# How Is College Different From High School? 

| Personal Freedom In High School | Personal Freedom In College |
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| *High school is mandatory and free (unless <br> you choose other options) | *College is voluntary and expensive. |
| *Your time is usually structured by others. | *You manage your own time |
| *You need permission to participate in <br> extracurricular activities | *You must decide whether to participate in <br> extracurricular activities. (Hint: Choose wisely in <br> the first semester and then add later.) |
| *You need money for special purchases or <br> events | *You need money to meet basic necessities. |
| *You can count on parents and teachers to <br> remind you of your responsibilities and to <br> guide you in setting priorities. | *You will be faced with a large number of moral <br> and ethical decisions you have not had to face <br> previously. You must balance your <br> responsibilities and set priorities. |
| *Guiding principle: You will usually be <br> told what your responsibilities are and <br> correct if your behavior is out of line. | *guiding principle: You're old enough to take <br> responsibility for what you do and don't do, as <br> well as for the consequences of your decisions. |


| High School Classes | College Classes |
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| *Each day you proceed from one class <br> directly to another. | *You often have hours between classes; class <br> times vary throughout the day and evening. |
| *You spend 6 hours each day - 30 hours a <br> week - in class. | *You spend 12 to 16 hours each week in class |
| *The school year is 36 weeks long; some <br> classes extend over both semesters and <br> some do not. | *The academic year is divided into two separate <br> $15-$-week semesters, plus a week after each <br> semester for exams. |
| *Most of your classes are arranged for you. | *You arrange your own schedule in consultation <br> with your academic adviser. Schedules tend to <br> look lighter than they really are. |
| *Teachers carefully monitor class <br> attendance. | *Professors may not formally take roll, but they <br> are still likely to know whether or not you <br> attended. |
| *Classes generally have no more than 35 <br> students. | *Classes may number 100 students or more. |
| *You are provided with textbooks at little <br> or no expense. | *You need to budget substantial funds for <br> textbooks, which will usually cost more than $\$ 200$ <br> each semester. |
| *You are not responsible for knowing what <br> it takes to graduate. | *Graduation requirements are complex, and differ <br> for different majors and sometimes different years. <br> You are expected to know those that apply to you. |

## How Is College Different From High School?

| High School Teachers | College Professors |
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| *Teachers check your completed <br> homework. | *Professors may not always check completed <br> homework, but they will assume you can perform the <br> same tasks on tests. |
| *Teachers remind you of your <br> incomplete work. | *Professors may not remind you of incomplete work. |
| *Teachers approach you if they believe <br> you need assistance. | *Professors are usually open and helpful, but most <br> expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance. |
| *Teachers are often available for <br> conversation before, during, or after <br> class. | *Professors expect and want you to attend their <br> scheduled office hours. |
| *Teachers have been trained in teaching <br> methods to assist in imparting knowledge <br> to students. | *Professors have been trained as experts in their <br> particular areas of research. |
| *Teachers present material to help you <br> understand the material in the textbook. | *Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to <br> amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide <br> background information, or discuss research about <br> the topic you are studying. Or, they may expect you <br> to relate the classes to the textbook readings. |
| *Teachers often write information on the <br> board to be copied in your notes. | *Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to <br> identify the important points in your notes. When <br> professors write on the board, it may be to amplify <br> the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a <br> must. |
| *Teachers impart knowledge and facts, | *Professors expect you to think about and synthesize <br> seemingly unrelated topics. |
| *Teachers often take time to remind you <br> sometimes drawing direct connections <br> and leading you through the thinking <br> process. | *Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the <br> course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out <br> exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and <br> how you will be graded. |

## How Is College Different From High School?

| Studying In High School | Studying In College |
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| *You may study outside of class as little <br> as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be <br> mostly last-minute test preparation. | *You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of <br> class for each hour in class. |
| *You often need to read or hear <br> presentations only once to learn all you <br> need to learn about them. | *You need to review class notes and text material <br> regularly. |
| *you are expected to read short <br> assignments that are then discussed, and <br> often re-taught, in class. | *You are assigned substantial amounts of reading <br> and writing which may not be directly addressed in <br> class. |
| *Guiding principle: You will usually be <br> tolled in class what you need to learn <br> from assigned readings. | *Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and <br> understand the assigned material; lectures and <br> assignments proceed from the assumption that <br> you've already done so. |


| Tests In High School | Tests In College |
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| *Testing is frequent and covers small <br> amounts of material. | *Testing is usually infrequent and may be <br> cumulative, covering large amounts of material. <br> You, not the professor, need to organize the <br> material to prepare for the test. A particular course <br> may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester. |
| *Makeup tests are often available. | *Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, <br> you need to request them. |
| *Teachers frequently rearrange test dates <br> to avoid conflict with school events. | *Professors in different courses usually schedule <br> tests without regard to the demands of other courses <br> or outside activities. |
| *Teachers frequently conduct review <br> sessions, pointing out the most important <br> concepts. | *Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when <br> they do, they expect you to be an active participant, <br> one who comes prepared with questions. |
| *Mastery is usually seen as the ability to <br> reproduce what you were taught in the <br> form in which it was presented to you, or <br> to solve the kinds of problems you were <br> shown how to solve. | *Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what <br> you've learned to new situations or to solve new <br> kinds of problems. |

## How Is College Different From High School?

| Grades In High School | Grades In College |
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| *Grades are given for most assigned <br> work. | *Grades may not be provided for all assigned work. |
| *Consistently good homework grades <br> may help raise your overall grade when <br> test grades are low. | *Grades on tests and major papers usually provide <br> most of the course grade. |
| *Extra credit projects are often available <br> to help you raise your grade. | *Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be <br> used to raise a grade in a college course. |
| *Initial test grades, especially when they <br> are low, may not have an adverse effect <br> on your final grade. | *watch out for your first tests. These are usually <br> "wake-up-calls" to let you know what is expected - <br> but they also may account for a substantial part of <br> your course grade. You may be shocked when you <br> get your grades. If you receive notice of low grades <br> on either an Early-Term or a Mid-Semester Progress <br> Report, see your academic advisor or visit the <br> Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center. |
| *You may graduate as long as you have <br> passed all required courses with a grade <br> of D or higher. | *You may graduate only if your average in classes <br> meets the departmental standard - typically a 2.0 or <br> C. |
| *Guiding principle: "Effort counts." <br> Courses are usually structured to reward <br> a "good-faith effort." | *Guiding principle: "Results count." Though <br> "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the <br> professor's willingness to help you achieve good <br> results, it will not substitute for results in the grading <br> process. |

http://www.smu.edu/~alec/whyhighschool.html

