

The **BIG** Idea

- How will a high school degree affect my future?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: Why Am I Here? (5 minutes)
- II. Advice from the Real World (10 minutes)
- III. My Four-Year Plan (25 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up: 9th Grade — It Matters! (5 minutes)

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Recognize the importance of high school to their future, even if they want to pursue a career that doesn't require college.
- Understand state and local high school graduation requirements.
- Develop a four-year course plan that will keep them on track for their high school graduation.

MATERIALS

PORTFOLIO PAGES:

- Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan
- Portfolio pages 33-35, Grade 9 (7-12) Skills Checklist (Goal-Setting skills only)

STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 10, Dear David

FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW
- District/state graduation requirements
- Listing of your schools 10th, 11th, and 12th grade courses w/syllabus for each grade
- Chart paper

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will explore the importance of high school—and what a high school degree can mean to them. They'll begin by answering the question, "Why are you in high school?" Next, they'll read a letter from a community college program director to a student who thinks he doesn't need high school, then discuss some of the reasons the director gives for staying in school. Finally, students will create a four-year plan for their HS courses.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook page 10, Dear David**
 - **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**
- For **Activity I**, write the multiple-choice questions on chart paper, covering up the quiz with a blank sheet.
- This lesson is designed to help students develop a tentative four-year plan for their high school courses. Be sure to coordinate with the counselor to become better acquainted with the courses offered. Obtain and copy the following handouts:
 - District/state graduation requirements (one class set)
 - List of 10th, 11th and 12th courses offered next year, obtained from your school counselor (one per student).In addition, you may wish to ask the school counselor to serve as a co-facilitator of this lesson.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW

*(You may choose to present the Warm Up activity as a written Do Now. Present the questions on the board or overhead, and have students write only their answers on index cards. You could also choose to give the students a handout by copying **Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW**.)*

Question:

1. Last week you learned about the five criteria that make a goal SMART. List them below and explain what each criteria means. If you are having trouble remembering look at **Student Handbook pages 8-9, Ninth Grade Goals Reflection.**

[Give the students 3 minutes to answer this question. Then have a few students share their responses with the class at the beginning of the Warm Up.]

In **Activity III, My-Four Year Plan**, you may choose to highlight high school courses that could prepare students for local post-secondary education programs. This could include 2- and 4-year colleges, along with tech/trade schools.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. WARM UP: Why Am I Here? (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Welcome, everybody! Before we begin today, I have a very important question for all of you: What are you doing in high school?

[Flip up the blank paper on your chart to reveal the following:

What am I doing in high school?

- a. 9th grade follows 8th grade.
 - b. I wasn't allowed to stay in bed this morning.
 - c. I'm too young to earn a living.
 - d. Other (Write your answer on a piece of paper.)]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Okay, so be honest: Raise your hand if you said a...b...c. And who chose d, another reason? [Ask a few volunteers to share their reasons for being in high school. Write these answers on the paper under "Other." Answers will vary, such as: to earn a degree to get a better job after high school; to get into college; to learn new things.]
 3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Of course, most of us don't jump out of bed every morning and rush to school driven by a single, motivating purpose. But overall, it helps to remember why you're in high school, whether you're studying for a test, choosing classes for next year, or just deciding whether or not you want to get out of bed in the morning.
 4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** In this class, you'll be hearing a lot about "beginning with the end in mind." The purpose of Roads to Success is to help you figure out what you want to do with your life, set your own goals, and leave high school with the tools and knowledge you need to meet those goals. That means in 9th grade, you're starting to figure out what those goals are.
 5. This year we'll be exploring lots of careers and hopefully finding a few that interest you. But today, we're going to focus on an essential step before any career – finishing high school.

II. Advice from the Real World (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's go back to the question, "Why are you in high school?" If

you sometimes (or a lot of times) feel like you're not really sure, then I hope you'll pay close attention to this next story:

A few years ago, there was a student in Indiana who felt he didn't need to finish high school. The student, David, wanted to become a truck driver, and he felt the whole school thing was sort of a waste of time.

Fortunately, his teacher contacted the local community college, and made a connection with the director of the truck-driving program. In turn, the director wrote David a letter with some important advice. In a minute I'm going to assign pairs. Please turn to **Student Handbook page 10, Dear David**. You and your partner will have five minutes to read this letter. While you are reading, circle any word or phrase that you think relates to a high school course.

2. [Give students about five minutes to read the letter.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now, let's talk about what we learned from Don Hess, the director of the truck-driving program. [As a class, discuss the following questions:
 - What parts of the truck driver's job description surprised you?
 - What are some skills that truck drivers need that would be gained in high school?
 - How did a college degree improve Don's career opportunities?]

