



## Get Help When You Need It

If you're having a problem in a class, talk to your teacher. Most teachers are happy to help you – you just have to ask.

There are also lots of other people in your school who are available to help you succeed. Make sure that you know who these people are.

### Fill in the blanks

Your counselor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Where is your counselor's office?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you go about seeing your counselor?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your principal's name: \_\_\_\_\_

The office secretary's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Write the name and position of three additional people in your school who are available to help students (e.g., tutor, nurse, coach, etc.).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Welcome to Middle School



## Tips for a Great Year

### 1. Be in school every day.

Attendance is the #1 school success factor. "I try to never miss school. It's such a pain to make things up." Tyler, 7th grade

### 2. Get involved in school activities.

Try to get involved in one or two activities at school. You'll meet new people, develop new skills, and have fun.

### 3. Do all of your homework.

Keep up with your assignments—right from day one. "If you get behind, it's really hard to catch up." Jasmine, 8th grade

### 4. Make friends and have fun.

Being with friends is important, but don't get too caught up in the social scene. "Go out of your way to be friendly, and don't take things too seriously." Logan, 7th grade

### 5. Give your best effort every day.

Work hard in your classes. You want to have a middle school record you can be proud of!



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Make Middle School Great!



# What to Expect in Middle School

## Welcome to Middle School

Middle school is a wonderful, exciting adventure. As a middle school student, you'll have more responsibilities, more freedom, and more fun. You will also learn a great deal!

Whenever you start something new, it's helpful to know what to expect.

Here are some things you can expect to find in middle school.

### ▶ New teachers and classmates

For many students, going to middle school means going to a different, and often larger, school. For all students, it means new teachers, new classes, and new friends.

*"I was kind of scared going into middle school, but the classes are more interesting and it's a lot more fun."* Justin, 7th grade

### ▶ New things to adjust to

Lunch periods, lockers, and changing classes are just a few of the new things most middle school students need to adjust to.

### ▶ New classes

The courses are often more difficult and there's usually more homework. Middle school students are also expected to do more work on their own.

*"My advice is to get each semester off to a good start – and whenever you need help, talk to your teacher."* David, 7th grade



### ▶ More activities and sports

Most middle schools offer a variety of activities, clubs, and athletic programs for their students.

*"Activities make school more fun. It's also a lot easier to make friends if you're involved in sports or band or something."* Isabella, 8th grade

### ▶ New rules and policies

Every middle school has its own attendance and tardy policies, dress code, cell phone policies, rules and regulations.

### ▶ More things to organize

In middle school, students have more classes, more teachers, and more homework. To keep up with everything, you need to be organized.

*"Using a planner helps keep me organized. I use it to record my assignments, and anything else I need to remember."* Jacob, 7th grade

### ▶ Changes in you

Middle school students come in all shapes and sizes, and most students grow and change a great deal during middle school.

### ▶ More independence and responsibility

Middle school students are expected to be responsible enough to handle the additional freedoms they're given.

### ▶ More social events

There are more games, dances, and social events in middle school. Some students feel that there's also more social pressure.

*"Find friends who have the same interests as you, and who like you for who you are."* Mia, 8th grade





## Cyberbullying

**Cyberbullying is the use of electronic devices (cell phones, computers, tablets) to harass, threaten, or embarrass others. Here's what to do if it ever happens to you.**

**Don't respond or retaliate.** Cyberbullies who don't get a reaction often get bored and quit.

**Block/delete.** Immediately block or delete the cyberbully's profile, number, or email.

**Tell an adult you trust.** Also tell your friends. Don't let anyone bully you into silence!

**If you are being threatened, it's serious.** If you've been threatened, it's important that you tell your parents what's going on.

**If you witness cyberbullying, do something.** If you see or hear about cyberbullying, intervene to stop it, support the person who was targeted, and/or report it to an adult.

Most cyberbullying takes place outside of school and "under the radar" of adults. This makes it more important than ever for students to speak up and take a stand against cyberbullying.

## Screen Time Survey

Answer the questions in this survey and reflect on how technology is affecting your life.

