

# FIVE WAYS COLLEGE IS DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL

**1. RULES:** You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

In High School, your time is structured by others. *In College, you manage your own time.*

In High School, you need permission to participate in extracurricular activities. *In College, you must decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities.*

In High School, you can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities. *In College, you must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before.*

In High School, most of your classes are arranged for you. *In College, you arrange your own class schedule in consultation with your Academic Advisor.*

**2. CLASSES/STUDYING:** It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material to be prepared for class lectures and assignments.

In High School, you may study outside class as little as 0-2 hours a week. *In College, you need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. For a 15-credit semester schedule, that's 30-45 hours a week!*

In High School, you seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough. *In College, you need to review class notes and text material regularly to keep up with the pace of the course.*

In High School, you are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class. *In College, you are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.*

In High School, teachers carefully monitor classroom attendance. *In College, professors may not formally take roll, but they are still likely to know if you are there and it may affect your final grade.*

**3. TEACHERS/PROFESSORS:** College is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you learn.

In High School, teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates. *In College, professors expect you to use the course syllabus, which spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how it will be graded.*

In High School, teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook. *In College, professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. They may expect you to relate your textbook information to the class discussion.*

In High School, teachers remind you of your incomplete work and approach you if they believe you need assistance. *In College, professors may not remind you of incomplete work, and most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.*

In High School, teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent. *In College, professors expect you to get information you missed from classmates.*

In High School, teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class. *In College, professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.*

**4. TESTS:** Mastery of a subject is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

In High School, testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. *In College, some courses may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester, covering large amounts of material.*

In High School, makeup tests are often available. *In College, makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.*

In High School, teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events. *In College, professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.*

In High School, teachers frequently conduct test review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts. *In College, professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to come prepared with questions.*

**5. GRADES:** Results count. Though "good-faith effort" is important to your professor, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.

In High School, grades are given for most assigned work. *In College, grades may not be provided for all assigned work.*

In High School, consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low. *In College, grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.*

In High School, initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade. *In College, watch out for your first tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected—but they may also count for a substantial part of your course grade.*

In High School, you may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher. *In College, you may graduate only if your average in classes meets a C (2.0). If you want to qualify for a competitive "secondary admission" major, your grades must be much higher than average to progress to graduation.*

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*Adapted from The Altschuler Learning Enhancement Center at Southern Methodist University*