

How to Choose High School Electives

Source: www.collegeboard.com

At most high schools, students get to take elective classes. These are classes outside the required curriculum that you get to choose. You may find elective classes in subjects such as art, music, journalism, computer programming and business.

Taking elective classes can give you a chance to:

- Explore your interests.
- Lighten a demanding class schedule.
- Have fun studying something you love.

Your electives can show colleges your interests and skills.

Tips for Choosing Electives

How can you make the most of the opportunity to choose elective classes in areas of interest? Keep the following tips in mind.

Pursue Your Passions

Follow your passions when choosing electives. Taking a class in an area you enjoy or want to learn more about can be fun and help reduce stress. If your school doesn't offer the classes you want, check out the course offerings at local and community colleges.

Maintain Balance

Handling four or five core courses each semester doesn't leave a lot of room for extras. Some schools offer elective courses — such as journalism or band — that complement your extracurricular activities. Classes like these can reduce your after-school time commitment, giving you more time to study.

Try Something New

Taking a class that will introduce you to a completely new subject or that is more advanced than your usual classes is a great way to challenge yourself and stay motivated throughout high school — you may even discover a new talent or interest.

College-Application Benefits

Choosing your electives well can also help you when you apply to college. Here are some things electives can help you do.

Take Courses Colleges Recommend

Did you know that just taking your school's required courses may not be enough to satisfy college admission officers? Some colleges, for example, want to see that you've studied fine art or taken four years of a foreign language in high school.

To make sure you're choosing the right elective classes, take these steps:

- Talk to your counselors and teachers to help you figure out which electives will meet the requirements of the colleges or types of programs you're considering.
- Use [College Search](#) to see what specific colleges require.
- Check out [High School Classes Colleges Look For](#) to get an idea of the courses college admission officers want to see on your transcript.

Show Colleges Who You Are

The electives you choose tell colleges something about you. If you take several electives in a certain area, for example, you can show your interest and skills in that subject. Or your electives can show that you have wide-ranging interests or that you like to tackle challenging work.

Strengthen Your Transcript

One of the most important pieces of your college application is your high school transcript. Admission officers want to see that you've earned strong grades in challenging classes. If you choose electives in areas you're excited about and will work hard in, that interest and effort will show in your grades.