

No-stress
GUIDE TO
HIGH SCHOOL
Transcripts



The No Stress Guide to Transcripts!

A Free Ebook from Homeschool.com

While the path homeschoolers follow through high school may be very similar or radically different than their public school counterparts, all applicants are in much the same situation when it comes to college admissions. The big challenge, of course, is how to impress an admissions officer enough to receive an acceptance letter from your student's school of choice. But a homeschooler without a GPA, class ranking, or high school transcript poses a unique challenge to any admissions office.

Many colleges and universities these days are notably more flexible than in the past about evaluating homeschooled applicants. Some accept portfolios of student work in lieu of the usual requirements, but a list of high school coursework, in one form or another, is usually necessary. That is where a transcript comes into play, a written record of the grades received or aptitude achieved in each course or area of study.

How do Transcripts Help?

High school transcripts prove useful for more than college admission. They're used for enlisting in the military, applying for jobs and internships, and even earning the "good student" discount for a family's auto insurance rates. It's also useful to have a transcript for the many scholarship applications that require one.

However, the most common need for a transcript is college admission. But admissions policies vary widely, so when a homeschooler narrows down their list of potential colleges, it's smart to do your research and find out exactly what each college is looking for. At one end of the spectrum, Harvard doesn't require transcripts at all, and at the other end, some colleges want high school transcripts to be aligned to state standards set by their Department of Education. Most schools will fall somewhere in between, and it's up to the applicant to find out the details.

For example, Wesleyan College in Connecticut has admitted homeschoolers with simply a portfolio of the student's high school work, but they prefer a transcript, and the more detailed the better. Ohio State University does require an official transcript, and Southern Methodist University not only requires a transcript but also makes homeschoolers take several exams that are not mandated for other applicants. Some college admissions officers use the application to view a student's individuality while they asserted using the transcripts as a verification that the minimum admission requirements were met. In addition, each school has a different set of requirements, which are easily ascertained by contacting the admissions office.

How Should We Keep Ongoing Records?

Keeping good homeschool grade records becomes essential once your student reaches high school, however, how you keep those records is completely up to you. Some families keep records online, others use a grade-book, and still others allow their students to keep their own records.

In any case, it's wise to keep records of what your student does from 8th grade through graduation, describe the course they took, or translate their experience into a course. Some parents will give their student a subject test to verify that the experience taught them enough. However, depending on your students' studies you might be able to find an alternative assessment. Some parents simply use a homeschool planner to track what they studied during the course of the year. One thing is certain, if

parents keep good records during the course of the year, when it comes time to craft a transcript it will simply be a matter of filling in the information.

How are Transcripts Created?

Some schools will accept a spreadsheet format, easily compiled on a home computer. Others want courses listed by semester, or perhaps including course descriptions so they know exactly what material was covered. There are both fee-based services and free downloadable templates available online designed to make the chore of writing a transcript easier, but keep in mind there is no “one size fits all” approach, and each college could require something different.

As homeschooling continues to gain popularity, homeschoolers will increasingly compete with traditional students for a limited number of college openings. Considered together with many other criteria, such as college entrance test scores like the SAT and ACT and extracurricular activities, high school transcripts serve an important role that homeschoolers cannot ignore. College bound homeschoolers should keep detailed records beginning with 9th grade, and be ready to translate those records into whatever format needed to compete with the ever-changing college admissions process.

High school transcripts are just one of many areas that challenge homeschoolers. Yet, transcript creation doesn't have to be a headache. Here are a few of the most frequently asked questions about home school transcripts.

What Should a Basic Homeschool Transcript Include?

Typically a basic transcript is just that BASIC. It includes:

- Name of student, homeschool name (if applicable) address, and phone numbers
- High School Course List by year – typically 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade years - or by subject
- Any college courses, dual enrollment, or honors courses
- Course grades. This should include semester grades and then final year end grades.
- The student's final homeschool grade point average (GPA). Often there are also yearly GPA's included as well. Visit Homeschool.com for a guide to calculating GPAs.
- Homeschool credits given per course. These should be listed for each semester and then for the entire year.
- Grade scale that was used in the homeschool.
- Any standardized testing that was given during the course of high school. (Achievement tests, IQ tests, SAT, ACT, and state proficiency tests).
- Final graduation date
- Parent signature with a date



A basic transcript is important even if your student isn't going to college. Employers will often request to see a transcript as part of the hiring process.

What do Colleges Want to see in a College Preparatory Transcript?

In addition to the basic transcript colleges may want to see a few more things. Some colleges can be very competitive in the selection process, and making your student's transcripts stand out can really make a difference. When you send a transcript to a college include the basic information above as well as:

- Course descriptions – sometimes this can be simply a sentence but some colleges may want a short paragraph (*note that not all colleges require course descriptions – please check with the college in question*)
- A list of any extracurricular activities
- A list of any leadership skills, awards won, volunteer hours, or other accomplishments



As an experienced homeschooler I've created a transcript for each of my homeschool graduates, and my homeschool transcript with course descriptions has been more than enough for college entrance admissions officers. ~ Jamie G., GA Check out [course requirements by college-type](#)

What Should a Course Description Include?

Since most colleges find that homeschool courses differ from the typical public school courses they like to know what students learned, so you may want to include a description of the courses on your high school transcript. These descriptions are often added as an addendum at the end of the transcript. A course description should include the course name, and a brief description of what the course taught. Using your curriculum's scope and sequence will be very helpful in supplying this information. Any other notable occurrences or information about the course and how the student completed it should be noted here. However, you might want to ask an admissions counselor if course descriptions are necessary. Often sharing too much information can be detrimental.