- | Yes                      | No                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I check my phone every few minutes.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I often get anxious or angry if I can't use my phone and other devices.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Once I start playing video games, I have a hard time stopping.                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I check my social media page(s) all the time.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I often stay up too late using my phone, playing video games, or watching videos. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I text while others are talking to me.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I feel anxious or upset when my phone or tablet battery is low.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I check the same apps over and over again.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I often use my phone when I'm not supposed to.                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Family members hassle me about being on my phone too much.                        |

**Give yourself 1 point for every Yes.**

**Your Score** \_\_\_\_\_

**How do you feel about your score? Do you think you should you make any changes to the way you use technology?**



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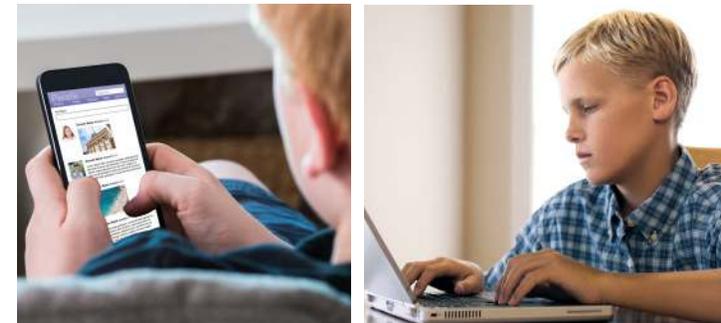
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# Technology & Social Media



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## Make Good Decisions

Your parents and teachers want to keep you safe from all that's negative, false, or harmful online, but there's only so much they can do. You need to make good decisions for yourself.



### Be Smart

- ▶ Create hard to guess passwords, change them regularly, and don't share them with anyone other than your parents.
- ▶ Don't download copyrighted music or videos—it's illegal.
- ▶ Sending and receiving "sexy" pictures of yourself and/or classmates can be illegal. *Never send or share inappropriate photos or messages.*
- ▶ Most importantly, think for yourself. If something doesn't feel or sound right to you, it probably isn't. Use common sense and trust your instincts.

### Be safe

- ▶ Don't put personal information (address, school, favorite hangout, etc.) online.
- ▶ Do not meet face to face with someone you've met online.

## Digital Citizenship

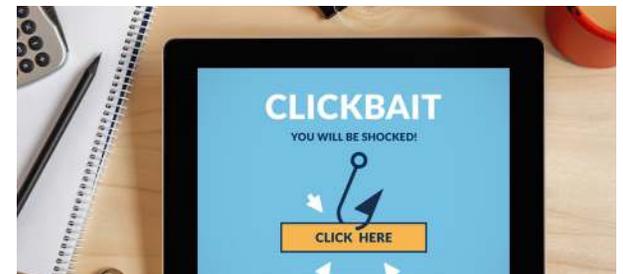
Being a good digital citizen means that your online behavior is responsible and positive. It also means that you think critically about what you read online.

### Be positive and kind

- ▶ Be extra polite to people online. They can't see your expression or hear your tone of voice, so what you say can easily be misunderstood.
- ▶ Remember that permanent means *permanent*. Somebody will always have access to what you've sent or posted, and it can always be recovered. Only send or post things you feel comfortable with people seeing *forever*.
- ▶ Be smart. Only use social media for positive comments, kind words, and to support others.

### Think critically

- ▶ There's a great deal of misinformation online – information that is deceptive, misleading, or false. Be sure to double check facts, especially for information found on social media sites.
- ▶ Think independently, clearly, and rationally, and consider the motivations of the author.



## Technology & Social Media

**There's a lot to love about technology, but like everything in life, nothing is perfect.**

While technology and social media can add a great deal to your life, they can also have some negative effects, especially in things that truly matter—like your relationships and your future.

It's important for you to pay attention to how you're using your devices, and to how often you're using them. It's also important for you to be careful, smart, and safe online.

**Your online life today can impact you for the rest of your life—positively or negatively. The choice is yours.**



## Read to remember

To succeed in school, you need to understand and remember what you read.

- ▶ Before you start to read a textbook assignment, survey the text. Read the **bold** and *italic* words, the introduction, section headings, summary, and chapter review questions.
- ▶ After you're finished reading, do a quick review of what you've read. *Reviewing is the key to remembering.*

## Be a good test taker

To do well on any test, you need to study enough to know the material. You also need to be a smart test taker.

