

What's the diff?

College — it's not just four more years of high school away from home. There are more responsibilities, but there's also more independence. Check out some of the differences below and talk to your school counselor about ways you can make yourself "college-ready."

the classes you take

- Class sizes may range from 100 students (first-year intro courses) to only five students (senior-year specialized courses), depending on school and major.
- Professors probably won't remind you of your incomplete work, check that you've done your reading, or offer extra-credit opportunities.
- Plan on two to three hours of study outside of class for each hour you spend in class.
- If you miss a class, you'll be responsible for the material (borrow notes from a reliable classmate!).
- Tests and papers will comprise most of your grade. Tests are less frequent (two or three per term).
- You may be tested on reading that was assigned but not covered in class; also, professors may lecture on material that's *not* in the textbook and expect you to relate the lectures to the reading.
- Good note-taking is a must. If you're concerned about missing important points, you can buy an inexpensive tape recorder for lectures.

Basically, at college it's up to you to apply what you're learning and to understand assigned material, even if it isn't covered in class. If you have questions, you can visit your professors during their office hours to talk about assignments; in many departments, upperclass students are often available for tutoring.

the choices you make

- You get to manage your own time, balance responsibilities, and set priorities.
- You'll likely find yourself making moral and ethical decisions you've never made by yourself. If you need help, you can talk with a counselor at the Student Services center.
- You'll arrange your own academic plan with support from your advisor.
- You'll have a vast array of choices where your time is concerned. Enjoy it, but use it wisely; many departments allow you to graduate only if your grades meet a particular standard, usually a 2.0 (a C).

Basically, this is your entrance into adulthood. College is expensive, so it's a good time to learn what it means to get the most from your investment. What you get out of it depends largely on what you put into it. Hard work and openness to new experiences can enable you to thrive no matter what school you attend.