

October 2008

# High School **1** YEARS

Working together for lifelong success

## Short Clips



### Your secret's safe

To encourage your teen to confide in you, let her know you can keep a secret. It may be tempting to discuss her latest crush or her SAT scores with relatives or neighbors, but show she can trust you by staying quiet.

### Stage fright

Help your high schooler conquer public-speaking jitters. Suggest that he practice his report or speech at home in front of you or a mirror. On presentation day, he can reduce nerves by arriving early, testing equipment (microphone, computer), breathing deeply, and smiling!

### Budget priorities

Smart spenders know the difference between *needs* (warm coat, lunch money) and *wants* (new purse, dinner out). Remind your teen to buy what she needs first. If she has money left over, she can save for items she'd like to have.

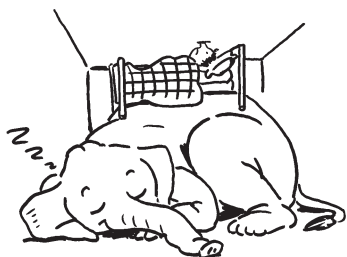
### Worth quoting

"Every artist was first an amateur."  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

### Just for fun

**Q:** How do you know if an elephant is under your bed?

**A:** Your nose touches the ceiling.



## Homework habits

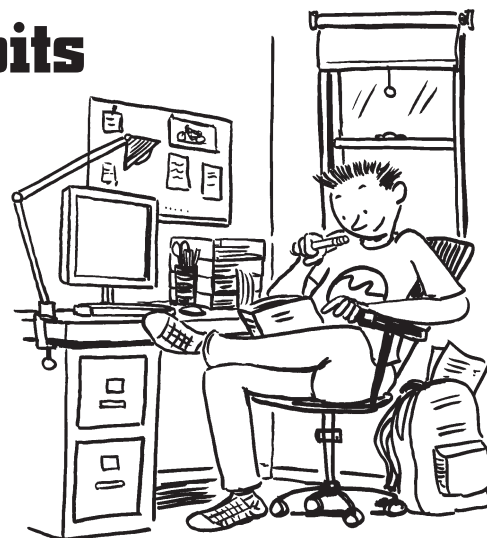
Keeping up with homework does more than raise grades—it has lifelong benefits. For instance, a strong work ethic will pay off when your teen is living by himself and holding down a job. These tips will help him do his homework on time and on his own.

### Get organized

Encourage your high schooler to set up a "home office" where he can spread out books and papers and avoid distractions like siblings and television. He might want to work near a computer so he can type reports or look up information online. *Tip:* Remind him that completed assignments should always go straight into his backpack so he can turn them in when they're due.

### Stay alert

People focus better when they're well rested and well fed. Teach your teenager to pay attention to his needs and recharge with short breaks or healthy snacks. Then, he'll be less likely to give up or do sloppy work. *Tip:* Suggest that he look over an important assignment



in the morning—he may catch mistakes when he's refreshed.

### Be independent

Rather than always turning to you with a question, your child can make a note and continue working. He might figure out the answer—or where to find it—without your help. In the process, he'll learn to rely on himself, and he'll build self-confidence. *Tip:* If he's still stumped, ask what strategies he has tried, or suggest a new approach (look up a word, revise a theory). 👍

## Working out, my way

A successful exercise program requires two things: getting started and sticking with it! Raise an active teen with these ideas:

**1.** Spark her interest by suggesting an unusual activity like rock climbing or tap dancing. Or encourage her to sign up for an aerobics class or a volleyball league with a friend. Fitness can be more fun for teens if it's shared.

**2.** Help your high schooler stay motivated. She might train for an upcoming event (5K run, soccer tournament). When she realizes how much she's enjoying the workout—and how great she feels—staying fit will become routine. 👍



# Respect: See it, show it

Learning about respect may be as easy for your teen as keeping her eyes open. Help her by pointing out examples and encouraging her to learn from them. She'll get along better with others and handle peer pressure more easily.

**▲ Respect your teen.** Show her that even disagreements can be respectful. Say, "I like your hair the way it is, but if you really want to dye it, we can talk about it."

**▲ Insist that she respect you by following household rules.** For example, taking the car without asking is disrespectful because it means she didn't consider whether you might need it.

**▲ Show respect for others.** Let your high schooler hear you talking nicely to others, in person or on the phone, and respecting their opinions.



**▲ Encourage self-respect.** Tell your child that friends will admire her if she stands up for what's right. Remind her how good she felt, for example, when she refused to make fun of a classmate.

**▲ Point out your teen's respectful behavior.** Be specific: "I know you disagreed with the grade you got. But your e-mail to your teacher was respectful. I'm proud of you." 👍

## Q & A Thinking it through

**Q** I keep hearing the term "critical thinking." What does it mean, and why is it important?

**A** Students who can think critically know how to weigh information carefully and use what they learn to solve problems and make decisions.



Use everyday situations to teach critical thinking. Does your teen want a better cell phone? Have him collect brochures from several companies. Show him how a marketing claim like "Get a free phone!" may be misleading if the provider's monthly fee is higher.

A child who can think critically will probably realize that paying more up front can actually save money. In the end, he may get a nicer phone—and a new set of thinking skills! 👍

## Parent to Parent Model citizen

"I wish I were old enough to vote!" my daughter Deborah said when my husband and I were discussing the upcoming elections. I told her that even though she isn't 18 yet, she can still take part in the political process.

We started reading newspaper reports and watching television debates to learn about each candidate's ideas. We also looked at whether they had followed through on their promises in the past. And we compared their platforms on issues that mattered to Deborah, like protecting open space.

One of our local candidates had pledged to set aside more land for wildlife sanctuaries. With our encouragement, Deborah volunteered to work for him. She may be too young to vote now, but she's learning how to be an involved citizen in the future. 👍



## Surf to learn

Teenagers use the Internet to listen to music, chat, and play games. Show your child how to use the computer for learning, too.

**Reading and writing.** Suggest that he search for bands' Web sites to find their biographies and lyrics to their songs. Your child will build reading comprehension skills as he thinks about what the songs say and what may have inspired the artists to write them.



**Foreign language.** Your teen can brush up on French conversation at [www.french-chat.com](http://www.french-chat.com), find a foreign-language pen pal at [www.mylanguageexchange.com](http://www.mylanguageexchange.com), or search [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) for videos in a language he's learning.

**Math.** Logic problems are a fun way to practice arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. Your high schooler is sure to get hooked on [www.puzzles.com](http://www.puzzles.com) or [www.puzzlersparadise.com](http://www.puzzlersparadise.com). Try joining him at the computer to work on a brainteaser together! 👍

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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