- ▶ Before you answer any questions, look over the entire test and make a plan. Decide how much time you'll spend on each section.
- ▶ Don't spend too much time on difficult questions. Put a dot or light check mark by any question you want to come back to.
- ▶ If you aren't sure of an answer, go with your first instinct.
- ▶ Check all of your answers, even the ones you know are right.

## What Kind of Student Are You?

Put a check mark in the boxes that best describe you.

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Hardly Ever
1. I do all of my homework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I participate in discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I get along with my teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I can find information online.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I ask and answer questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I take notes in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I ask for help when I need it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I am happy with my grades.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost Always**, 1 point for **Sometimes**, and 0 for **Hardly Ever**.

Your Score \_\_\_\_\_

**15 - 16 points** – You are a good student. You are probably doing very well in school.

**11 - 14 points** – You are in the OK range. You could try a little harder in your classes.

**0 - 10 points** – Your grades are probably on the low side. If you work harder, your grades will improve, and you may even find that you like school more.



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# Classroom Success



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# Classroom Success

**When you're successful in school, the people you care about are proud of you, school is more fun, and you feel good about yourself.**

You don't need to be a genius to succeed in school. However, you do need to be organized, and you need to know how to study. You also need to know how to make the most of the time you spend in class.

**If you ever need help or find yourself struggling in a class, talk to your teacher or see your counselor.**

**The following tips will help you become a better student, and get better grades!**

## Tips for Succeeding in Class

### Be organized

Being organized saves you time and makes your day run smoother.

- ▶ Use a student planner to record assignments, quizzes, tests, activities, and appointments.
- ▶ Keep your locker and backpack neat and clean.
- ▶ Make To Do lists and cross things off as you complete them.
- ▶ Get everything organized for the next day before you go to bed.



### Learn in class

If you make the most of the time you spend in class, you have a lot less to learn on your own.

- ▶ Be in class every day—alert and ready to learn.
- ▶ Keep your attention focused on what's being taught.
- ▶ Have all of your homework done.
- ▶ Participate in class discussions. Ask and answer questions.
- ▶ Use any free time you have to start on homework.
- ▶ Ask for help when you need it.

### Study smart

Students who study smart spend less time studying, and yet they get better grades.

- ▶ Find a place to study that's quiet, well-lit, and comfortable.
- ▶ Turn off the music and TV, and silence your phone. Focus on the work you need to do.
- ▶ Before you start your homework, make a plan. Decide what you want to get done, and the order you're going to do it.
- ▶ Break large assignments and projects down into smaller parts.
- ▶ Do difficult assignments first, while you're still fresh and alert.

### Take good class notes

Tests almost always cover material that's been presented in class, so it's important to have good notes to study from.

- ▶ Don't try to write everything down. Listen for the most important information and ideas.



- ▶ Leave spaces between topics and ideas.
- ▶ Use abbreviations to take notes faster.
- ▶ Highlight or underline important information.
- ▶ Go over your notes and rewrite anything that's confusing.



## Family Relationships

Having good relations with your family members makes life much more enjoyable. Here are some tips for maintaining happy relationships with your family.

1. Talk to your parents about what's happening in school, and about what you and your friends are doing.
2. Never be disrespectful.
3. Bring your friends home and introduce them to your parents.
4. Make a real effort to do well in school.
5. Do chores without complaining.
6. Always say where you're going, and check in often.
7. If you've done something wrong, don't lie about it. Admit what you've done and accept the consequences.
8. Speak up. If there is something you want or need, or if you have a problem, say something. Your family members aren't mind readers. You have to help them understand what you need from them.

## Boyfriends & Girlfriends

For many middle schoolers, having a boyfriend or girlfriend seems like something way in the future, while for others, it seems appealing right now. Regardless of where you are on this, here are some things to keep in mind.

**Keep it casual.** Personal relationships at this age should be fun and casual, not serious and intense. If someone you like is possessive or gets in the way of your schoolwork, friends, or family obligations, this is a good sign that you should back away.

**Be on the same page with your parents.** Your parents might have strong opinions about you having a boyfriend or girlfriend.

