

# Homeschooling Through High School

HSGS, April 2016

*In these fast-paced times, information has a short shelf-life. The information below is by no means a comprehensive listing of resources for homeschooling your teen through high school. Always, always check the deadlines, timelines and availability of the resources below. Organizations can change dates and application guidelines without prior notice.*

## **General Homeschool High School Info**

Illinois does not have any specific homeschool statutes regulating homeschooling. The following is quoted from Section 26-1 of (105 ILCS 5/) School Code:

"Any child attending a private or a parochial school where children are taught the branches of education taught to children of corresponding age and grade in the public schools, and where the instruction of the child in the branches of education is in the English language" is in compliance with the Illinois compulsory attendance law and is therefore not truant."

See [illinoishouse.org](http://illinoishouse.org), the site for H.O.U.S.E, the nonsectarian, statewide organization for people in homeschooling for more information. (Home Oriented Unique Schooling Experience)

## **About Homeschooling Through High School**

Cindi Link's Brain Dump, located in the Files section of the HSGS Yahoo Listserv

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/HSGS/files>

*The most valuable advice for homeschooling gifted teens through high school.*

In particular look at her Official High School Transcript, Course Descriptions and School Profile

## **Organizing Self-Study or Homeschool Courses**

- 1 high school credit (an academic year) is equivalent to 150 hours of student work; 1 semester = 75 hours; 1 academic quarter = 50 hours, generally speaking.
- Decide how many credits in each subject you will require for graduation. Illinois state standards are minimal. Check with the college your teen is targeting to find out their requirements for homeschoolers. One rule of thumb: The Four by Five strategy—4 years each of five subjects: Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language (4 years of same language). Successful applicants to elite colleges often have many more credits than the minimum required.
- In your course descriptions list texts and online resources used and topics covered. The table of contents of the textbook used is a good place to start.
- Incorporate a method of accountability for the student to demonstrate mastery of the subject. This can be regularly assigned and completed papers and or presentations. Many homeschool parents use SAT Subject tests to show their student's mastery of a subject.
- If using coop courses, make sure your student is meeting the work-hour levels needed to count it as a high school credit. Be prepared to provide additional curriculum, either through at-home study or an online class, to meet the work hours standard.
- If using outside curriculum, make sure the curriculum publisher labels the course as a minimum of high school level. One option is to use college-level texts for non-majors as a way to maintain rigor in your student's self-study.
- Use SAT Subject tests to validate student work.
- If you are seeking to create a class for your student, look online for the syllabi of courses from colleges or universities. These will include texts that your student can use in his or her own self-study.
- Teaching Company's Great Courses also another great resource for self study.

## **Independent Study: Project-based learning**

Project-Based Learning is a way for students to deeply study complex questions or issues in the world to get at key academic concepts. By increasing their skills in problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity/innovation, students are able to gain thorough knowledge and experience. Students have choices in which open-ended questions they choose to explore, and they pursue knowledge by continuing to ask questions and search for answers. Projects can incorporate many academic disciplines, strengthening and deepening their knowledge in the targeted area. Students present their findings to a public audience, beyond their instructors and other students.

## **Online High School/College Level Courses**

The availability of online learning keeps expanding. In addition to MOOCs, Coursera, edX , etc., the following provide online classes for homeschooled high school students.

### **Bytheonionsea.com**

These are wonderful, rigorous courses on Russian literature and film, taught by Julia Kriventsova Denne. Courses like these give the student a wider perspective on literature and film, outside of traditional English and American literature. Julia is an original member of HSGS, homeschooling her daughter, Nina, who is currently attending the Illinois Math and Science Academy. Course costs are approximately \$290 per semester.

### **Gifted Learning Links, Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development**

[http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/program\\_type/online-programs](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/program_type/online-programs)

Honors and AP courses for academically gifted children. Courses range from one semester (18 weeks) to a full year (36 weeks) of high school credit. GLL is accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. NU will issue a transcript that includes all courses taken through CTD. Full-year courses run about \$900  
CTD also offers for-credit, summer high school courses for commuter or residential students. Prices vary.

