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High School Really is Different

In order for you to make a successful transition from middle school to high school, it is essential that you understand HIGH SCHOOL IS DIFFERENT. The following are some of the changes that you may experience:

- You enter high school with a clean slate. Your academic success and involvement in co-curricular activities and athletics will help determine the options available to you later in life.
- Every class counts. You earn credits toward your diploma and complete graduation requirements every time you pass a course. Semester courses are worth 2.5 credits; full year courses are worth 5.0 credits. You need a total of credits, and credits distributed across the curriculum, along with passing MCAS to be eligible to receive a diploma.
- You have many new choices to make (e.g. course selections, activities, sports, part-time jobs, etc.). Every new activity makes your life a little more hectic; you must learn to budget your time and be organized.
- You experience social changes and pressures. You must think and work for yourself. You are older. More is expected of you.
- You are expected to take full responsibility for your work, your actions, and your future.
- You take a wider variety of courses, which you select, with many different students. You even take some classes with students from other grades.
- At times you will work in groups, but may be given the freedom to select team members. It is not always best to choose friends.
- You will have more teachers and experience a wider variety of teaching styles.
- Homework is very important and you are expected to complete it.
- You need to be organized. You are expected to keep both assignment and subject notebooks. A daily planner not just a good idea, it's a great idea.
- Note taking is crucial. Notes might not be written on the board for you to copy, and you will need to develop skills to take notes from lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings.
- You will enhance your computer skills and broaden your use of technology.
- It is crunch time! You are preparing for life after high school. You will develop life goals and basic skills you will need to succeed.

Classroom Tips for Success

You will generally be scheduled for 7 classes per semester. Some of your classes will be semester classes; other classes will be full year. However, you will only have 5 classes per day. This structure is often called a “7 drop 2” schedule. Each class will meet for 65 minutes, with the exception of the lunch block, which is approximately 110 minutes long. We schedule 4 lunches per day. Which lunch you take depends upon the location of your 4th block class. For example: First floor – 1st lunch; Second floor – 2nd lunch; Third floor – 3rd lunch; PE, Music, Wood Technology, Foods, Study Hall – 4th lunch.

This schedule also rotates. This means that you will not always meet your classes at *the same time* on the day they are slated to meet. It may seem confusing at first, but eventually you'll fall into the routine. Keep your printed schedule with you for the first few weeks of school. The daily schedule is posted in the lobby each day. Additionally, the class rotation is read daily at the

beginning of morning announcements. A printed monthly schedule with rotations is posted in all classrooms and offices. The schedule with rotations is printed in the student handbook that you will receive on the first day of school.

Longer class periods allow teachers to be creative with class time; plan team activities; and vary assessment practices. Keeping up with assignments can be a challenge. You will have shorter assignments to complete when the class meets daily. When the next day's class period is "dropped", you might have a longer assignment to complete. Being organized and writing assignments down can help you map out a strategy so that all of your assignments will be completed on their due dates. Teachers will provide a daily agenda and identify both long and short-term assignment deadlines.

Teachers are available for extra help and will post their help session day in their classroom. Generally, all teachers are available throughout the day: at break, during lunch, and most often after school even if it is not their scheduled help session day. If you are lost and don't understand what is going on in a class, go see the teacher. He or she will help you to get back on track. The longer you wait to get help, the more lost you will become.

Tips for Classroom Success:

- Have a positive attitude.
- Get involved.
- Learn to adapt to different teachers.
- Be in school, on time, every day.
- Be prepared for each class. Bring all materials that you may need to class – do not expect to make a trip to your locker every class period. Time is provided between classes and at break to make any necessary changes of books, etc.
- Check the agenda and assignment board in each class regularly
- Participate in class. Ask questions.
- Don't be afraid to try...if you don't you'll never succeed.
- Treat others with courtesy and respect.
- Get help whenever you need it.

"7 drop 2" Schedule – A schedule for success.