If your parents think you are too young for any kind of personal relationship, respect their views. This shows maturity, and when you show maturity, you're more likely to get more freedom later on—when you're ready.

***Don't feel pressured to act more grown up than you are. Focus on your schoolwork, your activities, your friends and family—and keep personal relationships easy-going, fun, and casual.***



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# Your Social Life



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# Making Friends

Over the past year or so, you've probably noticed "groups" forming. In middle school, "fitting in" and having a group of friends can feel really important. Here are some tips for building happy and healthy friendships.

## Be open

Most friendships grow from everyday circumstances, like sitting next to someone on the bus or being in the same classes. Strike up a conversation with a question or compliment like, "Who do you have for English?" or "I really like your shoes."

## Look for like-minded students

Pay attention to what other students are interested in, and if you have something in common, talk to them about it. Also, take notice of students who seem to be like you. For example, if you happen to be quiet or shy, and another student seems to also be shy, introduce yourself.

*Shyness can seem like a big problem to overcome, and it can make you feel lonely. Just know that all middle school students have fears, anxieties, and doubts. Once you get used to speaking up, it'll get a lot easier.*



## Join something

Participating in clubs and other activities is a great way to make friends with others who share your interests.



## Don't compromise your values

We all want to be liked and to be part of a group, and there's nothing wrong with that—as long as you don't force yourself to become someone you're not. Because if this happens, you might become someone you don't like.

## Find the right friends

So how do you know if someone is a good fit for you as a friend? Ask yourself these questions.

- ▶ Do we share similar interests?
- ▶ Do we laugh and have fun together?
- ▶ Do we have similar ideas about what's right and wrong?
- ▶ Do we respect and trust each other?
- ▶ Can I be my true self around this person?

# Your Social Life

**Being a middle school student is about more than homework and grades. In fact, it might feel like your life outside of the classroom is more important than the time you spend in class.**

**For lots of middle school students, making friends and having a fun social life is very important. However, for many students, a social life can be complicated.**

**If you have trouble making friends or are shy, the information here will help you develop positive relationships, and have fun while you are in middle school.**

***"Anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you."***

Misty Copeland



# Your Goals

Research shows that you are more likely to achieve a goal that's written down.

Think about what you want to achieve now and in the future, and set two academic and two personal goals for yourself. Write these goals below.

Academic short-term goal

---

---

Academic long-term goal

---

---

Personal short-term goal

---

---

Personal long-term goal

---

---

*"People with goals succeed because they know where they're going."*

*Earl Nightingale*

## Making Good Choices

### Smoking, drinking, and drugs

Everyone knows that it's illegal for students to drink, smoke, or vape, and that taking drugs is both illegal and dangerous. At some point, you may need to make a choice about smoking, vaping, drinking, or taking drugs.

Before you do something you know you shouldn't, think about the consequences. Ask yourself, "What if..."

### Peer pressure

Young people often do things they normally wouldn't do, just to go along with the crowd. Of course, many later regret what they've done.

*"I felt pressure from a friend once, but I thought about what might happen. I said no and walked away. I'm glad that I did."* Jordan, 8th grade

### Think for yourself

Think about your goals and values, and then decide what activities you will, and will not, get involved in. Also, think about what you will say and do, before you're in a situation where you need to make a quick choice or decision.

# Setting Goals & Making Choices



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## Setting Goals

Goals give you something concrete to work toward, and a way to measure your progress.

### Set short-term and long-term goals

Short-term goals often take hours or days to achieve. Long term goals may take weeks, months, or even years to achieve.

#### Examples of short-term goals:

- Get all of my chores done before dinner
- Get a B on Friday's history test

#### Examples of long-term goals:

- Make the baseball team this spring
- Go to college after I graduate



### Make goals that are specific, measurable, and realistic

**Not specific** – I will do better in math.

**Specific** – I will get a B in math this semester.

**Not measurable** – I won't be so shy in class.

**Measurable** – I will raise my hand 3 times today.

**Not realistic** – I usually get all Cs on my report card, but this semester I will get straight As.

**Realistic** – I usually get all Cs on my report card, but this semester I'm going to get two Bs.

## Making Choices



**When you make good choices, you reap the rewards. When you make poor choices and decisions, you must accept the consequences.**

Most of the choices you make aren't that important (what to wear, what to eat, what shows to watch). Some choices, however, need to be given careful thought and consideration.

