
6. **Learn how to be assertive** – Being assertive doesn’t mean being a bully. Being assertive means standing up for yourself and being respectful to yourself and for others. Sometimes you’ll hear the word “no” when you ask for assistance and sometimes you’ll say “no” when asked to do something you don’t want to do. No, is just a word, it’s not the end of the world.

- 7. Aim for *better*, not perfect** – we are human, we are not perfect. We can however, be a better version of ourselves. Life is full of learning. Learning is a part of life. Being perfect isn't.
- 8. Seek out extracurricular activities** – extracurricular activities isn't just found in school. Have you thought about volunteering? Volunteering is an opportunity to learn a new skill, looks good on your resume, and you can meet new and interesting people.
- 9. Write down accomplishments** – many individuals don't like "patting themselves on their back". But you need to. As you move into the work or college environment, employers and schools want to know what you've achieved. It doesn't have to be a grand gesture, such as starting a non-profit organization. It can be simple as volunteering "x" amount of hours.
- 10. Read, read, read** – do you like anime, ghost stories, or murder mysteries? Reading is the beginning to comprehension. This will help with standardized testing and AP classes. Read for fun, growth, and learning.

ⁱ **What does weighted and unweighted gpa mean?** A weighted score totals the point value for each letter grade. A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and F=0. The unweighted gpa refers to Honors/AP classes taken. A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, and F=1.

ⁱⁱ **West-MEC** – provides learning opportunities that can end with a certificate program by the end of graduation, putting you in a position to start working right after high school

ⁱⁱⁱ **Dual Enrollment** – there are Math, English, History, and Sports medicine classes that you can take that will earn you community college credit at either, Estrella Mountain Community College, Rio Salado Community College, and Grand Canyon University.

References

1. Collegedepot. (2016). 9th Grade Timeline. DOI: <https://www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/documents/Timeline-9th-Grade.pdf>
2. Fiveable, Inc. (2023). 10 goals for Your Freshman Year of High School. <https://fiveable.me/guides/goals-freshman-high-school>