### **Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth**

<http://cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/courses/>

Challenging online classes for academically advanced students. Both AP and honors courses in all core subjects, plus computer programming and chess. Some are self-paced, some are session based. Courses range from \$550 to \$1,410.  
CTY also offers summer programs.

### **Missou Online**

<http://mizzouk12online.missouri.edu/>

Expect minimal instructor involvement. Accredited program with grades and a transcript. They also have a diploma-granting program, if your student is applying to a school that requires a non-homeschool diploma. Courses by semester are \$500

### **Stanford Online High School**

<https://ohs.stanford.edu/>

Fully accredited, diploma-granting online high school. Full-time enrollment, 4 or more classes = \$19,950. Part-time enrollment of 2-3 classes is \$12,400. Single-course enrollment of 1year is \$4,150.

### **Derek Owens Classes**

<http://www.derekowens.com/>

Math and Physics classes for homeschool students. Owens is based in Atlanta, but has a very good online component. Students are able to take either regular or honors track. Courses are \$522 for a 9-month class.

### **Pennsylvania Homeschoolers AP Courses**

[Aphomeschoolers.com](http://aphomeschoolers.com)

Online AP courses for homeschooled students. NCAA approved. Operated by Pennsylvania Homeschoolers. Prices range from \$675 to \$1090 for heavy lab courses.

## Dual Enrollment

Dual Enrollment is a great way for a homeschool student to demonstrate academic excellence in a brick-and-mortar classroom. Each community college has varying requirements for homeschoolers—check with your community college. Rule of thumb: one semester of a community college course is equivalent to one high school credit.

Try to choose classes for your teen based on the quality of the instructor and not the convenience of the schedule, if possible. Ratemyprofessor.com gives very accurate student ratings and comments on instructors. Make sure your teen is ready for the independence of community college. The transcript produced by these courses will report grades not only to undergraduate institutions to which your teen applies, but also to graduate institutions who want to see all college transcripts.

Course costs are rising, due to budget impasse in Springfield. Current governor wants to cut state funding to higher education (community colleges) by 31%. Current costs are about \$400 per course.

## About Standardized Testing

### SAT Subject Tests

<https://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-subject-test-dates>

- one-hour, multiple-choice tests on wide variety of high school subjects.
- Tests are held 6 times a year, in October, November, December, January, May and June.
- You can sign up to take a maximum of 3 tests on a single date.
- Plan to take an SAT test right after studying that subject for best results.
- Many colleges and universities require 2-3 SAT Subject tests in a variety of subjects from homeschoolers to validate and corroborate homeschool transcripts. Check with each college for their specific requirements.
- You can take the same test multiple times, and you can choose which test scores to send to colleges during the application process.
- Plan to have several SAT Subject tests **completed prior** to college application deadlines so that admissions officials have validation of your transcript.
- You can register online through the SAT College Board site.

### AP Tests

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/index.html>

- 3-4 hour tests in a variety of subjects. Tests consist of multiple choice, short and long essays.
- Tests held once a year, during first two weeks of May.
- Maximum of 2 tests per day.
- You do not need to take an AP course to take the test. You can self study for any AP test.
- In order to list a course on your teen's transcript as an AP course, make sure the course is approved by the AP Board. Homeschoolers can create their own syllabi and get them approved by the AP Board. See <http://www.collegeboard.com/html/apcourseaudit/> for more information on how to get your syllabus approved.
- Courses are intended to represent a first-year college study of each subject. Plan on about 10- 15 hours of homework per week for an AP class.
- Success on an AP test provides validation that student can be successful at college level.
- To take the test, the parent must register the teen at a local high school. AP Central can tell you which schools offer which tests, if you provide zipcodes of the schools. The local school reserves the right to not allow outside students to take the test at their location, in the case of not enough room. The AP Board's deadline is mid-March, but sometimes schools set their own deadlines that are much earlier. Plan on calling the spring prior (one year before) to the planned test to find out your school's deadlines.
- All tests and courses are in the midst of a redesign to align them with Common Core goals. Students are tested more on their ability to synthesize and apply their knowledge. These are not regurgitate-the-facts tests.

