Everyone always says that high school and college are not the same, but what exactly is the difference?

High School

Parents or high school teachers may remind you about upcoming assignments; they may also help you prioritize your responsibilities. High school teachers might also approach you if they feel you need help.

In high school, you go from class to class for between 6 and 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, which puts you in class for a minimum of 30 hours a week.

You might not have to study very often for high school courses, and you may be able to do many assignments last minute and still receive a good grade.

High school teachers write information on the board or show you a presentation with the material. They may even provide the notes for you, and you can read the notes or class texts once or twice, or rely on listening to lectures, for good grades on quizzes, assignments, etc.

Attendance is closely monitored and almost always required in high school. If a teacher is absent, a substitute is sent in to continue the class.

Tests are frequent, and they cover small amounts of material. They may also be rearranged to avoid conflicts with high school events (pep rallies, homecoming, etc.).

Low initial test grades may not affect your final grade in high school. You may even be able to complete a semester or school year with a high average because of consistently good homework grades or extra credit assignments, even with low test grades.

College

As a college student, you are responsible for remembering your assignments’ due dates and prioritizing your responsibilities. College professors might reach out, but it is typically understood that you must initiate contact.

Since you set your own schedule in college, you may have an hour (or more!) between classes, or you might not have classes on certain days. Class times vary, and you’re only in class for a minimum of 12 hours a week.

Most college professors will tell you that you need to study at least 2-3 hours a day for each class. Though this is not always the case, you will need to study more and it may take longer to complete college-level assignments.

Some college professors don’t always follow the textbook, and many expect you to write your own notes based on class lectures. Good note-taking is a must, and reviewing notes and texts regularly is often necessary to complete assignments, do well on exams, etc.

Attendance may not be required, but college professors may use it to evaluate your participation in the class. In addition, not attending classes could result in a failure of the class or exams. Also, if the professor is absent, it is likely class will be cancelled until your next meeting time.

In college, testing may be infrequent and are often cumulative, meaning they cover more information; some courses may only have 2 – 3 tests in a semester. College professors also set their schedule in advance to many university events, and they are not likely to reschedule.

College exams and major assignments make up a majority of your course grade; the first exams in your course typically give you a good idea of what to expect, and they are likely to count for a large portion of your grade. Extra credit opportunities are sometimes available, but they may not significantly increase your class average.