To gain the advantages of this format, you have responsibilities. Missing or being tardy to class creates a big problem. Missing a class means missing a lot of material. If you miss a class, contact the teacher or a classmate as soon as possible to get your assignments. This allows you to catch up before you fall behind.

Note taking is another essential part of studying. In order to remember what you did in class, you have to take good notes. If note taking is something that is difficult for you, speak to your teacher and let him/her help. Most importantly, you must learn to be responsible for yourself and take the initiative. You will not see each teacher every day to be reminded of what is due. Keep an organized assignment book and everything will be fine!!

Tips for the "7 drop 2" Schedule:

- If you miss a class, contact your teacher on the first day that you are back.
- Take good class notes.
- If you are having difficulty in a class, contact the teacher as soon as possible.

- Learn to be responsible for yourself.
- Many teachers will give you their e-mail address. Contact them if you need help.
- Use the time provided during classes to visit your locker, etc. Class time is class time!

Team Thinking

The schedule allows you to do many group activities in class. Group activities are great experiences because they allow you to discuss the material with other students and get their viewpoints. In school, it is important that you participate in the group activities whenever possible. This is a great time to have some fun and learn the material. Group activities also help you learn to work with people who you may not otherwise talk to or get along with. In this case, you must act responsible and concentrate on the task at hand. Finally, group skills are great training for the real world!

Tips for Group Activities:

- Participate in-group activities. The more you participate, the more you will learn.
- Ask questions.
- Do not let one person dominate the group. Step up and be heard and allow others to be heard, too.
- Keep personalities out of the group. You do not have to be friends with every member of the group but you do have to work as a team in order to be successful.
- Your positive involvement makes the class time enjoyable.
- Respect the input of your peers. Listen and learn from others.
- Take notes.
- Appointment a team scribe; spokesperson.

Listening Skills

Listening is very important in a classroom setting. You must understand what is being asked of you before you begin a task. If directions are not clear, ask for clarification from your teacher. Also, it is important that you do not distract others who are trying to listen.



Tips for Listening:

- By being a respectful listener, you will learn from others.
- If you do not understand what you have heard, ask a question.
- Look while you listen. Focus on the individual speaking.
- Take notes.

Speaking Skills

There's more to learning than just listening. You should participate in discussions about the material, and ask questions about what you don't understand. Before you speak, it's important that you think about what you want to say. Most teachers will ask you to raise your hand. Speak clearly and slowly so that everyone can hear what you're saying.

Tips for Class Discussion:

- Raise your hand.
- Speak loud enough for the whole class to hear.
- Show respect. Don't interrupt someone while they are speaking.
- Be respectful of others' opinions and beliefs.
- Prepare an outline if it is a long presentation.
- Focus on your audience. Make eye contact whenever possible
- Discard any gum, candy, etc., before you begin to speak.
- Watch your posture. Stand up straight – refrain from moving about while speaking.

You will also be given assignments that involve preparing speeches and giving oral presentations. Create an outline of what you are going to say and then practice, practice, practice! Give your speech or presentation to a family member, or practice in front of the mirror.

Tips for Prepared Speeches or Oral Presentations:

- Practice your speech.
- Have notes. Note cards are best. Note cards are for reference only – not to be used as a textbook.
- Try to relax before the presentation. Take a deep breath before you begin.
- Make eye contact with your listeners so they feel included.
- Emphasize key points by saying them more than once.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Do not read your speech. You read faster than you talk, and your audience may miss things if you read too fast.
- Do not make a lot of hand gestures. They distract the listener.
- Discard any gum, candy, etc., before you begin.
- End with a positive comment. A “thank you” is always a good technique.

How Do I Take Good Notes?

Notetaking is not an easy task to master. The best way to improve is to practice. Taking notes while listening to someone speak or while reading helps you focus on the lesson and helps you remember important details. Taking notes does not mean writing everything that is said or everything that you have read. Good notetaking involves more listening or reading than writing (80% listening/reading vs. 20% writing). You must understand what you're writing before you write it. If you do, you will only have to write key points, and you will understand what they mean.



