**10 Most Common High School Freshman Mistakes**

**Preparing for college by learning some pitfalls to avoid your freshman year.**

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The road to college really starts your freshman year. You’ll stay ahead of the pack if you avoid these common mistakes freshmen make. Not all freshmen make these mistakes, but it’s important to be aware of them so you don’t hurt your school transcript or your grade point average (GPA).

Remember that your GPA means a lot when it comes to college admissions. The person in control of your education and your future is you, not your teachers, friends or parents. High school is an exciting, new and fun time, and you should definitely make the most of the experience. But remember that your senior year and college admissions will be upon you before you know it, and a little preparation early can go a long way. It's up to you to start planning for college now and working on keeping your GPA high and your transcript impressive.

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**Start planning for college by avoiding the following mistakes:**

**1. Believing your freshman year doesn't really count and you can improve your grades later.**

If you slack off in your first year, it will be really hard to catch up later. Don’t forget: Your freshman year grades count toward your overall grade point average as much as your grades in later years, and you want that GPA to be high to better qualify you for college admissions.

**2. Sacrificing your grades for your social life.**

You should definitely try to have a rich social life in high school, but that doesn’t mean you can’t get good grades too. Good grades are your ticket to getting into great colleges and universities, which in turn gives you more career choice and opportunities. Remember that while high school may seem like forever, it’s only four years, but the college you choose and your subsequent career affects the rest of your life.

**3. Skipping classes and missing homework.**

Teachers share important information during class, and listening to their lectures helps you to better understand the subject. You never know what subjects will end up becoming your favorite – or even your college major! Don't miss homework either: Homework assignments help you learn the subject matter better, which is not only important for your GPA, it can also help you when you take standardized tests like the SAT or ACT.

**4. Failing to make up missed assignments.**

Some teachers are very reasonable in negotiating extra time for you to complete your homework, so just because it’s late doesn’t mean you shouldn’t do it. It might cost you a few points, but that's better than a missed assignment on your record. There is a huge benefit in doing assignments, even if you’re turning them in late: You are more likely to retain the material.

**5. Assuming you’re not doing well because the teacher “just doesn’t like you.”**

Your future is your responsibility, and you shouldn’t let personal feelings interfere in your path to get the degree or career you want. You won’t get along with everyone in life, but that’s not an excuse to slack off or give up. If you’re struggling with a subject, ask your teacher for help, get tutoring or talk to your counselor. Schools want you to succeed if you are willing to do the work.

**6. Not signing up for extracurricular activities.**

Many students say they don’t have time for extracurriculars, but keep in mind that these activities can help both your social life and your college applications. When you start your search to find a college, you'll see that they look for well-rounded students who did extracurricular activities along with a challenging academic program. The best careers today are highly competitive and they require people to be able to multi-task. That doesn’t mean you should sign up for every activity out there; just try a few programs until you find ones you like. It’s better to be dedicated and active in a few activities than to make little effort in several.

**7. Deciding that high school is about dances, partying and sports, not classes.**

Big mistake. Even though social activities are an important part of high school life, they shouldn't be your main focus during the school day. Your focus in high school should be learning, preparing for college by taking challenging classes and preparing yourself for college majors and degrees.

**8. Not asking for help.**

If you're having problems in school, there are many people out there who can help you: parents, teachers, friends and your school counselor are all good sources for advice and assistance. Teachers and counselors got into those professions because of their desire to help students succeed, and your parents and friends know you well and can help you weigh your options, or just lend support when you need it.

**9. Not asking questions in class.**

They say the only stupid question is one that isn’t asked. You’re not going to have all the answers, and you’re not going to get them unless you are willing to ask questions. If you don’t understand something in class, it’s likely other students don’t understand it either.

**10. Taking classes just because your friends are taking them.**

It can be fun to be in all the same classes as your friends, but it can also be a distraction. Also, your friends may have different interests, academic skills and college goals than you do. So if you’re interested in classes that your friends’ aren’t, take them. You just might make some new friends, and you’ll be one step closer to getting into the college of your dreams.