

# High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



## Short Clips

### Spring fever

As the weather warms up, help your teen stay motivated by showing interest in her schoolwork. For example, if she's reading books by Edgar Allan Poe, watch a movie based on one of his short stories with her. Then, compare the movie with the story. How are they alike? Different?

### Stepfamily fun

While it may take time for blended families to form comfortable bonds, stepparents can use special activities to make connections. Find out what your stepchild enjoys (tennis, puzzles), and spend time together. *Tip:* Frame pictures of the two of you together to show you're proud to be with him.

### Humbly speaking

Being humble will make your high schooler more open to learning from others and help her get along with people. To foster this trait, encourage her to see herself as important, but not better than others. Suggest that she look for people's strengths, such as friendliness or a sense of humor, and avoid putting anyone down.

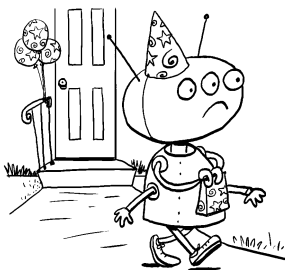
### Worth quoting

"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." *Andy Warhol*

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the alien want to leave the party?

**A:** The atmosphere wasn't right.



## How to spend summer break

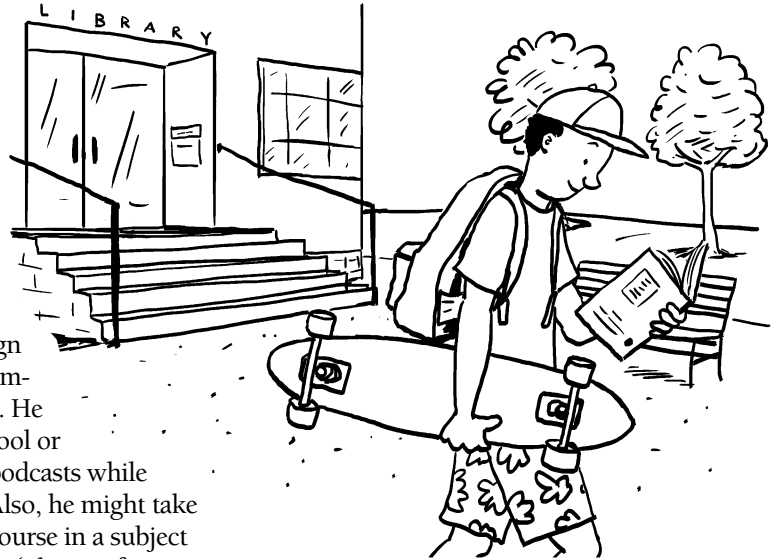
The long days of summer don't have to be lazy ones. Help your teen make the most of his school break with these ideas.

### Stay sharp

Encourage your high schooler to sign up for a library's summer book program. He could read at the pool or beach or listen to podcasts while doing yard work. Also, he might take a summer school course in a subject that's tough for him (physics, foreign language). That way, he can concentrate on just one class. Or he could enroll in a study skills or time management class at a community college.

### Build skills

Does your teenager like swimming, nature, or acting? Have him look for programs at pools, parks, zoos, and local theaters to attend (or work at, depending on his age). *Idea:* Suggest that he set a "stretch goal" to achieve over the



summer. He might learn to dive or get a role in a play.

### Take on special projects

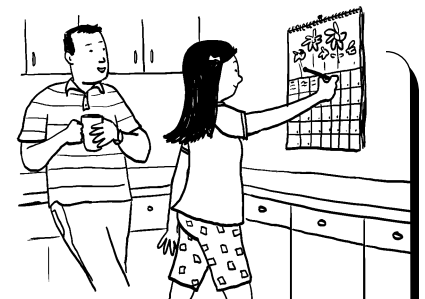
Let your high schooler be the family photographer and create a "Summer 2017" scrapbook. He might even take a photo a day for the entire summer and make a digital album. Or ask him to clear out your household clutter and organize a garage sale. Then, consider allowing him to keep a portion of the proceeds. 👍

## Know where your teen is

Keep your teenager safe by making a plan for staying connected over the summer. Use these suggestions:

- Ask your teen to write her daily plans on a calendar or a whiteboard in the kitchen. Add your work schedule and events so she knows how to find you, too.

- Explain that she needs to answer her phone or text back when you contact her. Save her friends' numbers in your phone, and let her know you'll call them if you can't get ahold of her. You could also exchange numbers with her friends' parents as a backup. 👍



# Preserve your online reputation

Does your high schooler's online reputation match how she wants others to view her? Share this advice.

**Keep it positive.** Online posts are fair game for viewing by college admissions officers and future employers. Suggest that your teen post items that paint her in a good light, such as links to interesting (and noncontroversial) news articles, photos of her volunteer work, videos of her sports performances, or inspiring quotes.

**Keep it professional.** Encourage your teenager to use an appropriate email address. Using a silly or provocative one



will not make a good first impression. *Tip:* If she has an email address from when she was younger, now is a good time to update it.

**Keep it clean.** The standard advice still holds: "Don't post anything you wouldn't want your grandmother to see."

Make it clear that your child should not post any words or pictures that are sexual or inappropriate in any way. Remind her that the instant she posts something online, it could be there forever. Even if she's on a private page or deletes her post, someone can take a screenshot and forward it.

*Idea:* Have your teen Google herself from time to time—she'll see herself as others see her online. 👍

## Parent to Parent Reviewing the final report card

When my daughter's final report card arrives, school will be over, and her mind will be on summer. I wasn't sure how to handle a discussion, so I asked her school counselor for advice.

Mrs. Grant said that while it will be too late to change anything for this year, discussing Jasmine's



report card can help her get off on the right foot for the fall. She suggested that I begin by praising my daughter for high grades and ones that improved, as well as other positives like good behavior and regular attendance.

If any grades are low, I should ask Jasmine questions, she said. Were assignments turned in on time? How could you have studied harder? Did you understand the material? Then, we can talk about ways to adjust her workload or homework routine for next year. 👍



## Q&A

### Pitch in at home

**Q** My son helps around the house—but only when asked. How can I get him to do chores without nagging him?

**A** Together, create a checklist of chores he is expected to do. Explain that these items aren't a "maybe"—they are his responsibility as a member of your family.

Then, have him devise a reminder system that works for him. He might set alerts in his phone or put sticky notes on his bedroom wall. Also, lay out consequences for not doing his chores, perhaps losing car privileges or not being able to go out with friends.

Finally, make chores more pleasant for everyone by setting aside time to do them together. Put on music, and use the time to enjoy each other's company as you get the jobs done. 👍



## Get started on college essays

Summer is the time to get a head start on college essays. Here are strategies to help your teen write ones that will make his applications stand out.

**1. Consider the question.** Perhaps the admissions committee wants to know his greatest moment or why their college is right for him.

**2. Brainstorm answers.**

Have him make a list of his strengths or any life-changing events. *Hint:* His essay should reveal something that's not obvious from his application.

**3. Add examples.** Maybe volunteering at a homeless shelter taught him that every person has value, or visiting a civil rights landmark inspired him to think about a public service career.

**4. Write and edit.** He should use words that show rather than tell. Instead

of "I learned a lot as club president," he might try "As club president, I was able to involve more students in school activities." *Tip:* Be sure he proofreads carefully. Even the smallest errors show a lack of concern for his work. 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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