Here are some

helpful hints for note taking:

- Start by placing a date on your note taking for each class for each day.
- Try to use the same notebook for each class – organize your notes.
- Learn to recognize important information. Watch for signals of importance: always write definitions and listings (“The four steps in this process...”; “The two causes are...”; “These four reasons are...”). Listen for important phrases like “And don’t forget...”; “This is an important reason...”; “The basic idea is...”; “You may see this on a test...”;

and “Star this item”. Watch for physical gestures (pointing, listing on fingers). Listen for emphasis in the teacher’s voice.

- Write the main ideas. Copy whatever the teacher presents visually or writes on the board. Underline unknown words and terms. Leave blanks for information missed. Raise your hand and ask questions about what you don’t understand.
- Don’t stop taking notes during discussion periods or toward the end of class. Often the most important ideas are presented during the last five minutes of class as teachers wrap up the lesson.
- Some information that your teacher will share with you will not be found in your textbook. If you don’t write it down, you will miss something vital. (This is why good attendance is very important.)
- Take notes in a form that helps you to remember the material. As you gain experience, you will develop your own style. Several useful notetaking techniques are located in Writers Inc., Sections 484 and 485.

Notetaking from a Written Source

The most effective notetaking technique is the Cornell Method or two-column system of notetaking. The two-column method allows you to separate the main ideas from the supporting details by writing the information in separate columns. This method can be used for any subject area and provides an excellent format from which to study. Taking notes from print is easier than taking notes from a lecture, so it is a good idea to learn this approach first.

Get the paper ready:

1. Draw a margin or fold the paper 2 1/2 inches from the left side
2. Put the date in the upper right hand corner
3. Put a title on the top line

The acronym **START** is a way to remember the steps involved in notetaking.

S - Survey the entire reading assignment by reading title, subtitles, captions, charts and bold print and looking at the pictures

T - Turn headings into questions and write them in the left hand column

A - Read to answer the questions and write the answer in the wide column next to the question.

R - Recite to review the questions and answers.

T - Test yourself by covering up the answers.

More Tips for Note taking from a Written Source:

Use pen when taking notes (for easier reading and less smudging).

Use only one side of the paper and skip lines between main ideas. You may want to add more information later.

Use abbreviations to save time.

= Same or equal

> Greater Than

< Less Than

~ Approximately

→ Resulting in

w/in With in

↓↑

Increasing, Decreasing

b/4 Before

b/c Because

w/o Without

e.g. for example (err go)

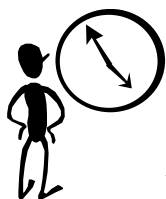
Note taking from an Oral Source

Taking notes while someone is speaking is more difficult than taking notes while you are reading because you can't control the rate of the speaker. It is a skill that requires practice and will improve every time you do it. Taking notes will be helpful for two reasons: you will stay more focused on the speaker, and you will have something to study after the class is over.

Use the same format on the paper as for note taking from a written source. During the lecture, you should take notes in the wide column. You should label the main ideas in the left column *after* the details are recorded.

Tips for Note taking from an Oral Source:

- Be ready when class begins with notebook open, margin drawn, and paper dated.
- While the speaker is talking, ask yourself, "What is the main idea? What details explain it?"
- Don't write down every word the speaker says. Use abbreviations and short phrases.
- If there is something you don't understand, put a question mark in the left margin and wait for a chance for an explanation.
- Keep notes together in chronological order from day to day.
- Use highlighters or underlining to emphasize important ideas.
- Study from your notes for tests and quizzes by covering up the right column of notes and asking yourself the questions in the left column. To recall main ideas, read the details on the right covering up the main idea questions on the left.
- Go over your notes as soon as possible.
- Review, edit, or rewrite your notes within 24 hours.
- Get classroom notes if you are absent.
- Make sure you bring appropriate materials to class.



