How is College Different from High School?

**INSTRUCTORS:**

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| High School Teachers | College Professors |
| May expect to be referred to as Mr. or Mrs. | May expect to be referred to as Doctor or Professor, and usually never Mr. or Mrs. |
| Teachers check your completed homework. | Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests. |
| Teachers remind you of your incomplete work. | Professors may not remind you of incomplete work. |
| Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance. | Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance. |
| Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class. | Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours or contact them to schedule a specific appointment time. |
| Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students. | Professors have been trained as experts in their particular area of research. |
| Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent. | Professors expect you to initiate getting the information you missed when absent, including getting notes from classmates. |
| Teachers present materials to help you understand the material in the textbook. | Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or, they may expect you to relate the classes to the textbook readings. |
| Teachers often write information on the board to be copied into your notes. | Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Taking good notes is a must! |
| Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process. | Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics. |
| Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates. | Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus, which spells out exactly what is expected of you and how you will be graded. Due dates may only be announced once by the professor. |

**PERSONAL FREEDOMS:**

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| High School | College |
| M*andatory* and *free* (unless chose other options). | *Voluntary* and *expensive.* |
| Others usually structure your time. | You manage your own time. |
| Need permission to participate in extracurriculars. | You decide whether to participate in extracurriculars. |
| You need money for special purchases or events. | You need money to meet basic necessities. |
| You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities. | You will be faced with a number of moral and ethical decisions you have not had to face previously. *You* must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. |
| Guiding principle: You will usually be told what your responsibilities are and corrected if you behavior is out of line. | Guiding principle: You are old enough to take responsibility for what you do and don’t do as well as for the consequences of your decisions. |

**CLASSES:**

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| High School | College |
| Each day you proceed from one class directly to another. | You will likely have time between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening. |
| Spend 6 hours each day – 30 hours a week – in class. | Spend 12 to 16 hours each week in class. |
| The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some do not. | The academic year is divided into two separate 15–week semesters. |
| Most of your classes are arranged for you. | You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your academic adviser. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are. |
| Teachers carefully monitor class attendance. | Professors may not formally take attendance, but they still likely know whether or not you attended. |
| You are provided with textbooks at little or no expense. | You need to budget funds for textbooks, which will usually cost more than $200 each semester. |
| You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate. | Graduations requirements are complex, and may differ by major and year. You are expected to know the requirements that apply to you. |

**STUDYING:**

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| High School | College |
| You may study outside of class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation. | You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour of class. It may not be possible to cram adequately for a test. |
| You often need to read or hear presentations only once to learn all you need to lean about them | You need to review the textbook and your class notes regularly. |
| You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class | You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing, which may not be directly addressed in class. |
| Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you needed to learn from assigned readings. | Guiding principle: It’s up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you’ve already done so. |

**TESTS:**

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| High School | College |
| Frequent and cover small amounts of material. | Usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the professor, need to organize the material to prepare for the test. A course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester. |
| Makeup tests are often available. | Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them. |
| Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events. | Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities. |
| Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts. | Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions. |
| May be able to perform adequately with little to no studying prior to the test. | Will likely need to study substantially to adequately perform on the test. May need to begin studying several days in advance of the test. |
| Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve. | Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you’ve learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems. |

**GRADES:**

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| High School | College |
| Grades are given for most assigned work. | Grades may not be provided for all assigned work. |
| Consistently good homework grades may help raise your overall grade when test grades are low. | Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade. |
| Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade. | Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course. |
| Initial test grade, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade. | Watch out for your first tests. These may be ‘wake-up calls’ to let you know what is expected – but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grade. If you received notice of low grades on either an Early-Term or a Mid-Term Progress Report, see your academic advisor and course professor. |
| You will graduate as long as you have passed all required coursed with a grade of D or higher. | You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the college standard – typically a 2.0 or C. |
| Guiding principle: “Effort counts.” Courses are usually structured to reward a “good-faith effort.” | Guiding principle: “Results count.” Though “good-faith effort” is important in regard to the professor’s willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not *substitute* for results in the grading process. |