

How to Build the Transcript Your Teen Needs

Vicki Tillman 7SistersHomeschool.com

Every teen has a different life destination. Here are ten tips for creating a transcript that truly shows who your teen is and where they are headed in life. We will discuss transcripts for teens headed into the workforce, the military, community colleges, private colleges and competitive universities.

Transcripts are important for all homeschool high schoolers. College-bound teens need a good transcript to get into college. Even teens who are not college-bound will often need to show a transcript for trade schools or the military (and sometimes for new jobs). We love to share the things we have learned about successful transcript creation.

Why are transcripts important?

Transcripts are proof that education happened. (Our culture believes that if there is not a record on paper that something happened, it did not happen.) They open doors for college and career. (And it is fun to keep a record for yourself about what a great job you and your high schoolers have done.)

There is not really a magical formula or necessary downloadable form from your state government that you must fill out. You must create your own. However, there are many templates available.

There's not ONE right way to homeschool high school...OR complete a transcript.

However, these tips are a good place to start.

On the transcript include:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Social Security (totally optional)
- Address
- Contact information (email address, optional)
- Title of your homeschool (optional)
- For most transcripts, break out courses taken by year with name of course, [levels](#), amount of [credit](#), grade.
- Be sure to capture it all: electives, extra core courses, even if these make the number of credits more than the basic credits that Iowa requires for graduation
- Course Summary section (compilation of courses, along with the grade those courses were taken. This is optional.) See the sample below.
- Use sparkle titles where applicable
- [Extracurriculars](#)
 - List what teens have done and the years they were done
- Service hours

- Competitions
- GPA
 - [Here is a post on figuring out the GPA](#)
- Graduation date
- SAT or ACT scores (although some colleges are not requiring these scores any longer)

Here's a sample transcript. Remember, there's not ONE right way to format at transcript.

High School Transcript					
Student Legal Name: John Doe			School Name: Doe Homeschool		
Date of Birth: 01/01/2001			Address: 1234 Smith Rd Jonesville, MD 11111		
Credits	9	10	11	12	Total
Language Arts	1	1	1	1	4
Mathematics	1	1	1	1	4
Social Studies	1	1	1	1	4
Science	1	1	1	1	4
Foreign Language	1	1			1
Technology	1				1
Electives	1	1	1	1	4
Drivers Education			.25		.25
Explanation of Levels Level 1 - Remedial Level 2 - Average High School Level 3 - College Preparatory Level 4 - Advanced Level 5 - Honors					
GPA: 3.94 SAT Score: 1111 ACT Score: NA					
Grade Scale: A: 92-100 B: 84-91 C: 76-83 D: NA F: NA					
Activities: Speech Team 9-12, Drama club 9-12, Church Youth Group 9-12, Service Club 9-12, Karate Team 9-10,					
Service Hours: 200					
Awards: Regional Speech Meet:Extemporaneous Speech Top Honors 11, 12; Drama Club Area Competition: Best Monologue Presentation 10					
Grade 9			Grade 10		
Course	Credits	Grade	Course	Credits	Grade
American Literature/Composition Level 3	1	A	British Literature Literature/Composition Level 3	1	A
Algebra I Level 3	1	A	Geometry Level 3	1	B
American History Level 4	1	A	Social Sciences: Psychology /Human Development Level 5	1	A
Health Science Level 3	1	A	Biology with Lab Level 4	1	A
Phys Ed	.5	A	Phys Ed	.5	A
Keyboarding and Excel Skills	1	A	Music Appreciation	1	A
Drama and Speech	1	A	Drama and Speech	1	A
Spanish I	1	A	Spanish II	1	A
			Drivers Education	.25	P
Grade 11			Grade 12		
Course	Credits	Grade	Course	Credits	Grade
World Literature/Composition Level 3	1	A	Great Christian Writers Literature/Composition Level 3	1	A
Algebra II Level 3	1	A	Financial Literacy Level 5	1	A
History and Philosophy of Western World Level 4	1	A	Civics/Economics Level 4	1	A
Chemistry with Lab Level 3	1	A	Physics with Lab Level 3	1	A

Suggestions that will really help!