Time Management and Organization

There will be sports, activities, and class events competing for your time and attention at Northbridge High School. It is essential that you develop strong organizational and time management skills to help you keep your life in balance and to assure your academic success.

Goal Setting

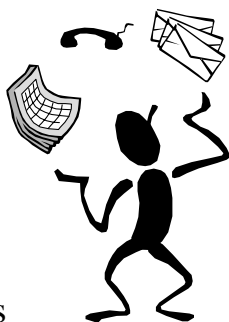
In order to achieve what you want in life, you must set goals. Goals may be short term or long term (Short term: finish homework by 9:00 p.m.; Long term: save \$1,500 for college expenses). One effective method for goal setting is the **SMART** way.

S – Specific	Be detailed. Stay away from vague and confusing goals.	I want to buy a new, mountain bike.
M- Measurable	Give yourself a timeline. When do you want to achieve it?	My goal is to buy a bike 6 months from today.
A- Action-Oriented	What will you do? How are you going to get there?	I'll need \$75 a month.
R- Realistic	Check your goal. Is it doable?	How much do I earn? Is \$75 a month a realistic amount?
T- Timely	Give yourself enough time...but not too much.	Six months will give me \$450, enough for a quality bike.

Responsibility

This is *your* life. Take responsibility for it. Set priorities. At this age, school is your top priority – it will help define your pathway for the rest of your life. Set your goals high and work to achieve them. Dream!

- ✓ You have the challenge of balancing your active schedule. Athletics, extracurricular activities, social activities, and work have their special place as well, but not at the expense of your grades.
- ✓ Bring the correct materials to class (pens, notebook, textbook, calculator, etc.) Know the teacher's expectations about what you need to bring to class each day.
- ✓ Take responsibility for what you do and what you say. Only you are responsible for your actions.
- ✓ You are expected to treat others with respect at all times. It is not a choice; it is not a right to be disrespectful.
- ✓ You play a part in keeping our building safe, clean and creating a positive school environment.



Organizational Skills

You can take positive steps towards getting organized for your classes. A day planner or an agenda book that has daily, weekly, and monthly calendars can be used as:

An assignment notebook - Write your homework down when it is given and estimate how long the assignment will take you to complete. Faithfully recording the assignments every day will help you to complete them on time and with accuracy.

An organizational calendar or planner - Using your priority “to do” list will help manage your time (i.e. homework, sports, work, socializing, home responsibilities).

A daily to-do list - You can make a list of things to get done every night, so that you’ll be prepared for school in the morning without rushing. Your list might include packing your backpack (and making sure you have all of the books and homework for the classes you have the next day), making a lunch, and laying out your clothes.

Here is an example of a daily calendar:

October 2004

S	Mon 1	Tues 2	Wed 3	Thurs 4	Fri 5	Sat 6
	Practice 2:30-4 English: read pg. 33-52 Math: pg. 125 #1-20 Last Day to buy dance tickets!	Game Away: Uxbridge History: Study for quiz on Thursday Biology lab report Thursday	Practice 2:30-4 English: Vocab quiz Friday, read pg. 54-76 Math: Review Sheet for test due next Tuesday	Practice 2:30-4 History: Quiz Today Biology: lab report due! History: chapter 8, section 1, answer critical thinking question sheet	Game Home: Grafton Homecoming Dance 6:30- 10:30 English: Vocab Quiz Today Math: study for test on Tuesday	Homecoming Day Set-up 9am Work 3:30- 6:30

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the learning process. In high school, you should expect homework on a daily basis in all courses.

Benefits of homework

Practice an idea or topic introduced in class.

- Help you understand the material.
- Respond to something discussed in class.
- Read, research, or study something that will be discussed at a later time. (These non-written assignments should be considered as important as written ones.)
- Recall previous material and place lecture in context.
- Prepare for the next class meeting.

Know the homework policy for every class

- How and when is the assignment usually given? It is given orally and written on the board. All teachers post short and long term assignments.
- Is homework accepted late? Are you allowed to finish a late assignment and still get credit?
- If classwork is not completed, are you expected to complete it for homework?