When you have an important choice or decision to make, try going through the following four steps:

**Step 1** – Determine your choices.

**Step 2** – Make sure you have all of the information you need to make your decision.

**Step 3** – Take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. On one side, list the positive things about each choice. On the other side, list the negative things.

**Step 4** – Consider the positive and negative aspects of each choice, and then make your decision.

**As a middle school student, you must be prepared to accept responsibility for your actions, and for the choices and decisions you make.**

# Setting Goals & Making Choices

## Setting Goals

Having goals gives you direction, focus, and purpose. Having a goal can also help you come up with a plan of action.

*For example, if you want to get As and Bs on your next report card, there are certain things you need to do to achieve that goal.*

## Making Good Choices

In middle school, you have more freedom, and you get to make more of your own choices and decisions. But with freedom and independence comes responsibility.

*Think about who you are and what you want to achieve in school and in life. Make choices and decisions that are right for you.*

## Info About You

To choose a career that's going to be right for you, think about your interests, talents, and abilities.

1. What courses do you like the most? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What activities or hobbies do you enjoy?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What talents or skills do you have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you want a career that requires:
  - 1 year (or less) of education after high school
  - 2 to 4 years of additional education
5. Which do you like working with the most?
  - people (working with people)
  - things (activities using objects or tools)
  - information (desk-type activities)
6. What's important to you in a career (e.g., money, working outside, job security, travel)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Look over your responses, and think about the kinds of careers that might be right for you.

For additional help in planning your future, go to [careeronestop.org](http://careeronestop.org).



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# Career Exploration



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## How will you prepare for a career?

Below are six ways that you can prepare for a great career. Which of these will be the best choice for you?

### High School Career and Technology Education

– Most high schools offer a variety of career and technology programs for their students.

**Two-Year College** – These colleges offer many affordable one- and two-year career programs.

**Four-Year College** – A four-year college education can provide students with a wide range of career opportunities.

**Career and Trade School** – These schools offer short-term training in a variety of career fields.

**Apprenticeship** – Apprentices learn a skilled trade through classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

**Military** – The U.S. military offers enlistees free job training in over 2,000 job specialties.



# Career Exploration

Even though high school graduation is several years away, it's not too early to think about what you want to do after high school.

Middle school is a great time to start thinking about what career you'd like to have—and about the various ways you can prepare for a career.

To get started, choose a few careers you'd like to consider, and then learn as much as you can about them.

*A career that's perfect for one person may be totally wrong for another. As you plan for your future, think about what career is going to be right for you.*

## Careers by Subject

Choose a favorite subject and consider careers that are related to that subject. Here are some examples.

**English** – broadcaster, journalist, lawyer, librarian, paralegal, receptionist, reporter, salesperson, speech pathologist, teacher, writer

**Foreign Language** – flight attendant, nurse, social worker, teacher, tour guide, translator, travel agent

**Math** – accountant, bank teller, carpenter, computer programmer, electrician, engineer, loan officer, stockbroker, surveyor, systems analyst, teacher

**Science** – athletic trainer, biologist, chemist, dentist, engineer, forester, medical technician, nurse, physical therapist, physician, teacher, veterinarian

**Social Studies** – archaeologist, corrections officer, geographer, lawyer, newscaster, paralegal, police officer, politician, psychologist, social worker, teacher

**The Arts** – actor, architect, artist, composer, dancer, fashion designer, interior designer, musician, photographer, sound engineer, teacher



## Learn About Careers

Find a career you'd like to learn more about. Then research it, talk to people, and if possible, get some related experience.

### Read and research

There are lots of great books and websites to help you learn about the careers you're interested in. For example, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* has excellent information on hundreds of careers. An online edition of this book is available at [www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh).



### Talk to people

Talk to your school counselor, the teachers who teach related subjects, and to anyone else who might be knowledgeable about the careers you're considering.

If possible, job shadow an adult for a day. This is a great way to find out what it's like to work in a specific career.

### Get some related experience

The best way to learn about a career is to get some firsthand experience. You could, for example, get involved in a related activity after school.