- Unlike the SAT subject tests, you cannot choose which scores to send to colleges. The colleges get an AP Score Report which lists all the tests you have taken, along with your scores. If you don't like a score, you have about 2 weeks after you receive your score in early July to snail-mail a letter to the AP Board, requesting that your score be cancelled. Your AP Score Report will list that you took the test, then in italics it will state: "Score cancelled at the request of the student." The AP Board is evil.
- Places to take AP classes online:
  - Pennsylvania Homeschoolers: <http://www.aphomeschoolers.com/classes.shtml>
  - Johns Hopkins CTY: <http://cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/courses/>
  - NU-CTD: <http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/program/advanced-placement-ap>
  - Stanford Online High School: <https://ohs.stanford.edu/courses.html>
  - AP Chemistry-- <http://www.chemadvantage.com/>

## SAT

<https://sat.collegeboard.org/register/when-to-take-sat>

3-4 hour test, revised beginning 2016 with new, optional essay portion. Revisions also to include more 'practical' vocabulary' and math aligned to high school math. Test is offered 6 times a year, in October, November, December, January, May and June. Register for the test online at SAT College Board site. You cannot take SAT Subject tests on the same date as you take the SAT.

If you take only the SAT (rather than the ACT) be prepared to also send in several SAT Subject tests with your college application. Some schools will accept the ACT alone, or the SAT with additional Subject Tests. Always check the college.

## PSAT

**Register through local high school. Best to call in Spring before school ends for October Test Date.**

This test is used to identify students for National Merit Scholarships. A student can start taking the PSAT starting in freshman year, for practice. The test is offered once a year, in mid-October. Student takes the test officially in Junior Year. To qualify for the National Merit Scholarships, the student needs to take the SAT sometime later in Junior Year.

## ACT

<http://www.actstudent.org/regist/>

Covers English (grammar and usage) Reading, Science and Math. Plan on taking the essay portion for college apps. Offered 6 times a year in September, October, December, February, April and June. Register online. Many colleges give you the choice of providing only your ACT scores.

## Superscoring

Some colleges will superscore—they will take the student's highest scores on individual portions of the SAT and/or ACT and calculate their own composite scores. That way a student can take the test multiple times, focusing on different aspects. So a student can take the test and focus on the Math (SAT) or Math and Science (ACT) then later take the test again, focusing on the reading and writing portions. The Common Application will ask for your highest scores in each subject area, regardless of when the student took the test. Check with your individual college choices on their policies.

**Useful Resources:****Books:**

Beach, Wes: *Forging Paths: Beyond Traditional Schooling*

Dunbar, Don: *What You Don't Know Can Keep You Out of College*

Newport, Cal: *How to Be a High School Superstar: A Revolutionary Plan to Get into College by Standing Out (Not Burning Out)*

Pope, Loren: *Colleges That Change Lives*

Wissner-Gross, Elizabeth: *What High Schools Don't Tell You (And Other Parents Don't Want You to Know)*

Wissner-Gross, Elizabeth: *What Colleges Don't Tell You (And High Schools Don't Want You to Know)*

**Websites:**

Site for STEM Students to interact with scientists and each other. Run by Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins <http://cty.jhu.edu/cogito/>

**Useful Homeschool Discussion Boards:**

[Homeschool2college@yahoo.com](mailto:Homeschool2college@yahoo.com)

<http://talk.collegeconfidential.com/home-schooling-college/>

<http://forums.welltrainedmind.com/>