- How does your teacher grade and weight homework? Check your Course Expectation Sheet. Your teachers will give this information during the first week of classes.

Tips for Homework:

- Review your class notes, even if homework was not assigned.
- Set a regular time each day for homework.
- Estimate how long each assignment will take and plan your time accordingly. You might want to start with your most difficult assignment first, and then the rest will go more quickly.
- Have a “study buddy” for each class. Exchange phone numbers with your buddy so that if you are absent or have questions about the assignment, you can get help. It is your responsibility to get the assignment.
- Expect a “pop quiz.” By doing your homework regularly, you won’t be caught by surprise.
- Do your best on your homework; it is for your benefit.

Assessments

Your class course grade is comprised of many different parts. The course expectation sheet provided by your teacher at the start of the class will explain how your grade is determined. If you have a question on any grade given by a teacher, ask how the grade was calculated. All teachers will provide rubrics so you will know how to make the grade!

Remember – if you’ve been unsuccessful in the past in a particular subject, it’s never too early to start again. Just follow some of the practices outlined in this guide and you will be on your way to a new day! We believe that “together, we can accomplish any task.”

Studying for Tests, etc.

Test taking is a skill that can be improved through practice and preparation. Nothing is more helpful or important than attending class regularly, participating in class activities, and completing homework assignments, asking questions and getting help. Also, creating a good study area, knowing when to study, having study buddies, creating memory aids, and relieving test anxiety are all important.

Study area:

- Create a study center to be used daily.
- Study in a quiet place with proper lighting and ventilation.
- Eliminate distractions.
- Collect all materials before beginning.
- Find a large enough working surface to have all your materials in one place.
- Complete one task before beginning another.



When to study:

Every student has his or her own prime time and downtime. What are yours? Plan your studying (especially for your hardest subjects) during your prime time.



Study “buddies”:

Form a study group with some of your friends or classmates who are studying for the same test. Study groups may develop a better understanding and can motivate each other to study more effectively.

When others depend on you, don’t let them down.

Memory aids:

1. Review, review, review! Research shows that only 20% of material we hear and read is retained after two weeks.
2. Make the content relevant. Take a few minutes at the beginning or end of a lesson to connect the material to your personal life.
3. Chunk the information into meaningful groups or categories.
4. Visualize what you are learning. Sometimes silly pictures can aid in your memory of a word or idea.
5. Space out learning over a period of time and begin each review at a different place in your notebook and/or textbook. (Research tells us that we remember what we studied first and last better than the material in the middle.)
6. Make and use flash cards.
7. Use mnemonics.

Acronyms – make up a word using the first letters of the words to be remembered (i.e. M A I N to recall the major causes of the First World War: Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism, and Nationalism)

Acronymic Sentences – Make a sentence using the first letters of the words to be remembered (i.e. Kings Play Cards On Fairly Gorgeous Soft Velvet to remember the classifications for Biology: kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, species, variety)

Relieving grade anxiety:

- ✓ Be sure you understand the assessment format.
- ✓ Get at least 8 hours of sleep the night before a test.
- ✓ Eat a good meal prior to the test.
- ✓ Exercise to reduce tension and stimulate thinking.
- ✓ Be prepared. Make sure you have reviewed everything that will be on the test.
- ✓ Get to the test on time and relax. Hurrying causes tension.
- ✓ Keep a positive attitude. Tell yourself you studied as well as you could for the test.
- ✓ Scan the entire test before you start. Budget your time so you can answer all the questions.
- ✓ Read direction lines carefully.
- ✓ Do an easy part first. This builds confidence and relieves anxiety.
- ✓ Don’t pay attention to anyone else. Don’t panic if others are busy writing and you are not. Don’t panic if others finish before you do.



