

ACTIVITY # 1: CURRICULUM PLANNING

Opening Discussion:

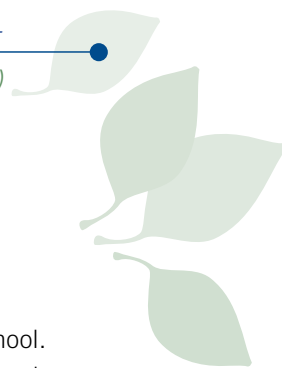
Preparing for college entrance and success begins with extremely careful planning of high school course work. Every student needs to focus the bulk of energy during the high school years on classes that are truly “college-preparatory.” While it is certainly important to “enrich” a four-year schedule with classes in the fine and practical arts, colleges will look for the “meat and potatoes” classes in English, mathematics, world languages, laboratory sciences, and history/social sciences.

Activity/Handout:

**Your High School Classes will Open the Doors to College
What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College?**

Instructions:

1. Distribute handout: “Your High School Classes Will Open the Doors to College,” and activity sheet: “What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College?”
2. After allowing students time to read and consider the handout. Ask them to individually complete the activity sheet.
3. Divide students into small groups to compare responses.
4. Allow small groups to report to the larger group about the ways they are and aren’t on track for college. What deficiencies have been identified? What do individual students need to do to catch up?
5. Answer any questions that this activity may have brought forward.



YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES WILL OPEN THE DOORS TO COLLEGE

Because you are planning to go to college, it's important that you take the right classes in high school. Beginning in ninth grade, the majority of your classes should be ones that prepare you for admission to and, perhaps even more importantly, success in college. Most admission officers tell you that the first thing they look at is your choice of classes, even before they look at grades. When it comes time to apply to college you want to make sure that you meet the admission criteria of ALL colleges in which you are interested. Always remember that it is much better to be “overprepared” than “underprepared.”

Here's what you need by the end of your senior year in order to meet the admission expectations at a majority of colleges:

- Four full years of English classes. This includes courses in which you study writing and courses in which you read literature. Colleges know that you need to be able to write well in nearly every career. You need to be able to read and analyze, and you need to develop strong communication skills!
- Four full years of math classes. Students who take math in each year of high school are far more successful in college than students taking only three years. Math is the tool that you will use for many other classes, especially those in science. Your math classes should include at least four of the following six classes, taken in this order:
 - Pre-algebra
 - Algebra
 - Precalculus
 - Geometry
 - Algebra II and/or trigonometry
 - Calculus

Never “skip” a year of math in high school, because you will lose your momentum. If you do not take math in your senior year, you will find that the math classes required in college will be very difficult!

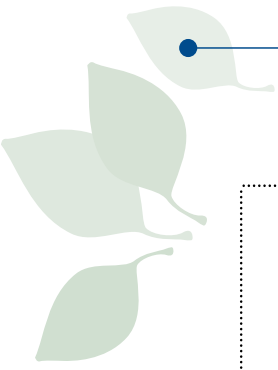
- Three–four years of laboratory science classes. You will have the strongest background if you have taken at least one year each of:
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Physics
- Two years minimum of social sciences. Most college freshmen studied World History and American History in high school. Other social science options include:
 - Government
 - Sociology
 - Geography
 - Psychology

- Two–four years of world language. More and more colleges are requiring a minimum of two years of language study while in high school, as an admission criterion. Because many colleges require students to study a second language, it is important that you expose yourself to the study of languages while in high school.

A small number of colleges require one year of visual or performing art prior to admission. Participation in these classes throughout high school, can help you to develop a “special talent” that will make you a highly qualified applicant.

As a summary, most colleges require students to meet certain college prep curriculum standards. But just meeting the minimum is not necessarily the best way to prepare for college. Strong preparation means going beyond the minimum—allowing you to start your college career in college-level courses, not remedial courses which are designed to help you catch up or review high school material—for NO CREDIT!

SPECIAL NOTE FOR ATHLETES: Work with your counselor and coaches to make sure that your classes meet the standards of the NCAA Clearinghouse. Go to <http://eligibilitycenter.org> for more information.



WHAT CLASSES WILL YOU TAKE TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE:

Subject	Minimum college preparation	State universities and other selective college requirements	Highly selective college recommendations (Honors and AP levels when possible)	My courses to date	I need to take
English (with an emphasis on reading and writing)	4 years	4 years	4 years		
Math	3 years, including algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra	4 years, including algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra	4 years, including algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra		
Social Studies	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences		
Science	2 years of lab science: Biology, Chemistry or Physics	2-3 years of lab science: Biology, Chemistry or Physics	2-3 years of lab science: Biology, Chemistry or Physics		
World language	2 years of the same foreign language	2-4 years of the same foreign language	4 years of the same foreign language		