

December 2008

High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

Short Clips

Write it right

Good grammar matters in all classes—not just English. Remind your teen to go over assignments before turning them in. Have her check for slang, incomplete sentences, inconsistent tenses, and incorrect punctuation. She can lose valuable points for careless errors.

Laugh for health

Laughing together can help your family relieve stress and share fun times. Look for humor in everyday situations. At dinner, tell funny things that happened that day. Check out joke books from the library, collect funny clips from magazines, and forward e-mail jokes to your teen.

Restock supplies

With the new year coming, encourage your high schooler to take an inventory of school supplies. Is he low on folders, binders, paper, pens, or pencils? Suggest that he make a list and pick up the items. He'll have what he needs for class and homework, and you won't hear emergency requests late at night.

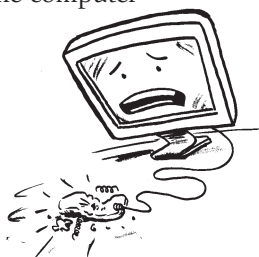
Worth quoting

"Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."
Martin Luther King Jr.

Just for fun

Q: Why did the computer squeak?

A: Because someone stepped on its mouse!



Teens who say "no"

Most kids are exposed to drugs at some point during their teen years. The good news is, many say "no." You can encourage your child to be one of them by talking to him about drugs, keeping an eye on him, and helping him stay active and happy.

What to say

■ Keep the lines of communication open. You might share a news article about drugs or spark a conversation while watching television or listening to the radio together. Then, talk about how your teen can avoid the pressure to try drugs. For instance, he shouldn't go to parties or get into a car with classmates who smoke marijuana or do other drugs.

■ Explain to your child why he's not allowed to try drugs: they're illegal and dangerous. Remind him that using other people's prescription drugs is unsafe, too. He might think his friend's ADHD medication will help him focus or stay awake. But it can raise his blood pressure and heart rate, and he could become addicted.

What to look for

■ Know the people your teen is hanging out with. Encourage him to participate in



supervised school, community, church, and athletic activities. Staying busy and having friends who avoid drugs are important lines of defense against using them.

■ Be on the watch for signs of drug use in your child. *Examples:* a loss of interest in favorite activities, spending a lot of time alone, sudden appetite changes, dropping grades, unexplained mood swings. If you observe these symptoms, call his school counselor or doctor for help. 👍

Stretch your brain

Games and puzzles that require logical thinking can keep your high schooler's mind sharp. Try these two ideas:

☑ Challenge her spatial and math thinking with puzzles like Tetris Cube or Rush Hour. Or play chess, Mastermind, or other strategy games. Think aloud to demonstrate tactics: "Red can't go here or here, so it must go there."

☑ Suggest that she try solving logic problems by using clues and the process of elimination. You could keep magazines such as *Dell Logic Puzzles* lying around the house and work on them as a family. Or find free games and puzzles at www.puzzles.com. 👍



The right college

Whatever grade your child is in, the time is right to be thinking about college. Help your high schooler make plans with this three-step strategy.

1. Learn what's out there. Have your teen schedule a meeting with her guidance counselor to discuss options. *Tip:* Join her at the meeting if possible. Go to the library to read college guides and check online sources (try www.college.gov). Suggest that she attend local college fairs and information sessions.



2. Take a closer look. Encourage your child to browse college Web sites for information on academic requirements and student life. She might create a chart with a row for each school and a column for each feature (size, cost, admission requirements). Have her request brochures and catalogs from schools she's interested in.

3. Develop a list. Finally, your teenager can narrow down her choices. Encourage her to come up with a list

that includes a few "safety" schools (those she should get into), "target" schools (ones with a 50/50 chance of being accepted), and "reach" schools (schools she likes but might be tough to get into). 👍



Writing with flair

Creative writing lets your teen express himself. Learning to write creatively will also help him do better on all kinds of writing assignments, from reports to essay questions. Share these suggestions.

Write away

Set a timer and go! Write about whatever comes into your mind for 15 minutes. Don't worry about making mistakes. Just let your creativity flow.



Make it personal

Try writing about something you've experienced (scoring a touchdown, babysitting). Soon, more topics may pop into your head. Maybe you'll end up with a story about being drafted by the NFL.

Experiment with styles

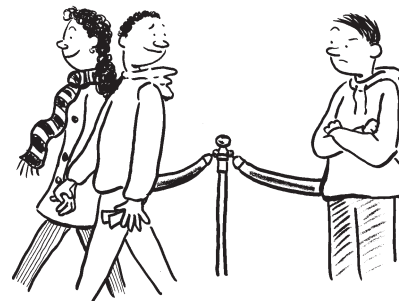
Different perspectives can turn a piece into something completely new. Rewrite a story as a poem, or switch the point of view from first to third person ("Jack couldn't believe it when his name was called" instead of "I couldn't believe it..."). 👍

Q & A Friendship matters

Q Now that my son Adam is dating, he and his best friend aren't hanging out anymore. How can I show him that friendships are still important?

A Friends often drift apart when one of them starts dating. Explain to your son that it's possible for him to date and still do things with his best friend, too. Remind Adam how much fun he and his friend always have when they play basketball or listen to music together.

Then, talk about ways your son can keep up his friendship. He might sit with his friend at lunch or make a point of getting together after school or on the weekend. Also, let Adam know he should respect plans he and his friend make—he shouldn't cancel their weekly workout if a girl calls for a date. 👍



Parent to Parent Smooth holidays

I love having my kids home during winter break. But between working and getting ready for the holidays, the days can get chaotic.

Last year, I decided to plan ahead. I made a dinner schedule, and everyone took turns cooking. We enjoyed some great family meals—my daughter even discovered she has a knack for making pizza.

I also helped the kids come up with a

homework plan so they wouldn't leave everything until New Year's Day like they did last year. They each worked for an hour a day while

I was at the office, and when I got home, they were ready to go out with friends or spend time with us.

Everything went much more smoothly than usual, and we even managed to decorate some cookies and attend a holiday concert. Now I'm going to start planning ahead for summer! 👍



OUR PURPOSE

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

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