How To Do Well with Different Kinds of Tests

There are many different types of tests that you will have to take. Here are some helpful hints for each type:

All Tests:

D – Directions – Read them and then ask any questions if you are confused

E – Entire – Read over the entire test to check out how much you have to do
T – Time – Plan your time to spend the most time on the most important parts
E – Easiest – Answer easy questions first to build your confidence
R – Review – Read over every answer before passing in the test

Objective/Standardized Tests:

Multiple choice questions

- Underline key words in the question.
- Read the question with each possible answer.
- Draw a line through incorrect answers.
- Only change your answer if you are certain it is wrong.
- Answers with absolutes (for example, never, always, all) are usually incorrect.
- If two answers are opposites, one is likely the answer.

True/false questions

- Answers with absolutes (for example, *never*, *always*, *all*) are usually false.
- The longer a statement, the more likely it is false.
- In order for a statement to be true, everything in the statement must be true.

Fill-in questions

- Carefully read the whole sentence. Look for context clues before and after the blank. (For example, a/an, his/her.)
- Fill in the blank with specific, not general, information.
- After you fill in the blank, reread the sentence to see if it makes sense and is grammatically correct.

Matching questions

- Note whether the two columns contain an equal number of items or whether there are items left over after matching.
- Skim all items in both columns before you begin matching.
- Look at the first item in the left column. Then read all the choices in the right column, and pick the best match.

Open Ended Response and Essay:

Q – Question: Read the question for the direction word
U – Underline: Underline the key words in the question
O – Organize: Organize or outline your answer
T – Time: Plan your time wisely so you can completely answer the question
E – Evaluate: Go over your answer and correct all grammar, punctuation, & spelling

The first step in answering essay questions is to determine exactly what the direction word is asking. The following is a list of commonly used direction words:

Compare – to tell how two or more things are alike, as well as different
Contrast – to tell only how two or more things are different
Criticize – to point out both the positive and the negative sides
Define – to give a clear, concise meaning for a term
Describe – to present a detailed picture of something

Diagram or Illustrate – to show examples of something

Discuss – to talk about an issue from different points of view

Evaluate – to judge something; a statement of positive and/or negative worth supported by evidence

Explain – to give the reasons for something

Interpret – to explain, translate, or show a specific application of a fact or principle

Justify – to tell why a position or point of view is right; should stress the positive

List or Enumerate – to present information in some order

Relate – to show how two or more things are connected

Summarize – to state the major points about something

After the Test

- Keep tests and quizzes in an organized file. Save them to prepare for comprehensive exams. Your teacher may offer to keep them in a file for you.
- Notice what was done correctly!
- Learn from your mistakes. Did you fail to read directions correctly? Was something not studied? Was the answer messy or incomplete? Did you run out of time?
- Correct errors and make certain that you understand the correct answers.
- Teacher comments are especially useful. Ask your teacher questions when corrections are unclear.
- Make sure that right and wrong answers are counted accurately. Even teachers make mistakes.

Other Types of Assessment

In addition to standard tests and quizzes, teachers may choose to assign a project, or several different types of projects, to meet the different learning styles of the students in a class.

Some good examples of projects include:

- Research projects
- Journals
- Group projects
- Oral presentations
- Posters
- Interdisciplinary projects and portfolios

Be sure to review the guidelines and due dates for the project. Turn in all drafts on their designated due dates and be sure to use the corrected drafts to prepare your final report. Work cooperatively with team members and leave yourself plenty of time to complete each component. Ask questions before you start the project not on the date the project is due

Rubrics (grading system)

A rubric is a grading system used to evaluate your work, and reflects the depth of understanding for the assignment. For example, rubrics are used to assess open-response writing in the MCAS test. When a teacher uses a written rubric for an assignment you will receive a copy of the rubric before the assignment is due. You may be asked to create a rubric for a particular project. You may be given rubrics for essays, book reports, and other projects.



Sample school-wide rubrics used to establish guidelines grading are enclosed. If you have questions regarding the rubric, do not be afraid to ask.

