

How to Take Your High School Classes to the Next Level

Source: www.collegeboard.com

Taking challenging classes in high school is a great way to build new skills. And it will serve you well when you get to college, because you'll be more prepared for the work. In a recent survey of college freshmen, more than half of the students surveyed said that they wish they had worked harder in high school.

Challenging classes, such as honors and college-level courses, also help you get into college: They are exactly what admission officers like to see on applications.

Honors and college-level courses are valuable for other reasons too. In the survey mentioned above, most of the students who took college-level courses as part of the Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs said that these classes were more worthwhile and more interesting than others.

Experience a Different Approach

Honors and college-level courses differ from regular classes in various ways. Here is a brief overview of some of the classes that may be available to you:

- **Honors classes** usually cover similar material as regular classes but at a faster pace or more deeply than regular classes
- The College Board's [AP Program](#) offers college-level classes that help students develop and apply skills such as reading critically, solving problems analytically and writing clearly. There are more than 30 classes available.
- The **IB program** offers college-level classes that stress developing your thinking skills and an awareness of global issues.
- You may be able to take **college courses** while still in high school, either at your school or on a college campus.

Try honors and college-level courses.

Find Your Passion

Courses like these can introduce you to topics and ideas that are not covered in the regular classroom. For example, AP courses include Chinese Language and Culture, Environmental Science, and Psychology. This range of subjects allows you to explore your interests and develop new passions. You may even discover the subject that will become your college major or the focus of your career.

Build Important Skills

Honors and college-level courses can help you learn the skills and habits you'll need for success in college and beyond. They will allow you to develop:

- Stronger writing skills

- Problem-solving abilities
- Time-management skills
- Discipline
- Good study habits

Prepare for College

Showing that you're willing to push yourself by taking rigorous classes in high school can help when you're applying to college. In fact, the level of courses you take now is one of the first things colleges look at.

In addition, college courses, IB classes and exams, and AP Exams may lead to college credit and advanced placement in college. This means you may be able to skip some basic college courses and move directly into interesting advanced classes. This also may allow you to free up enough time to pursue a double major or to study abroad.

Take the Plunge

Once you've decided to challenge yourself with honors or college-level courses, talk with your school counselor, a teacher or the school principal. He or she can help you get information about a course's workload, any preparation you might need and the way to sign up for this type of class.