- Keep backup document with course descriptions
- Do some research on college, NCAA sports and military requirements by visiting websites, recruiters
- There are transcript templates out there. You can use those or make your own.
- Remember not to sell your teen short but also to keep your records and your integrity.



Should you do a year-by-year transcript or a subject-based transcript?

As always, we 7Sisters believe there's not ONE right way to handle transcripts. However, one thing to think about is that many college admissions officers are used to thinking in the traditional year-by-year format. Therefore, if you have a yearly transcript rather than subject oriented transcript, you might make their job easier.

So, that's how you do get the homeschool high school transcript exactly right, with the the exactly ONE right formula...Oh, right! There's not ONE right way to do a homeschool transcript. These are simply the tools that we have used over the years on the transcripts of our own kids and the hundreds of homeschool high schoolers in our local umbrella school who have graduated and gone on successfully to the next phase of life. Adapt our information and ideas to your teens' needs! Let us know your ideas.



Transcripts for college-bound teens

One thing they are looking for is evidence of the levels of rigor at which your homeschooler has worked on each particular course.

Thus, the idea of showing "levels" for each course helps admissions officers get a glimpse into your teens:

- interests (especially for a major)
- abilities
- willingness to work hard at academics

So, showing credit levels on homeschool transcripts is valuable for the college application process.

Adjusting credit levels to teens needs and interests also helps you tweak high school courses so that they are best-fit for each student.

Hey, that's one thing that is SO awesome about homeschooling. We can tailor courses to meet our teens needs and interests!

For instance, perhaps a teens love Biology and is thinking about that as a college major. You might not only have your teen complete the Bio textbook and labs, but add lots of field trips, hands-on experiences, paper-writing, interviews and documentaries.

You want to show all this work on the transcript!

That's what leveling-up is about for the homeschool transcript.

Here's an overview of credit levels for the homeschool transcript.

Level 1 Remedial

This is for students with special need and truly struggle in certain areas. High school is a great time for remediating and skill building. This is wonderful! Homeschooling is about giving teens the things they need. If your teen needs remediation, go for it. (Level 1 courses, however, are not good for college-preparatory transcripts.)

Level 2 Average

This is a credit for average high schoolers. These are courses that most students can take and master well. They are not intense courses, not time consuming, not really college prep. These are courses that are good for workforce headed teens.

Level 3 College Prep

These credits are courses that prepare students for college. Courses include more intensity of assignments and require more time and work than a Level 2. Teens who do well in these courses are learning good academic skills (independent learning, study skills, time management) and subject preparation. College-bound teens should often be able to do much of this work with supervision but not much hand holding (although this varies by teen, after there's not ONE kind of homeschool high schooler). Many homeschool textbooks are written at Level 3 College Prep. If a teen has a [Level 2 text, add extra hours of experiences to bring this credit to level 3.](#)

Level 4 Advanced

These credits are more rigorous (thus more competitive on the homeschool transcript). Your student can earn this credit by adding on about another 1/2 credit's learning experiences to their textbook work. This can be done with reading extra real books (think rigor, so maybe 10 moderately-sized books) or 60-68 hours of field trips, research and paper writing, hands-on activities, interviews and shadowing experiences.

Level 5 Honors

These credits are highly rigorous. They require about double the work of an average high school credit. Add to textbook learning: 120-180 hours of reading extra real books (think rigor, so maybe 10 moderately-sized books) and 60-68 hours of field trips, research and paper writing, hands-on activities, interviews and shadowing experiences.

Many teens will not need Level 5 courses for all their courses. Choose core courses or electives that advance their college-major interests and/or abilities. Do not overload your teen (unless they are aiming for a military academy or highly-competitive college).

On the homeschool transcript, record the title of the course WITH the level at which the work is done. Be sure to include a key or legend at the bottom of your transcript that briefly explains how the levels are earned.

Do you weight these courses differently? There's not ONE right way to handle this. Colleges have an algorithm that allows them to compare apples to apples on weighted and unweighted credits. (Thus, we don't bother weighting.) Check out these posts for more on GPA and weighting.