Reading Comprehension

Being able to understand what you are reading is vital to understanding the meaning of your homework or class assignment. We recognize that reading can be a challenge for some students. If you feel that you are experiencing difficulty reading, i.e., focusing, comprehending material, seeing the material, speak to your teacher or guidance counselor as soon as possible. We can help. The following are some suggestions that will help you understand what you are reading.

Book Skills:

Your textbook is an important part of classroom learning and is a great place to begin an informational search. Reading your textbook is an integral part of your course. You must be thoroughly familiar with its format to be able to use all of the tools it provides for your understanding of the subject.

Tips for Effective Reading:

- ✓ Know your purpose before you read. If the purpose is unclear when the assignment is given, ask the teacher to clarify it before you begin the assignment.
- ✓ Read to remember.
- ✓ Read and copy the questions at the end of the chapter or section first, leaving space in between for your answers. If the text does not provide questions, make up your own by turning bold-faced headings and subheadings into questions that you can answer later.
- ✓ It is better to read for the knowledge of the information rather than for decoding skills (sounding out words one-by-one).
- ✓ Read for ideas when appropriate.
- ✓ Read the first and last sentence of each paragraph for main ideas and summary.
- ✓ Read in chunks. Most textbook chapters and units are divided into smaller sections. Read in smaller sections, not from beginning to end without stopping.
- ✓ Guess where/what the author is trying to tell you. It may make the reading more interesting!
- ✓ Read aloud, whenever possible. Try to visualize while you read.
- ✓ Take notes while you read.

When the going gets tough:

Many times the material that you have read will not make sense the first time you read it. There will be new words and phrases that might not make sense right away...don't get frustrated!!

The following are some helpful tips to help you better understand what you have read:

Re-read the material. Build and understand the reading assignment by fully comprehending one paragraph before moving on to the next. Summarize each paragraph by writing or reciting.

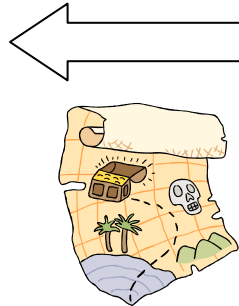
Change your surroundings. Try moving around and become physically active, turning off (or on) soft music, or sitting in front of a mirror and reading aloud.

Form a study group in which you can discuss the material with a family member or with friends. Teach the material to someone else -- Pretend you are a teacher.

Decrease your reading rate. If you read too fast, you may not digest all of the information the first time. Putting the book down for a short time (30 minutes) and then returning to it helps as well.

Ask the teacher for help. One way to keep track of your questions is to fold a piece of notebook paper into a bookmark, and write out the page number and a fraction for where the information is located on the page (see example).

Page 23, $\frac{1}{2}$ of page
Page 31, $\frac{3}{4}$ of page
Page 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ of page



By using this format, you will be able to find the passage you had trouble with, without having to write it out completely. Believe it or not, this will **SAVE** time and allow you to participate in class!

Locating Information:

The best place to start in your search is your textbook. The textbook may make references to other sources, and provides both general and specific information on a variety of topics. There are two types of sources: primary and secondary. Primary sources are the best ones to use because they contain the most accurate and detailed information. Secondary sources are great for finding general information and direction for locating primary sources.

Primary sources include university and college websites, original and/or authentic copies of documents, journals, and diaries, in-depth books (such as biographies and autobiographies), personal interviews, personal email responses, some television and movie documentaries, etc.

Secondary sources include textbooks, encyclopedias (including Encarta and other computer or other online encyclopedias), some magazine articles, dictionaries, atlases, etc.

Good places to locate secondary and primary sources:

- *School, local, and collegiate libraries.*
- *Bookstores.*
- *Internet.* BE CAREFUL of what you find and read on the Internet. Anyone can post information on the Internet, even if it has no factual or verifiable information. Reputable sources will have authors and dates listed somewhere in the text of the material.
- *Historical societies and museums.*

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

In every class, you will be expected to complete several writing assignments each quarter. Writing is one of the most effective ways of presenting information, communicating your thoughts, or expressing your opinions. Good writing takes practice, and is an essential lifelong skill.

