

# How to Homeschool High School

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You can do this!

The high school years can be the best homeschooling years of all. We will discuss the basics you need to know about planning and goal setting, figuring out what your unique teens need, finding the right resources, record keeping that doesn't give you headaches, and preparation for your teens' futures.

## 2 Things You Need to Know About Homeschooling High School

1. **You CAN do it!**
2. **There's not ONE right way to homeschool high school.**

If our way does not work for your family, you can create your own process!



## Homeschooling high school: Here's how!

### Step 1: Pray

As 7Sister Kym always says, "Pray first, last and always!" Families who are homeschooling high school need God's guidance and help.



### Step 2: Set goals

As 7Sister Marilyn says, "Why would I give up all my free time to homeschool if I didn't have goals?" Why are you homeschooling high school? Then that's your main goal.

What are the other goals that you and your teen want to accomplish by the time they graduate? Write your goals down and check in with them regularly.

**Step 2A: For new homeschool high schoolers who are transitioning from traditional school settings**

As a newbie homeschooling high school parent, you will want to start with your teen's school records. Using those records, decide what your teen has left in order to fulfill high school graduation requirements (see Step 3). Then set your goals.



### **Step 3: Choose courses that will meet graduation requirements**

Iowa's Department of Education's graduation requirements show 14 credits including:

- 4 years English/Language Arts
- 3 years Mathematics (Computer Science may count as Math if it contains math in the course) (Courses may include strands in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, statistics, probability, and discrete mathematics.)
- 3 years Science (e.g., biological science, earth science, and physical science: chemistry and physics)
- 3 years Social Science (including 1/2 unit US Government and 1 unit American History)
- 1/2 year Financial Literacy (requirement began 2021)
- Suggested by DOE
  - 1/2 unit Health
  - 1 unit Physical Education per semester through high school (suggested 1/8 unit per semester)
  - 2 units Fine Arts (Art, Music, Theater, Dance)
  - 2 units Languages (can include American Sign Language)
  - 3 units Career and Technical Education

### **Step 4: Note the difference between college-bound transcript needs and non-college bound transcript needs**

Some young people are called into a career that requires college, some are called into a career that does not.

First off, some homeschool high schoolers are planning on going into the military. If so, talk to a recruiter as soon as you can, so that your transcript can reflect what they need to see. Your teen might also want to join an organization like Civil Air Patrol.

College-bound homeschool transcripts need some course that SPARKLE. These special courses help your homeschool high schoolers' transcripts grab the attention of admissions officers. Here are some posts that explain choosing and naming these courses.

Non-college bound teens can concentrate on life and career preparation.



### **Step 5: Decide how each credit will be earned**

This is the big one!

- Will your teen use textbooks?
- Log hours for a Carnegie credit?
- Take a class online/in a co-op/at an umbrella school?

As we always say: There's not ONE right way to homeschool high school. Choose what is best for your teens.



### **Step 6: Choose courses and experiences to develop your teens' strengths**

Use the higher levels of rigor (such as College-Prep Level, Advanced Level and Honors Level) to build on your homeschool high schoolers' strengths. This helps your teens to grow intellectually (and personally, as they stretch their abilities).

Non-college bound teens can chose courses that log hours in building their special strengths.



### **Step 7: Choose courses and experiences to explore your teens' interests and values (Career Exploration)**

You don't have time to not have time for Career Exploration. Much of what homeschooling high school is about is helping your teens explore their interests and values. Ask yourself these "What is" questions. What is:

- Important to them?
- God-given gift(s) that they already understand?
- Their current awareness about themselves so far?
- The area of "need to know" in their lives?



### **Step 8: Choose courses and experiences to help your teens explore their callings**

Your teens were created on purpose, for purpose! Understanding God's callings for your teens lives is a lifetime process, but they should get started in high school.



### **Step 9: Choose courses and experiences that develop character**

When you homeschool high school your teens, you can teach them, as part of their education, skills that truly matter. They can learn manners and social skills, business skills, and Bible skills.



### **Step 10: Choose curriculum**

You've got lots of ideas! Now it is time to choose your curriculum! Think about what is best for your family's interests, abilities, budget and lifestyles.

Ask around in Homeschool Iowa, Facebook groups, co-ops and your friend groups: What is working for others?

But remember: Just because one particular curriculum works for your friends, doesn't mean YOU must use it. There's not ONE right way to homeschool high school!

### **Step 11: Develop life and college or career preparation skills**

Homeschool high school years are the time for life and career and college prep such as home maintenance, home economics, financial literacy and study skills.



### **Step 12: Keep good records**

Record keeping is necessary. Records to think about:

- A syllabus and/or a course description for each course
- Grades and amount of credit earned

You may keep them anywhere (a crate or binder).



### **Step 13: Start a transcript**

To work on the transcript, you will need to decide order of courses for each year, where to include extracurriculars, service hours, competitions, testing and how you will compute the GPA.



### **Step 14: Decide how to assign grades for each course**

We often get questions on how to grade assignments and how to assign grades for courses. This can feel overwhelming if you're worried that there's only one right way to do it. Think about your goals for each student. The grading process may look a little different for each one.



**Step 15: Set up a plan and a schedule (but stay flexible with it)**

Homeschool high school is a busy lifestyle. If you don't create a good schedule, you and/or your teens will get lost in the \*forest of wasted time\*.

**Step 16: Remain flexible**

We can plan our ways but as we've often found out, things don't always go our way. It is God who directs our paths...and our teens' paths. Sometimes you'll end up ditching a curriculum, changing course formats, or dropping a course altogether. That's okay! One benefit of homeschooling is being able to do what's best at EACH moment.

**Step 17: Do yearly reviews of your goals**

Many homeschool high school families have a supervising organization or have reviewers by state regulations. That's fine, but the most important reviewer is you. How are you and your teens doing with the goals you all have set?

**Step 18: Decide if you will need PSATs, SATs or ACTs**

Only college-bound teens need to take these tests. Some colleges are not requiring them any more. Teens headed for community college do not usually need them (although some community colleges use the scores in place of placement tests).



**Step 19: Remember not to take everything too seriously**

There's no such thing as a perfect homeschool high school! if you are prone to perfectionism, hand that over to God and allow him to help you become an "imperfectionist"! (To quote Stephen Guise)

**Step 20: Be kind to yourself and your teens**

Teens need lots of encouragement in order to grow well. In fact, you need lots of encouragement also. Look for things to be grateful for each day.

**Step 20: Remember: you CAN do this!**

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