

# High School **YEARS**

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Recognize progress

Giving rewards like money or presents for grades sends the message that the only reason to achieve is to earn a “prize.” Instead, use heartfelt praise and encouragement to boost your teen’s confidence and success. Remember to acknowledge his efforts, too. He’ll be more inspired to achieve his goals if he sees that you notice his progress.

### Gear up for safety

Does your teenager know that it’s safe *and* stylish to wear the proper sports gear? She can check with her coach about the equipment she needs for school or rec sports. For casual games or activities, have her look online to find what’s recommended. The professionals in every sport wear protective clothing, and so should your high schooler.

### Hang a map

Maps make great decorations—and they’re a good springboard for discussing people, places, and cultures. Suggest that your teen hang a map in his room or a hallway of your home. Then, he could add colored pushpins or “sticky flags” to highlight places he learns about, hears about, or visits.

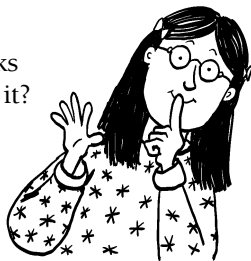
### Worth quoting

“We make a living by what we get.  
We make a life by what we give.”  
Winston Churchill

### Just for fun

**Q:** What breaks when you say it?

**A:** Silence.



## “Yes, I’m responsible”

Spark your high schooler’s spirit of independence by encouraging her to develop habits of personal responsibility. Here are some strategies.

### Offer choices

Your teen may not realize everything it takes to keep a household going, so involve her in decisions about weekly chores. Get together one night a week to make a to-do list and assign jobs. Her duties might be vacuuming the house, taking out the trash, and emptying the dishwasher, while her little brother has a different set. She’ll see how her responsibilities fit into the big picture and that her help really matters.



### Don’t run to the rescue

It’s normal for parents to want to help their kids. But your teenager will become more capable when she sees the logical consequences of her actions. If she forgets her costume for a school-play dress

rehearsal, for instance, she will have to rehearse without it. She’ll learn that sometimes it’s painful or annoying if she neglects a responsibility—and she will be more likely to remember next time.

### Ready, dressed, go

Your high schooler can take responsibility for her own day from the start. Rather than running out the door in crisis mode, she could take 15 minutes the night before to get ready. Suggest that she think about what trips her up in the morning (packing her backpack, choosing an outfit) and then handle it before bedtime. 👍

## Reading into a topic

In high school, your teen will read more nonfiction—or what his teachers call *informational text*—than when he was younger. These tips can help him read more deeply in textbooks, magazines, reference materials, autobiographies, and other nonfiction material.

**Start at the back.** For textbooks, he might begin by reading the review or the discussion questions at the end of the chapter. That will give him a preview of what he should read for—and what he will learn.

**Share and discuss.** Encourage your high schooler to share facts or ideas that he finds fascinating. Ask open-ended questions to help him dig into what he reads and use the information for class discussions or written assignments. 👍

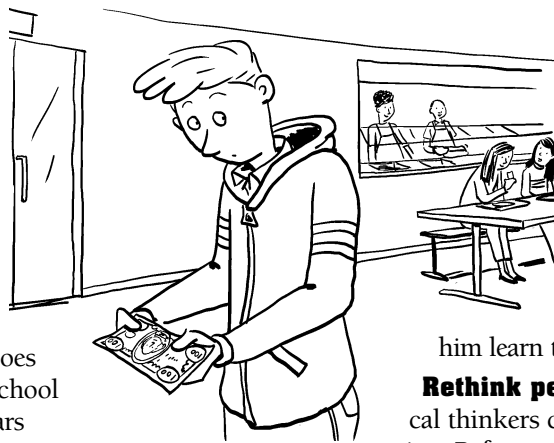


# Encourage critical thinking

When your teen thinks critically, he's able to evaluate information, offer informed opinions, and make better decisions. Try these tips together to improve how he reasons, reflects, and questions information.

**Present a problem.** Take turns tossing out thought-provoking questions or scenarios over dinner. Should shoes cost more in bigger sizes? If you find a \$100 bill in the school cafeteria, what should you do with it? Why do movie stars earn so much more money than firefighters? Your teenager will get a chance to think through his beliefs and debate yours.

**Research the facts.** Your high schooler isn't wrong for thinking his team will win the Super Bowl, but can he



explain how he came to that conclusion? Did he research the players and analyze their skills? What sources did he use? Following these steps will help him learn to back up his positions.

**Rethink personal biases.** Critical thinkers consider other points of view. Before your child makes a decision, suggest that he run his ideas past someone who doesn't always agree with him. He'll start to think beyond his own experiences and biases. 👍



## Q&A How to pay for college

**Q** Our daughter wants to go to college, but I can't imagine how we would ever pay for it. What should we do?

**A** First, encourage your daughter to consider a range of cost-saving options. She might attend community college for two years before transferring to a four-year school. She could live at home. Or she can look at lower-priced schools, such as public colleges or ones located closer to home to cut down on transportation costs.



Then, get set up to find financial aid. To apply for federal student aid (grants, loans, and work-study programs), file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) right after January 1 of your child's senior year.

Also, talk to your teen about applying for scholarships. There are many available, and small ones can add up. Have her ask her school counselor for ideas. 👍

## Make the most of winter break

Winter break can be fun *and* productive. Share these choices with your teenager.

### Renew your room

Instead of simply cleaning her room, maybe she'd like to rearrange it completely. Moving furniture around and coming up with new organizational systems will allow your child to put her own stamp on her space—and get off to a fresh start for the new year.

### Find a new hobby

Encourage your high schooler to follow her passions. Maybe she'll teach herself new meditation techniques, learn cake decorating, or get into painting. Developing her own interests might lead to a career or just give her different ways to relax.



### Do good

The holiday season, when people are in a giving mood, is a good time to begin a community service habit. Suggest that your teen check with organizations like Goodwill, the Salvation Army, or the Red Cross about volunteering during—and after—winter break. 👍

## Parent to Parent Too much social media?

I noticed that the more our son Jeff was on social media, the sadder he seemed. He was either bummed about not being invited to a party or upset that his posts didn't get many "likes."

I talked to other parents and found out it wasn't my imagination. Feeling sad from being on social media is actually common. In fact, I've felt it myself. Together, Jeff and I came up with some ideas.

First, we're each going to set aside daily Facebook-free time. Then, I decided to delete the Facebook app from my phone so I wouldn't be tempted to look at it constantly. Finally, we thought of "hiding" friends who tend to post things that bother us.

It's difficult to stay away from social media these days, but Jeff and I are both going to try to limit our exposure—and increase our happiness. 👍



**OUR PURPOSE**

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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 www.rfeonline.com  
 ISSN 1540-5605