Tips for Good Writing:

- Brainstorm ideas before beginning to write a paper
- Organize ideas, and narrow your topic choices
- Use graphic organizers or outlines



- Separate main ideas and information into introduction/body/conclusion
- Skip lines when writing a draft
- Make corrections on a hard copy
- Use spell and grammar check tools to correct drafts
- Read your work out loud. If a sentence sounds funny to you, it probably needs to be rewritten.
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!
- Have someone else proofread and make corrections on your draft.

Research Papers and Projects

Research papers and projects are very similar. Both are a collection of facts concerning a specific topic. In both forms, these facts are arranged in a logical order and presented in a specified format (such as a book review, oral presentation, visual display, research paper, etc.)

In many of your classes, you will be expected to complete a variety of projects and papers. Additionally, your English and Social Studies classes will require at least one research paper before the end of the school year. Your classroom teacher(s) will determine the process or method for projects. The steps you will use to complete any project will be similar to those you will use to complete the research paper(s) for English and Social Studies. The steps for successfully completing any research project are:

1. Brainstorm ideas and choose a topic
2. Ask/write topic questions
3. Complete preliminary research and gather data to answer topic questions
4. Organize information (formal or informal outlines, graphic organizers, etc.)
5. Insert appropriate evidence and cites (include accurate citation format)
6. Complete and include a works cited page

Some projects may have additional steps, and include some form of presentation requirement. Make sure to check with your teacher if you are unsure about any of the steps involved in completing a specific research project BEFORE the project is due! Make sure you have completed all requirements on the grading rubric.

References:

Using Writers Inc for research papers:

You have one of the best “how to” manuals to help you with your research paper. It is entitled *Writers Inc* (D.C. Heath, 1996). Seniors will use the companion textbook *Write for College* (D.C. Heath, 1997). You should always have one of these reference sources handy while preparing your paper. Take it with you when you go to class, to the library when you search for sources, and home with you when you write your paper. Your teacher will explain the research process, as outlined in *Writers Inc* (At Northbridge High School, the MLA format is used in writing research papers.). You will continually refer to its clearly written advice on research matters. This guide will focus your attention to certain key sections that you must read and use.

The John Collins Writing Program:

Northbridge School District currently utilizes the John Collins Writing Program to incorporate writing in all subject areas. At the high school level, we utilize all of the five types of writing:

1. Type One Writing: brainstorming (coming up with as many ideas as you can in a short amount of time, with no right or wrong answers)
2. Type Two Writing: correct answers to specific and objective questions (these are often seen as parts of quizzes and/or tests)
3. Type Three Writing: self-edited writing, with corrections usually made on a single draft. Usually seen as an essay question on a test, or a short writing assignment. NOTE: In Type Three writing, whenever possible, it would be a good idea to complete more than one draft, and have someone else (a parent, friend, sibling) edit your work.
4. Type Four Writing: peer-edited writing, with at least two drafts.
5. Type Five Writing: publishable-quality writing (no mistakes in the final draft), with multiple drafts. The best example of this type of writing is a research paper.

Your classroom teacher will explain the format for your papers.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology can make learning fun, rewarding and challenging. Your teachers will integrate a wide variety of technological tools into your learning activities. You must respect and follow the technology use guidelines outlined by the school district. Take every opportunity to sharpen those skills that you already know, and make it a point to learn at least one new computer application each year.

A few last thoughts ... A famous man once said, “*Well begun is half done.*” Getting a good start to your high school career is important to your future. Being successful doesn’t just happen. You need a plan of attack. This guide gives you some helpful tips that can make the work seem easier. Try some of these suggested ideas. They work! You will be surprised how easy and rewarding learning can become. Being successful doesn’t always mean that you have to work harder; it means that you have to learn how to work smarter.

We know you will have a great first year at Northbridge High School. We encourage you to apply the tips and strategies found in this guide. And Remember,

Together... we *can* be successful!