How should you create transcripts for a student who has a mixture of public, private, and homeschooling records?

Typically, the records from each school will be transferred separately. For instance, if your child first attended the public school and then transferred to a private school the public school records would have transferred as well. The new school will simply begin their record keeping on a new permanent record chart. As a homeschooler, you can keep these records separate or put them all together on a single transcript sheet. The single-transcript option is likely the most preferred as colleges prefer to have to review as little paperwork as possible. You may choose whether or not to notate where each course was taken in the course description.

How Should Courses be Documented?

Typically, the yearly record with courses and grades is included in one document. While the course descriptions are included in their own separate document similar to an appendix. Here is an example of a yearly record.

Ninth Grade	Date	
Course	Grade (Semester/Final)	Credit
English 9	89/90	1
Algebra I	93/91	1
Home ec	95	.5
Biology	92/94	1
World History	84/86	1
P.E.	93	.5
Spanish I	93/95	1
Art	97	.5
Music	93	.5
Total Credits for 9th grade	7	
Total GPA for 9th Grade	3.8	

How can you document volunteer hours and other types of awards or service?

This is often that part of the transcript that a competitive application process requires. This area can really set your student apart from everyone else. It also gives the college a chance to see them in action, and to see where their priorities lie. These items can be documented on a separate sheet as well by titling the page and then listing each under a heading that corresponds to each accomplishment OR as an addendum on the main transcript. Homeschool.com has created a transcript template for you to easily print that includes volunteer hours.



Visit homeschool.com for a volunteer hours printable tracker as well as a [free high school transcript template!](#)

You can create a high school template by year, so all information recorded shows everything your student did each year or you can list your student's accomplishments by subject. This is especially helpful for families whose students may not have completed academic subjects "in order" or whose students may have taken longer to complete subjects.

How Many Credits are Needed to Graduate?

Determining how many credits a high school homeschooler needs for graduation is an important aspect to consider when thinking about planning your student's high school studies. For most states the

homeschooling parent is free to determine which courses their high school students should take. However, if your student desires to attend college, their college of choice will have admission requirements. These requirements then would determine which courses should be taken by your student prior to graduation. In essence, students should determine their future goals and then work back from there to plan their high school courses. This ensures that the student takes what is needed.

However, there are a few states that do have requirements for high school homeschool graduation and these can typically be found in their state homeschooling statutes. Visit our [Guide to Giving Credits](#) here.

Are there Specific Courses That Should Be Taken?

To know which courses a student should take in high school is often determined by what their future college requires. Find out early so that a good four year high school plan can be made.

However, typical high school courses are often the following:

- 4 years of Math (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Trigonometry or Calculus)
- 4 years of English (Grammar, Literature, and Composition)
- 3 years of Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
- 2-4 years of History (U.S. History, World History, World Geography, U.S. Government)
- 2 or more years of a foreign language
- Electives for the remaining credits

Can Homeschoolers Use AP Course Designations on Their Transcripts?

High schooled homeschoolers are welcome to use the AP (Advanced Placement) program offered by The College Board. The College Board encourages homeschooled students to self-study for the AP Exam and then find a local high school that administers the test. However, if a student wants to sign up for authorized AP courses there are many online providers.

AP courses are “honors” courses that carry more weight than a typical course. AP courses can often be considered equivalent to some college courses. If this is something that interests you visit The College Board website and search “homeschool AP exam.”

How Should Dual Enrollment Courses Be Designated on the Transcript?

Dual Enrollment courses are usually offered at a local community college or university or through a high school. These courses are a great way for students to earn both high school and college credit.

When notating these courses on a transcript they are typically labelled “DE” to differentiate them from typical high school level courses. Some parents choose to weight the courses taken as AP or Dual Enrollment, however, as a high school student it really doesn't make a big difference in the transcript itself. College admissions officers should be able to clearly recognize the difference between the types of classes on the student's transcripts. Find out more in our [High School Dual Enrollment Guide](#).

The High School Transcript: Step-By-Step!

- Step 1:** Start early! If you missed this step, start as soon as possible.
- Step 2:** Download a free high school transcript template to use.
- Step 3:** Enter in your student's residential information, along with your homeschool's name and address. If you've never named your homeschool, you can skip that part of Step 3.
- Step 4:** Under each subject, enter your student's academic information. Do this based on your student's final grade in each subject for each academic year (9th through 12th). Create course descriptions for each course your student completes. Include what was covered in the course. Your course scope and sequence will help with this.
- Step 5:** Enter the credit amount your student has earned for each subject (either .5 credit for semester-long courses or 1 for year-long courses).
- Step 6:** Enter all schools your student has attended for his or her high school years.
- Step 7:** Enter any academic achievements your student has received in the appropriate section. Make sure to highlight leadership opportunities and other activities especially those that relate to their future career and college major.
- Step 8:** Enter any standardized test scores your student has received.

That's it! That's all there is to a high school transcript until your student completes 12th grade! **If your student has completed 12th grade**, proceed to Step 9.

- Step 9: At the end of 12th grade:**
 - Total the number of credits for each subject and enter the sum.
 - Total the student's cumulative GPA. To do this, use the point values for grades at the bottom of the transcript. Just add your student's final grades and calculate the average.
 - Total the student cumulative number of credits and enter this value in at the bottom of the transcript.
 - Sign and date the transcript

In Conclusion...

Preparing a high school transcript for your homeschooled student doesn't have to be an overwhelming task. Starting early is ideal but even if you're halfway through, you can do it in under 10 steps! Take your time and enter the information carefully. When you're finished, be sure to keep it in a safe place or make several copies, because your student will need it for colleges and employers. For more information on homeschooling highschool be sure to visit Homeschool.com.

