
The difference between high school and college

College can be a fun, new and exciting experience, however it can also be a nerve-wracking and stressful one. Most of these emotions arise because students do not know what to expect. Whether you are a commuting student or an on-campus student, you can help ease these feelings by knowing what to expect ahead of time.

Commuting College Students

If you are going to be a student who commutes to college, then here are a few tips to prepare you ahead of time:

- Obtain your parking decals. Most colleges require parking permits to park on-campus so make sure you go to the school before the start of the semester to apply for your decal.

- Allow for extra time before classes. If you have an 8am class, do not expect to make it to class on time if you arrive at 7:50. Most campuses are large and parking is scarce at some schools. You may have to park quite a distance away from the building where your class is located so be sure to allow for time to park and walk across campus to your appropriate building.

- Use the cafeteria. You will get hungry in-between classes so make use of the cafeteria/meal hall to eat. Some schools will allow commuting students to purchase a meal card to make it easier to pay for meals in their dining halls.

All Students/ON-CAMPUS Students

If you are going to be living in a dorm on campus, then you will see a world of a difference once you leave home.

- Studying: You will most likely have to study a lot more than you did when you were in high school. Some dorms are designated quiet dorms for those students who wish not to be involved with the distractions of other students partying. You can check with your intended school to see if your school offers this type of living situation.

- Roommates: You may have a roommate since single rooms in dorms are usually reserved for upper classmen and/or are more expensive. It will be a new experience learning to live with a complete stranger, so make the best of your new situation.

- Classes: In high school you of course had to go to school everyday and be to class on time. However, in college some professors are so strict that if you miss more than two of their classes, you can receive an automatic failing grade for that class. Be sure to attend every class. Of course there are college classes out there that will have no attendance requirements, but your best bet in the long run is to attend all of your classes.

- Class size: In high school you probably had a class size of 20-30 students, however in college you could possibly have a class with as many as 200 students. This is especially common in "intro" classes, which are classes that are required of all students no matter what the major.

All in all, you generally have more freedom as a college student. This is because professors expect you to be mature about your studies. College tuition is expensive, so you should get the most for your money by joining clubs, using the campus facilities (computer lab, library, tutoring center, etc), and keeping up with your work. In high school you may have been able to get through by skimming your notes before a test, however since college is geared toward making students think critically, you may have to study more and apply yourself a little harder to earn your GPA.

Remember, college is meant to prepare you for a career in the real world. So make sure you not only study but also have fun, meet new friends, and enjoy the transition into adulthood.