

High School Transcript: The content available on your high school transcript is reviewed to determine how you have performed academically in the context of your most immediate academic community (specifically, your high school class). Research shows that a student's academic performance in high school is the most statistically significant predictor of his or her college success, and so admissions offices will often cite the transcript as the most important component of the application. Through the transcript, reviewers will see how well you have done in your classes (grades), how you compare academically to your peers (cumulative GPA and class rank), how your achievement has changed over time (grade trend), and to what extent you have challenged yourself in your course selection (rigor).

The transcript is usually submitted by your high school counselor along with a profile of your high school, which includes important context for your transcript, including the types of classes offered at your school, grading policies, and any requirements or restrictions that may have impacted you academically. (If you have never seen your high school's profile, or if you did not even know your school had one, ask your counselor if you can see it! The content of this document may ease some of the concerns you have about how your transcript will be perceived.)

Academic Achievement

Okay team, this is the big one. No matter what grade you are in, no matter what your college plans look like, and no matter what your professional goals may be, academic achievement is the key to getting where you want to go. If you take nothing else from this section, understand that working hard and doing well in all your classes from Day 1 of high school is the most important thing you can do to prepare yourself for a successful transition to college. When you are an elder and wizened senior, there will be things you can do to polish your essay, acquire a leadership role, or boost a test score, but there will likely be nothing you can do to fix the D you got in that gym class you blew off freshman year. Do your future self a big favor and follow the steps outlined below to ensure that you are not making the college process any more difficult than it needs to be.

Stay on top of your academic record. Do you know how many credits you need to acquire in each subject area to graduate from high school? More importantly, do you know whether you are on track to obtain the required number and graduate on time? If the answer to either of these questions is "no," schedule a meeting with your school counselor or registrar to find out. Most high schools will automatically sign you up for the classes you need, but their ability to do this effectively depends on a long list of factors, and you will be much better off staying on top of the information and your progress yourself. If you think there is an error in your record or an academic opportunity that

should be available to you, speak up and advocate for the change that needs to be made. Taking this kind of ownership will not only benefit you now but will also be great practice for when you are in college; though you will likely have an academic advisor to answer your questions, it will be up to you to make sure you are taking and passing the classes you need to graduate on time with the degree that you want.

Take rigorous courses. If you attend a high school that allows you to select the courses you take, try to enroll in the most rigorous curriculum that you can. College admissions committees favor students who have challenged themselves and succeeded, as it shows that they are ready for the rigors of a college classroom. In fact, most schools will value a slightly lower grade in an honors, AP, or IB class more than an A+ in a lower-level class. This does not, of course, mean that failing a rigorous class will look good on your transcript, and you should be careful not to get in over your head when selecting your curriculum for the year. Moreover, setting yourself up for a life of “all stress and no play” will come back to haunt you, even if you do manage to do well in all your chosen classes. The balance between ambitious and feasible is a tricky one, and I encourage you to include your counselor, teachers, and family in the decision-making process. When in doubt, sign up for the more difficult class and give it a shot, understanding that moving down a level after a week or two is always easier than moving up and trying to make up lost ground.

If your high school does not offer AP, IB, or honors courses, talk to your counselor about what other options for academic enrichment are available to you, particularly if you feel unchallenged by your existing schoolwork. Some schools may allow you to pursue dual enrollment courses at a local college, take an Advanced Placement class as an independent study, or enroll in online classes provided by other educational institutions. Going above and beyond what is offered by your high school can be an excellent opportunity to push yourself to the next level as a student, meanwhile demonstrating to colleges that you are not afraid of a challenge.

Prioritize your schoolwork. All of it. While some of your classes in high school might require more work than others, and some may even be weighted more heavily when calculating your GPA, it is important to remember that every single grade you earn will be visible on your transcript, no matter the grade level, content, or rigor. Most seniors who express regret over their academic records do so in reference to an early class or two that they did not take seriously but that still put a dent in their cumulative GPA and stick out like a sore thumb on their final transcripts. These students often cite temporary concerns, like conflicts among their friends or making appearances at social events, as the reason for not prioritizing these seemingly unimportant academic requirements, and they almost unanimously wish they had turned their focus to their schoolwork earlier in their high school careers. Again, a balance between your schoolwork, extracurricular involvement, and maintaining strong, positive social connections is important, but make

sure you are not sacrificing the school work more frequently than you should, incorrectly assuming you will be able to “make it up” or fix your record down the road.

Persist through academic setbacks. Here is something that most people will not tell you about high school: You are going to fail. At some point, you will bomb a test, miss a deadline, read an essay prompt incorrectly, or even struggle with an entire class, and failure will come for you. The good news is that this is also true about college, the professional world, adulthood, and life in general. The even better news is that college admissions counselors know this, and a positive response to academic setbacks can actually be a point in your favor in the application process (remember that your grade trend, not just the individual grades themselves, is a big part of transcript review). High school provides a fairly safe and controlled environment where you can practice recovering from failure, which will prepare you for the “real world” just as much, if not more, than consistent success will. When you encounter failure, do not throw up your hands and write off that assignment, class, or even school in general as a lost cause. Instead, work with your teachers and counselor to create a game plan for getting back on track, then execute like the boss you are.

