

Lesson 9

Graduating from High School

In this lesson, students deepen their understanding of the importance of staying in school by learning about the consequences of dropping out and by considering which of these consequences is most relevant to them personally. Through reading about how students facing a variety of serious challenges stay in school, and by brainstorming solutions to address common stumbling blocks, students realize how many resources they have to handle any problem. Next, they learn exactly what steps they need to take in order to graduate with a high school diploma. Familiarizing themselves with the lexicon of high school academics and requirements is a key component of making the world of high school their own. