

Starting Strong: Homeschooling Freshman and Sophomore Year

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“Helping parents homeschool through high school”

Guidance Counselor Basics

- Freshman Year: 9th grade, begins about age 14 or 15. Goal: think about college.
 - Sophomore Year: 10th grade, begins about age 15 or 16. Goal: prepare for college.
 - Changing Role of Parents: caretaker, teacher, mentor, friend
 - Understand local homeschool law. Read [Know Your State Homeschool Law](#)
 - Learn more: Articles: [The Best High School Guidance Counselor Is You](#)
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Plan Courses

- Cover the Core: [Planning High School Courses](#)
 - Math: [9 Ways to Actually Get Math Done This Year](#)
 - English: [A Parent's Primer for Teaching High School English](#)
 - Social studies: [Social Sciences and High School History](#)
 - Science: [Simple Science for Homeschooling High School](#)
 - Beyond the basics: cover classes not needed every year
 - Foreign language: [Teaching Tips for Foreign Language](#)
 - Physical Education: [Physical Education Outside the Box](#)
 - Fine Arts: [Art for The Art Klutz](#)
 - Electives: required by state law, required by parents, and what the child loves to do
 - Learn more about High School Electives: [3 Must-Have High School Electives](#)
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Create Records

- Keep records in a way that makes sense for you: Articles: [Homeschool Record Keeping](#)
 - Make an official transcript: [How to Make a Homeschool Transcript](#)
 - Course Descriptions: [How to Write Perfect Course Descriptions](#)
 - Comprehensive records include a reading list and expanded activity list
 - Coordinating reference book: [Setting the Records Straight](#)
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Understand Tests

- Annual standardized tests for test experience and practice
- Take the PSAT for fun in 10th grade: [Take the PSAT for Fun and Profit](#)
- Top tips on Tests
 1. Choose the right test for your child: [How to Ace the SAT or ACT](#)
 2. Avoid test anxiety and over testing
 3. Focus on literacy: reading, writing, math, vocabulary, penmanship, study skills.
 4. Incorporate test prep into daily English classes in 10th grade: real tests, 2-4 times a week
 5. Use homeschool skills to motivate your child
 6. Invest in test preparation for college admission and scholarships
- Read: [Play Your Way to a Great Vocabulary](#)

Avoid Common Traps

- Have Reasonable Expectations
 - Maturity occurs over 4 years; gradually more organized and responsible
 - Balance sleep and physical exhaustion
 - Teach for mastery, not perfection
 - Natural consequences when appropriate
- Maturation and Motivation
 1. Do be sure to keep school to a reasonable number of hours.
 2. Do be sure you don't plan curriculum that is too advanced.
 3. Do be sure to plan for increased sleep needs in teens.
 4. Do be sure to mix active subjects and seated work.
 5. Do be sure you have reasonable expectations.
 6. Do be sure they will be challenged, not bored.
 7. Do be sure it would be doable even for you.
 8. Do be sure you aren't expecting perfection.
 9. Do be flexible, homeschooling is not a race.
 10. Do be sure you have a backup plan with consequences
 - Read: [How to Motivate Homeschool Teens](#)
- Set Technology Boundaries
 - Balance online education with non-digital, non-electric coursework
 - Boundary suggestions: up to 1 hour on games, using a timer
 - No technology or cell phone in bedroom, bathroom, or mealtime
 - Discussion topic: digital addition, personal safety, future consequences
 - Read [TechnoLogic: Setting Logical Boundaries on Technology with Your Teen](#)
 - Read [Balanced Technology in Home Education](#)
- Stay Strong Sophomore Year
 - Be sure you have started a foreign language
 - Take the PSAT for fun; estimates SAT score to guide college choices
 - Choose between the SAT or ACT and start studying
 - Consider subject tests: AP or SAT Subject Test, or CLEP

- Read [High School Subject Tests Simply Explained](#)
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Plan College Financing

- Understand Financing
 - Save money, set aside money monthly, talk to your tax professional or banker
 - Earn Scholarships
 - Scholarships come from colleges
 - Apply to 4-8 colleges, including reach, fit, safety, public, and private.
 - Read [How Homeschoolers Earn Scholarships](#)
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Encourage Activities

- Activities and Leadership
 - Activities build a resume and improve admission
 - Include volunteering, leadership, and work
 - Technology is a frequent impediment
 - Experiment with different activities to find “passion” that colleges love
 - Investigate Careers
 - Read books and assessment tools: [Career Assessment for Homeschoolers](#)
 - Attend college fairs and discussions with college admissions and professors
 - Employment, self-discovery or field-testing careers
 - Article: [Options After High School](#)
 - Find a mentor, and consider entrepreneurship
 - Extra Credit for Sophomore Year
 - Carefully research dual enrollment. Read [Facing the Community College Fad](#)
 - Attend a college fair and visit colleges in the spring
 - Read [Three Steps to Finding a College](#)
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Big Ideas for Success

- Big ideas for success #1 – Seek balance and sanity
 - Put weak areas first: [Put Your Weak Areas First in 4 Easy Steps](#)
 - Have a morning meeting: [Have a Morning Meeting for Homeschool Success](#)
 - Read [How to Avoid a Crazy Busy Life in 7 Easy Steps](#)

- **Big ideas for success #2 Remain Calm**
 - You can't be behind; anything missed can be fixed junior and senior year
 - Start strong, plan for success, but don't panic and double-up, hoping to catch up
 - Choose curriculum for the student (self-teaching) not for you (the mentor, project manager)
 - Read [Homeschooling at Peace Inside the Bell-Shaped Curve](#)
 - Read [7 Point Sanity-Saving Checklist for Planning Your Homeschool Year](#)
 - Read [10 No-Fail Strategies for Choosing High School Curriculum](#)
- **Big Idea for success #3: Encourage Delight Directed learning**
 - Encourage their passion – What do they do for fun?
 - Avoid turning delight directed learning into “schoolwork”
 - Collect high school credits: [Delight Directed Learning](#)
- **Big Idea for success #4: Take Advantage of Breaks**
 - Relax and take breaks.
 - Update homeschool records
 - Take continuing education classes
 - Spend time planning ahead
 - Collect summer credits, and add summer activities to your list
 - Retain core math skills
 - Read good book for vocabulary, fluency, and college preparation
 - Meaningful activities; employment, or volunteer jobs
 - Read [College Bound Reading List](#) and [Classic Christmas Literature for High School Students](#)
 - Articles [How to Have the Best Homeschool Summer Ever](#)
- **Big Idea for success #5: Take Continuing Education Classes**
 - Continuously learn a little more each month about homeschooling high school
 - Gold Care Club classes: quick start, beginner, intermediate, advanced, and encouragement
 - Yearly homeschool conventions and workshops

Suggested Resources

Reference book: [Setting the Records Straight](#)

Reference book: [College Admission and Scholarships](#)

[TechnoLogic: How to Set Logical Technology Boundaries and Stop the Zombie Apocalypse](#)

[Finding the Faith to Homeschool High School: Weekly Reflections for Weary Parents](#)

[How to Homeschool 9th and 10th Grade: Simple Steps for Starting Strong](#) Coffee Break Book

[Comprehensive Record Solution](#): create records for college admission and scholarships