

January 2021

High School YEARS

Working Together for Lifelong Success



Short Clips

Tasty probability

On a platter with 4 red, 6 blue, and 5 yellow cookies, what is the probability someone will randomly grab a blue or yellow cookie? Your teen can add up all the cookies ($4 + 6 + 5 = 15$), determine what fraction are blue or yellow ($\frac{11}{15}$), and convert the fraction to a percent: $11 \div 15 \times 100 = 73.3$ percent. Let her test it over dessert!

Sit up straight

Good posture can improve your teen's mood and boost his memory and learning. Remind him to sit up straight, pull his shoulders back, and lift his chin. If he tends to slouch over his laptop, have him try adjusting his chair height or putting the computer on a stack of books.

A parenting circle

With all the changes to this school year, having a supportive network of fellow parents can be a welcome relief. Reach out to neighbors and the parents of your teen's friends to see who is interested in regular video chats. You can exchange tips and advice about virtual learning and other challenges.

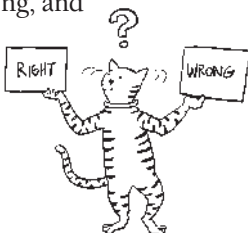
Worth quoting

"If you knew how much work went into it, you wouldn't call it genius."
Michelangelo

Just for fun

Q: Call me right, and you'll be wrong. But call me wrong, and you'll be right. What am I?

A: The word *wrong*.



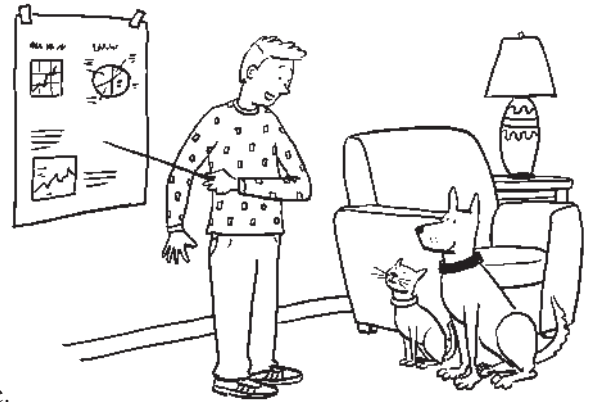
Study strategies that work

Help your teenager get the most from his study sessions—and do his best on quizzes and tests—with these smart ideas.

Condense notes

Flipping through piles of notes and pages of highlighted text wastes your teen's time and keeps him from focusing on what's important. Instead, encourage him to comb through each set of notes for key points and turn them into a study guide.

Tip: Summarizing the information in his own words, instead of copying it from notes or a textbook, will help him understand it better.



Speak up

Saying something out loud is one of the best ways to remember it. Your child could record himself explaining the different types of chemical bonds or singing his summary of major moments in the Reconstruction era to a familiar tune. Challenge him to come up with his own clever ideas for studying.

Be the teacher

Teaching someone else is another proven way to understand a subject. Suggest that your high schooler form a study group where members take turns explaining concepts. He could also use a whiteboard or poster board and pretend to teach someone (stuffed animals or the family dog will do!)—or teach you. Maybe he'll make an outline of a novel or show how to find the slope of a tangent. 👍

Take initiative

Teens with initiative get things done without being reminded and find their own ways to stretch themselves. Share these ideas to help your high schooler develop this trait.

Notice what needs to be done.

Encourage your teen to step up on her own instead of waiting to be asked or told. If she mentions that the trash can is full, try saying, "Thanks. I trust you to handle it."

Go beyond "good enough." Suggest that your high schooler think about what she could do to make an assignment a bit better. Maybe she can find a primary-source document online for her history paper rather than just using material from her textbook. 👍



Social media and self-esteem

From counting “likes” to comparing lives, social media can make teens feel like they don’t measure up. Here’s how to help your high schooler use her online accounts in a healthier way.

Put feedback in perspective. Writing something unkind just to rack up retweets or posting a “prettier” picture to get more “likes” puts other people’s judgment above her own. Ask your child to think about her followers. If she needed to make an important decision, would she trust them for advice? If not, why would she judge herself by how they react to her posts?

Do a reality check. Have your teen notice things throughout the day that she might post a



photo of (her perfect omelet) and things she wouldn’t want others to see (the toast she burned). Point out that others have plenty of each kind of these moments, too.

Step back and assess.

For one week, suggest that your high schooler keep track of how she feels (happy, stressed, angry, amused, jealous) each time she checks social media. If she doesn’t like the results, ask her what she could do differently (turn off notifications, close certain accounts). 👍



Every class counts

Attendance is one of the strongest indicators of school success. The more classes your high schooler attends, the better he’s likely to do. Head off excuses with these ideas.

“I need a mental health day.”

If you hear this a lot from your teen, talk about what’s really going on. He might be behind on his assignments or having difficulty with a classmate. Try to work with him to address his concerns. Help him come up with a homework plan, for example, or make an appointment with his school counselor.



Parent to Parent

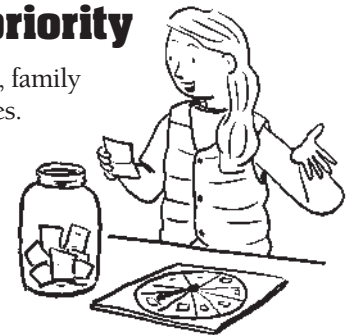
Family meals: A priority

As my daughter Lydia got older, family dinners often got squeezed out by busy schedules. But when I read that teenagers who regularly eat with their families are less likely to drink, smoke, or use drugs, I made eating together a priority again.

To keep things fun and help with planning, we made a “theme jar.” Everyone wrote ideas for interesting dinners on slips of paper, and we pull one out each week. Our favorite idea so far was a “safari supper,” with appetizers in the living room, the main course at the table, and dessert in the yard.

I also asked Lydia to come up with conversation starters. She taped paper over a game spinner and wrote questions on it like “If you opened a restaurant, what would it be called, and what would be on the menu?” We spin it during dinner and share our answers.

It’s still not always easy to get everyone to the table, but we’re having some good conversations with Lydia and it’s helping us stay connected. 👍



“Online classes don’t matter.”

They certainly do! At this point in the year, your child may need a change of scenery like he’d have if he were switching classes in school. If possible, let him find another quiet spot in the house (living room, kitchen table) where he could do a class or two each day. He should make sure to keep supplies he needs with him as he changes rooms. 👍

Q&A Yes, grammar is still important

Q My son’s texts and emails are filled with grammatical mistakes. The other day, he wrote, “Whose picking me up mom.” How can I convince him that proper grammar matters in any kind of writing?

A Maybe he’s heard that we shouldn’t judge a book by its cover. But people will judge him by how he presents himself in writing. And those people could be college admissions

officers or potential employers who might wonder about his qualifications. If your son argues that posts and emails are meant to be casual, point out that there’s a difference between casual (swapping in “Hello” for “Dear sir”) and sloppy (“My teacher’s say good stuff re me”).

Poor grammar can also distract from his message. And sometimes, it can confuse the message entirely: “Let’s eat Grandpa!” instead of “Let’s eat, Grandpa!” (Poor Grandpa!) Challenge your son to find other funny examples. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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