

# High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips

### Foreign films

Is your teen taking a foreign language class? Here's a great way to help him learn. Think of a movie he has watched several times, and rent it in the language he's studying. Since he already knows the plot and probably some of the lines, he'll be able to pick up on the meaning.

### Sports injuries

Kids who play one sport regularly may be at risk for "overuse" injuries to joints, muscles, tendons, and bones. Encourage your high schooler to cross-train by doing activities that use different muscles (play tennis one day, run the next). If she experiences pain or swelling, be sure she sees a doctor.

### Life stories

When your teenager has to write a paper on a famous person, suggest that he look for facts that aren't widely known. *Examples:* a childhood event, an obstacle the person overcame. Uncovering interesting details will help your child write a paper that stands out.

### Worth quoting

"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

### Just for fun

**Q:** What are the four seasons?

**A:** Football, basketball, baseball, and soccer.



## Building family bonds

Your teenager is busy with schoolwork, friends, after-school clubs, and a part-time job. Where does family time fit in?

Staying close to family keeps communication lines open and forms ties that will last a lifetime. Try carving out "together time" with these ideas.



### Casual chats

Join your child at what she does best: hanging out. When she flops on the sofa after a long day, flop down near her. Wait for her to say something, and follow her train of thought. At bedtime, stop in her room to chat about your evening, plans for the weekend, or the book you're reading. Spending even a few minutes together each day will help keep you connected.

### Shared interests

Look for natural ways to foster closeness. Maybe there's a hobby (jewelry making, canoeing) you and your high schooler can do together. Or enjoy common interests, such as going shopping or watching football games. Your teen may open up about what's

going on in her life during those times. Plus, you will develop memories for the future.

### Extended family

Brainstorm ideas on keeping in touch with relatives. You might hold a monthly "speakerphone" meeting with long-distance grandparents. Or your child can conduct e-mail surveys with questions for each person to answer and send to the group (*examples:* "What's your favorite food?" "What's your earliest memory?"). Strengthening these relationships will help your teen see the importance of family. 👍

## Back on track

The first half of the school year is almost over, and your child is struggling in two classes. Show him that it's not too late to turn things around with these strategies:

■ Together, write down problem areas (making careless errors on quizzes, getting poor grades on essays). Suggest that your teen ask his teachers for specific things he can do at home and in school to improve. Have him post the list at home, and check his progress regularly.

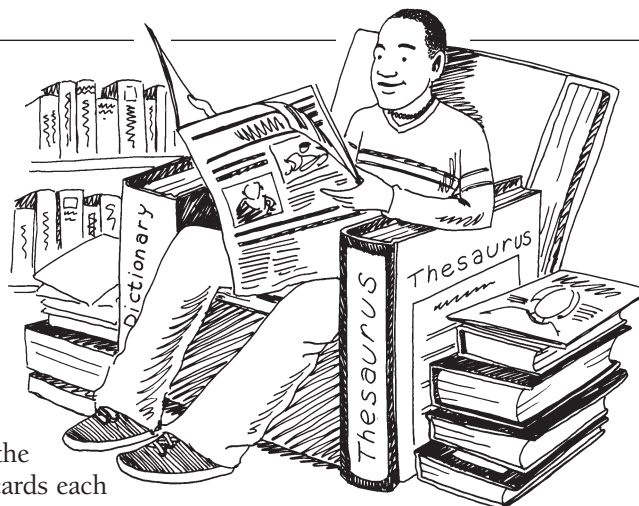
■ Encourage your child to use homework clubs, teacher office hours, and honor society tutoring for extra help. Also, you might consider enrolling him in a study skills course at the library or community college. 👍



# Vocabulary test prep

Both college entrance exams and standardized tests require strong vocabulary skills. Use these tips to help your child do his best at test time:

- Help your teenager make flash cards (search online for SAT word lists). Have him write the word on one side of each card and the meaning on the other. *Tip:* Suggest that he shuffle the cards each time he quizzes himself. That way, he'll really learn the words—not just memorize them in order.
- Challenge him to create a multiple-choice vocabulary test from words in his textbooks. Since reading and writing use



different parts of the brain, your child will increase his chances of remembering the words by doing both.

- Put a dictionary and thesaurus in plain view (on the kitchen desk, in the family room). Try to model ways to use them. For example, while reading a magazine, wonder aloud about a word, and check the definition.
- Reading a variety of materials (books, newspapers, almanacs) will expose your high schooler to a wide range of words. *Tip:* Suggest that he jot down unfamiliar words and their page numbers. Then he can look up the words later and go back to read them in context. 👍

# Finding an internship

Internships are a great opportunity for your high schooler to sample different careers and get work experience. Here's some advice on locating the right one.

First, help your teen explore areas of interest. Does she like children? She might want to intern in a preschool. If she likes to write, she can try a newspaper or public relations firm.



Interning will help her see if her interests could lead to a career.

Once your high schooler has ideas, encourage her to network with everyone she can (family, teachers, friends' parents, your coworkers). She can email or call to ask about opportunities they may know of.

Finally, suggest that your child contact local businesses, nonprofit groups, and government offices. While bigger organizations are more likely to have formal internship programs, small businesses are often willing to take on an extra hand. 👍

# Q & A Multi-tasking teens

**Q** My child seems to be constantly doing 10 things at once: IMing, text messaging, listening to her iPod, and reading Facebook—all while doing homework. Is this multi-tasking bad for her?

**A** Today's teens spend an average of 6½ hours a day “plugged in.” While some of this is okay (connecting with friends, using writing skills), there are downsides. Homework will take your child longer when she switches back and forth between tasks. And she won't learn to focus on the job at hand.

Consider telling your child to keep electronics off while she's doing homework. If she needs to use the computer, have her shut down her IM windows and Facebook account. Finally, try to encourage her to “unplug” for some period each day to give her brain time to relax away from the digital world. 👍



# Parent to Parent Confidence boost

I recently overheard my son telling a friend, “I just can't do it. I'll never figure it out.” I was concerned that he was losing his confidence. So I talked to my husband, and we came up with a few ideas to help Derek feel better about himself.

First, we notice when he does something nice for someone. For example, one day he checked the oil in my car without being asked. He



beamed when I said, “Thanks. I really appreciate your help!” We also try to compliment him on his accomplishments and ignore small shortcomings. When Derek's science project ended up making a huge mess in the kitchen, instead of criticizing, I asked him to explain it to me and said, “What a cool experiment.”

Lately, I've been hearing fewer “I can'ts.” Little by little, I'm happy to say Derek is becoming more confident. 👍

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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