Take advantage of the resources that are available to you. Almost all high schools offer student support services that are designed to help you excel in the classroom and beyond. These services could include academic advising, tutoring, standardized test prep, after-school enrichment programs, and more. Some schools that are unable to provide these resources themselves will partner with outside organizations in your community to ensure their students are supported. As will be the case in college, however, you can only benefit from these programs if you know they exist and how to access them. Talk to your teachers, counselor, or even principal to find out what academic support exists at your school and what it takes to get involved. Remember that seeking out help in this way is not a sign of failure or weakness, but rather that you are using the resources available to achieve at the highest level possible.

Pay attention to your talents, interests, and passions. In what academic subjects do you consistently excel? Which classes do you enjoy the most? What topics of discussion get you excited? Reflecting on these questions can help give direction to the goals you set and the decisions you make over the next few years. Pay attention to these highlights and seek opportunities to push yourself further when you encounter them. If the content of your math classes comes easily to you, find out what honors, AP, or IB math courses are available at your school, and set a goal to enroll in them. If your theater class brings you joy, try out for a starring role in the next play. If the issue of gentrification in your city makes you livid, ask your sociology teacher for additional readings and find out more about how you can help. Focusing your ambitions on the things you care most about will increase your chances of success, along with your chances of finding joy and fulfillment along the way.

Student Information				2019-2020			
Student Number:	██████████	Grade:	11	Course	Mark	Weight	Credit
Birthdate:	██████████	Gender:	M	#8100 RePublic High School			
Diploma Type:				Grade 11			
Diploma Date:				G02H05 Algebra II S1	86	0.5000	0.5
GPA Summary				G04H21 AP US History S1	90	0.5000	0.5
Cumulative GPA (Weighted)		2.33333		G01H11 English III S1	86	0.5000	0.5
Cumulative GPA (Unweighted)		2.18519		G01H00 Literary Arts II S1	87	0.5000	0.5
				G05H44 Music Theory I S1	85	0.5000	0.5
				G03H20 Physics I S1	86	0.5000	0.5
				G05HA7 Piano III Adv S1	86	0.5000	0.5
				G04H10 World History & Geog S1	85	0.5000	0.5
				Credit: 4.000 GPA: 3.12500 U/W GPA: 3.00000			
2016-2017				Credit Summary			
Course		Mark	Weight	Credit			
#0700 Creswell Middle Prep School of the Arts				High School			
Grade 8				Attempted			
Credit: .000 GPA: 0.0000 U/W GPA: 0.0000				Earned			
				ELECTIVE FOCUS	0.500		0.500
				ENGLISH	2.000		1.500
				FINE ART	1.000		1.000
				FOREIGN LANGUAGE	1.500		1.000
				MATHEMATICS	3.500		3.500
				SCIENCE	2.000		2.000
				SOCIAL STUDIES	2.500		2.500
				WELLNESS	0.500		0.500
				Total			13.500 12.500
				Total Credits			13.500 12.500
2017-2018				Comments			
Course		Mark	Weight	Credit			
#8100 RePublic High School				Message from District			
Grade 9				The unweighted GPA listed on this transcript is based on the State Board of Tennessee's Uniform Grading Policy and is reported to TSAC for qualifying for the HOPE lottery Scholarship.			
3634 AP Comp Sci Principles S1	91	0.5000	0.5	All high schools in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.			
3210 Biology I S1	81	0.5000	0.5	Grading Scale			
3001 English I S1	68	0.5000	0	A 93-100			
3117 Integrated Math I S1	71	0.5000	0.5	B 85-92			
3031 Latin I S1	50	0.5000	0	C 75-84			
3303 Lifetime Wellness S1	84	0.5000	0.5	D 70-74			
3417 US Government S1	80	0.5000	0.5	F 0-69			
Credit: 2.500 GPA: 1.57143 U/W GPA: 1.42857				*Credits awarded due to Grade Averaging			
				R - Credit Recovery			
2018-2019							
Course		Mark	Weight	Credit			
#8100 RePublic High School							
Grade 10							
3634 AP Comp Sci Principles S1	82	0.5000	0.5				
3634 AP Comp Sci Principles S2	86	0.5000	0.5				
3221 Chemistry I S1	78	0.5000	0.5				
3221 Chemistry I S2	79	0.5000	0.5				
3002 English II S1	83	0.5000	0.5				
3002 English II S2	75	0.5000	0.5				
3118 Integrated Math II S1	73	0.5000	0.5				
3118 Integrated Math II S2	77	0.5000	0.5				
3031 Latin I S1	79	0.5000	0.5				
3031 Latin I S2	81	0.5000	0.5				
3416 US History & Geog S1	86	0.5000	0.5				
3416 US History & Geog S2	80	0.5000	0.5				
Credit: 6.000 GPA: 2.25000 U/W GPA: 2.08333							

Sample Transcript Reflection Questions:

School context: The average GPA for students in this class is a 2.8. The lowest GPA is a 1.3 and the highest is a 4.1. This school offers 4 AP courses, and there is no limit to the number of AP courses a student can take.

What is this student's overall GPA? Do you think this student is towards the top, bottom, or middle of their class?

What classes or subject areas has this student done well in? Do you see any trends?

What classes or subject areas has this student struggled in? Do you see any trends?

How has this student's grades/GPA changed over time? Describe the trend you see.

How many AP courses has this student taken? Would you consider this to be a rigorous curriculum?

If this student has one semester of junior year remaining, what advice would you give them to improve their transcript before the end of the year?