What colleges tend to be looking for on homeschool transcripts

1) Solid GPA

If you check the websites of a few colleges of interest to your homeschool high schooler, you can find what GPA range that each is looking for. Our local homeschool umbrella school calculates GPA on core classes (English/Language Arts, Maths, Social Studies, Sciences, World Languages).

2) Strong SAT or ACT scores

Not all colleges require SAT or ACT scores. Some require SAT but not ACT. Some require Subject Tests. Colleges that do require the test usually are looking for competitive scores. You can get free training for the [SAT with YouTube lessons from Khan Academy](#).

3) Academic challenge

Many colleges want to know that their incoming students have challenged themselves academically. They want to know:

- Are most of his courses at College Prep level or higher?
- Is he taking some Advanced, Honors, or AP classes?

4) Academic richness

Academic richness can be defined as: In-depth study in areas of interest and talent OR Wide variety of course-topics and personal development.

- In-depth coursework might include extra biology or chemistry courses for future science majors OR special topics on respected writers for English majors (I covered CS Lewis studies with my homeschool high schoolers).

5) Extra-curriculars

We still have to avoid the stereotype that homeschoolers are well-educated misfits who never left the basement for 12 years. Rich extracurriculars are absolutely necessary to show that my student is community minded and has good social skills. Note: Colleges like to see a level of commitment in the extracurriculars- not just one-time events. Here's an explanation of homeschool high school extra-curriculars.

6) Competitions

College is a competitive place. Competitions show drive and diligence in my son's character. He doesn't have to win, just enter. Here's a post that explains more about competitions.

7) Service

Research shows that people who are active and service-minded have lower levels of depression than the general population. Besides, it is Scriptural to serve others! Here's a post with more information on enriching the transcript (and high school experience) with service.



For homeschoolers here are some specific things military recruiters will looking for:

The military services are looking for homeschoolers. Our recruiter friend reports that homeschoolers get some of the highest scores on the ASVAB. They are often polite, have done good research and have a plan about what they want out of the military.

- A diploma (It can be homemade.)
- A transcript

For regular enlistment:

- Finish well in high school, with good academics and extracurriculars
- Visit the recruiter

- Take the ASVAB test to find your best fit career (although the military will choose a career from what they need)
- Work out, get physically fit
- Join Civil Air Patrol or Army Split Training

For teens aiming for an Academy

- Find leadership opportunities
- Work on service opportunities
- Network
- Be up on current events
- Show initiative, start things/events
- Have a well-rounded involvement in extracurriculars
- Take high-level courses and learn the skills for academic success
- Create a clear, top-notch transcript
- Join Civil Air Patrol or Army Split Training

- Explore their interests
- Develop their strengths
- Give credit on the transcript for their experiences in leadership, CAP or AST, current events and other unique courses.



Transcripts for non-college bound teens

Teens who do not need to go to college can often relax about their transcript. Here are tips:

- You do not need to worry about levels or “sparkly names” for courses, unless you want to do that.
- Keep in mind that transcripts are sometimes needed for job applications or entrance to vocational school.
 - Emphasize: Apprenticeships, vocational training and other Career Exploration experiences (such as shadowing, volunteer work, competitions, etc). You can log hours for these to measure credit.
- Also, transcripts are a wonderful record for capturing all the cool things your teens did during high school!
- With that in mind, adapt the guidelines above to fit your needs.

Transcripts for students with special needs

You have a lot of flexibility as homeschooling parents to develop the right homeschool program (and transcript) for your teens with varying special needs. Give yourself permission to invest in your teens in the ways that are best for them without pressure from outside.

I'll share the way the homeschooling families that I know have handled it: Aim for the state requirement of credits for each subject. However, provide instruction based on the abilities, needs and life goals of your teens. For instance, courses for one teen looked like this:

Language Arts 4 credits (each year including life-skills and comprehension-building reading with listening; and practical writing)

Mathematics 3 credits (Practical Math, Life-skills Math, Consumer Math)

Social Studies 3 credits (logged hours for credits in American History, World History, Civics and Geography)

Science 3 credits (logged hours in Nature Study, Backyard Astronomy, Car Maintenance)

Phys Ed 1 credit (logged hours in personal fitness)

Apprenticeships for the remainder of their credits