III. My Four-Year Plan [25 minutes]

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I have an important question: How many of you want to graduate from high school? Of course you all do! But it's not going to happen magically. If you want to make the most of your time in high school, you need to have a plan. That's what we're going to work on for the rest of class.
2. [Instruct students to turn to **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**. Give students a few minutes to complete the 9th grade column of this chart, reminding them to leave the 10th, 11th, and 12th grade columns blank.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Some of you may be wondering why you are thinking about courses three years from now. The plan you are going to make today is not set in stone. Some of your course selections may change based on your performance this year and your changing career interests. The purpose of this plan is to help you stay on track for your high school graduation. The first thing we want to take a look at is what's required in our district/state.

4. [Hand out the list of district/state requirements for graduation, and show a copy on a projector. Review the credits for each subject required by your district/state.]
5. [Take a few minutes to let students ask questions about these requirements.]
6. [Hand out the listing of your schools 10th, 11th, and 12th grade courses w/syllabus.]
7. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that we've reviewed the most important criteria for choosing courses, it's time to take a first pass at making your own choices. You will be making tentative course selections for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade from this list of course offerings for next year. [Hand out copies of this list obtained from your own school or district.]

You should first fill in the courses that fulfill the district/state requirements. Once you have done this for all three grades, go back and select electives that fit your interests. Remember, your selections today are not set in stone. You'll share these choices with the guidance counselor in the Spring when you make your 10th grade schedule.

8. [Give students about 15 minutes to complete their four-year plan. Walk around the classroom to answer questions they may have as they make their selections.]

IV. WRAP UP: 9th Grade – It Matters! (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I hope each of you come away from today's lesson having a little clearer sense of purpose about high school. As you're going to see in the coming weeks, education plays a critical role in the careers you pursue. And what you do in high school will pave the way for your future, whether you're planning on pursuing a career after graduation, or moving on to college.

That's why ninth grade is such an important and exciting time in your life. Middle school is behind you. As you launch into your high school years, remember that this is the time that matters. This is the time that counts. It's what you learn now that you'll carry forward into your career and into college. No college is going to ask for your middle school grades, but they will see your grades and activities from this point forward. If you want to make the most of your time in high school, you should set a clear goal in your mind – a goal that will motivate you and guide you over the next four years.

2. **SKILLS CHECKLIST**

Direct students' attention to **Portfolio pages 33-35, Grade 9 (7-12) Skills Checklist.**

Have students complete the skills checklist questions for Careers.

GOAL SETTING SKILLS

I can...

Set a goal for myself and make a plan to reach it.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
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DO NOW

Setting Goals 2: High School Matters

Directions: You will have three minutes to read the question below and write your response.

1. Last week you learned about the five criteria that make a goal SMART. List them below and explain what each criteria means. If you are having trouble remembering look at **Student Handbook page 8, Ninth Grade Goals Reflection.**

DEAR DAVID

Don Hess
Director
Transportation & Public Safety Programs
John Wood Community College
1301 South 48th Street, Quincy, Illinois 62305-8736

Dear David,

Hi. My name is Don, and I work at a college where we teach people how to drive trucks. Your teacher sent an email saying that you thought you might not need high school. I hate to tell you this, but I really believe you need to consider a few things before you make a final decision.

Truck driving today is much different than it used to be.

1. Trucks have computers in them to run the engine, and other computers and satellite systems so that the driver and the company can communicate with each other any time. Drivers have to know how to use computers because they do so every day.
2. Also, truck drivers must have good math skills. They have to keep very detailed “log books,” which keeps track of all of the hours in the day, and how many hours the driver has been driving, loading, sleeping, eating, and resting. They have to know how to use fractions and decimals to calculate those hours.
3. Truck drivers also must calculate the weight of their load, figure out how the load should be distributed in the trailer, supervise the loading process, then calculate the weight that is being put on each axle of the truck and the trailer (usually there are five axles).

You know, when I was in high school, I thought a lot like you seem to be thinking now. I often thought about quitting and just getting a job. But I stuck it out anyway and got my diploma. Then I drove trucks for a long time (about 17 years), and drove over one million miles total. Then I decided that even a high school diploma wasn't enough anymore, so I went back to school — this time to college. I was a freshman in college when I was 36 years old, and spent 4 years there. Then I got a job teaching people how to drive trucks, and now I'm in charge of many different departments at the college, including truck driving, fire science, and law enforcement, and I have lots of teachers working for me.

So there are just a few things to think about, David. I really hope that whatever you decide to do, you start out by finishing high school. You will really and truly be glad you did, I absolutely guarantee it.

Don Hess

Letter reprinted with the permission of Don Hess. Special thanks to Marlene Dakita at the Truckload Carriers Association (www.truckload.org).

MY FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Courses Taken/Planned					
SUBJECT	9th	10th	11th	12th	
1. Language Arts					
2. Math					
3. Science					
4. Social Studies					
5. Foreign Language					
6. Other/Electives (Arts, Computer Science, etc.)					