

Planning for Tomorrow

How To Prepare In High School For Your Community College Years

A Draft Document Prepared by The educational Policies Committee of The Academic Senate for
California Community Colleges
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Introduction

If you are a high school student planning to attend a college, the information in this folder is for you. Read it carefully and use it to help plan your high school courses.

The majority of students attending college in the state of California study in community colleges. Community colleges admit all high school graduates and all who can profit from their instruction. Wherever you go to college, if you plan your courses while you are in high school, you will be prepared for college work and will not have to lose time in college taking courses you should already have taken on high school.

If you do not take all the high school courses recommended here, you can still make them up in your community college. But you will save time and money by planning now for a successful future.

Whether you want a certificate in a vocational area, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree having the knowledge and skills this folder outlines will help you to succeed.

The knowledge and skills will be useful to you in your personal life as well, because you will learn more about yourself and your world, and your life will be more pleasant and rewarding.

Good Luck!

Skills

To succeed in college-level classes, you will need to have certain skills. The most important minimum skills are listed below.

Listening

You will have to understand and take notes on lectures, picking out the most important points. You will also have to understand spoken directions for assignments.

Speaking

Answering questions in class, making presentations, being a part of group discussions, and even taking oral examinations may be part of your college education. You will need to be able to express yourself clearly when you speak.

Studying

Good study skills are essential in college. You will have to be able to concentrate on course material, learn facts, and sum information.

Thinking

Being able to think clearly, logically and creatively is essential. Get into the habit of asking yourself what you believe, and why.

Reading

You will need to be able to read material written at the college level and find the main point, see how details relate to that point, understand the structure, find relationships among the ideas, separate fact from opinion, and reach appropriate conclusions about the reading.

Writing

You must be able to write an essay about 500 words long, in about 50 minutes. You must have a main point and develop it, use detail to support the point, use sentences which have some structural variety, and make few errors of sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling.

Mathematics

Your mathematics skills must include arithmetic, decimals, and metrics. For many majors, geometry and algebra are also necessary.

Computers

More and more people are using computers, at work and in school. If you learn to use a computer to write or if you can do some programming, you will find those skills useful.

Courses

The courses you take in high school will be important for your success in college.

No matter what you plan to major in at college, you should take at least the following courses.

Every semester, take an English course in which you have to write papers. In some of those courses you should also be reading literature.

Take mathematics through elementary algebra.

Include world history, U.S. history, and civics in your three years of history and social studies.

Take at least two years of science, including at least one year of laboratory science.

Take at least two years of one foreign language.

Take classes in art, music, dance, and/or drama.

Take typing as soon as possible. Typed work looks good and is usually expected in college. Typing skills will also help you in using a computer.

These are minimum courses recommended.

If You Think You Might Major In Business

You may be able to take business classes in high school. But also prepare for business by learning about yourself and the world. Classes in psychology, mathematics, history, and art will help you.

Knowledge of a foreign language is useful and often necessary, because many companies today are international. If you are thinking of working for a company that does business in other countries, consider taking four years of one language or two years of two different languages.

If You think You Might Major In Science

Start while you are still in high school to get a good background. College classes in chemistry, biology, and physics start where the high school classes end. Of you have not already studied those sciences in high school, you will be behind when you get to college.

Science involves mathematics, so take as much in high school as you can; geometry, advanced algebra, trigonometry, analysis, statistics, and even calculus.

You will be able to take those mathematics courses at community college, but if you take them in high school you can finish earlier.

If You Think You Might Major In A Technical Field

Different technical fields require different kinds of knowledge, so find out about the areas that interest you. Maybe you will have to use mathematics, or you may have to read difficult technical manuals. Nurses use biology, cosmetologists chemistry, welders use physics, and so on.

If You Think You Might Major In Humanities Or Social Sciences, Or If You Are Undecided

If you have not decided on a major, or if you are majoring in humanities or social sciences, here is a well-balanced program for your high school years:

- four years of English, with some composition every semester
- three years of mathematics, through second year algebra
- three years of history and government
- two years of a laboratory science
- two or three years of the same foreign language
- two years if classes in art, music, dance, and/or drama
- typing
- introductory computer courses

For more information about planning your high school classes, ask your counselor or call your local community college.