

# High School YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips



### ▶ What's fair?

"It's not fair—Nicole has a midnight curfew!" Does your teen compare her rules to her friends' rules? Explain that fair rules take individual needs into account. For example, if you have to get up for work in the morning, you might want your child to come home before you go to bed.

### ▶ Learning with games

Board games are fun at any age. Encourage your teenager to play a game with you in the evenings, with children if he babysits, or with friends at coffee shops and the library. Board games can build skills such as strategic thinking (Othello, Mastermind), teamwork (Catch Phrase, Cranium), and vocabulary (Bananagrams, Boggle).

### ▶ No smoking

In the United States, 80 percent of smokers start before they're 18 years old. Share this statistic with your child to start a conversation about cigarettes. Ask if her friends smoke or if she has tried it. If you suspect she is smoking, ask her pediatrician or school nurse for advice on helping her quit. Or find ideas at <http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/smoking.html#>.

### ▶ Worth quoting

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." Theodore Roosevelt

### ▶ Just for fun

Q: What do history teachers talk about in meetings?

A: The good old days!



## Responsible me!

One of the best ways to turn your teen into a responsible adult is to gradually give him more responsibility—and to expect more from him. Try these ideas.

### Handle assignments.

When your child goes to college or gets a job, he'll be responsible for finishing projects on time. So be sure he's the one in charge of his school assignments now. Avoid nagging him about an upcoming deadline. Instead, give a simple reminder: "Your history report is due Monday. What are your plans for the weekend?"

**Plan lunch.** Meal planning is another skill your teen will need when he's on his own. He can start now by making sure he has enough money in his cafeteria account or by packing his lunch at home. If he's getting low on supplies (bread, jelly, apples), he should add them to the grocery list.



**Arrange rides.** Let your high schooler arrange rides to work and activities. If you share a family car, or if he isn't driving yet, he'll have to ask you for rides in advance. Tip: If he has his own car, have him review the maintenance schedule and keep track of when the car needs the oil changed, the brakes checked, or the tires rotated.

**Make appointments.** Help your teen learn to manage personal appointments. He can put numbers in his cell phone for his doctors, dentist, and barber. Explain how far in advance he should make routine appointments. If he needs to cancel an appointment, he can be responsible for that, too. 👍

## Powerful presentations

Your child has a big speech coming up, and she hopes to get a good grade. Suggest that she:

- Become familiar with her topic. She should feel confident discussing it without relying on her notes.
- Practice using technology. If your teenager is planning to include slides, music, or video clips, she can do a dress rehearsal at home.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Nervous presenters tend to talk quickly, so your teen should try to pace herself. Also, she needs to speak loudly enough for students in the back row to hear.
- Spot friendly audience members. Classmates who are smiling or nodding will help put your child at ease. 👍



# Short story secrets

Danielle is writing a short story for English class. She can turn a blank page into an interesting tale with techniques like these.

**Develop the characters.** Include details (appearance, mannerisms, personality) so readers feel as if they know each person.

**Define the plot.** Decide what problems the main characters will face. Explain how they overcome them.

**Portray the setting.** Use descriptive words that help readers picture where the story takes place. (“Sunlight flooded the green meadow.”)



**Write meaningful dialogue.**

Describe facial expressions and tone of voice to convey meaning when characters speak.

(“How can I trust him?” Mary yelled, her eyes fierce. “He hurt me once, and he’ll do it again.”)

**Use active-voice verbs.** Change passive-voice verbs like “is” and “was” to active ones. For

instance, “Thea was startled by the thunder,” could become, “The thunder startled Thea.”

**Tighten sentences.** Cut words that don’t influence meaning, such as “very.” Example: “He saw a dark shadow” instead of, “He saw a very dark shadow.”

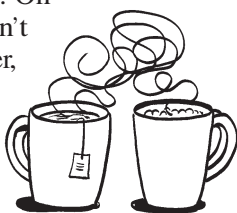


## Stay connected

In the morning, you head to work and your teen goes to school. In the evening, you run errands while he has volleyball practice. Busy schedules can cause parents and teens to drift apart. Try these ideas for staying connected:

- Find something you have in common. You might let your child choose the music when you’re in the car. Read a book he enjoyed and discuss it.

- Chat over treats. On days when you can’t eat dinner together, share fruit smoothies, hot chocolate, or tea before bedtime.



- Help others. For example, buy groceries for a sick relative when you and your teen are on the way home from band practice.

- Take a class together. Check community centers and places of worship for free or inexpensive courses (ceramics, weight training) that you both would enjoy.

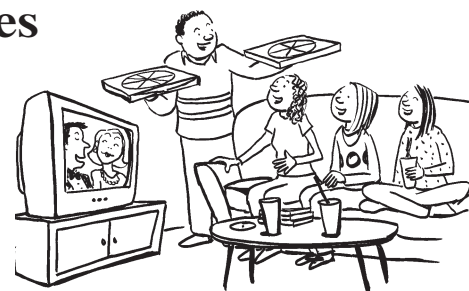
## Q & A Better grades

**Q** I’m not expecting good grades on my daughter’s report card. How can I motivate her to do better next quarter?

**A** It can be difficult for teens to understand how important it is to get good grades. They don’t always realize how the grades they get now can affect their future.

Start by talking with your daughter. If she wants to go to college, ask her what grades she needs to be accepted. Is she planning on getting a job when she graduates? Explain that doing her best while she’s in school is a habit that will carry over into the workplace—and look good on her resume.

When your teen improves in a subject, notice her efforts. You might even let her celebrate by inviting a few friends over for pizza and a movie. Your recognition and praise will encourage her to keep trying harder.



## Parent to Parent Making financial decisions

My son Charles makes money doing odd jobs for neighbors. Every time he gets paid, he wants to buy the first thing he sees. Later he wishes he had the money for something else.

I decided to explain my spending choices to him. For example, when I see a sweater I like, I think about whether I need another one. If I have enough, a new one is a want, not a need. I also

consider whether I need the money for other things, like a dishwasher repair.

Not long after our conversation, Charles saw a new skateboard that he wanted. I asked if he really needed it, and he agreed his old one is fine. We discussed what else he might use the money for. In the end, he decided to keep saving toward a down payment on a car—something he will definitely need in the future.



**O U R P U R P O S E**

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

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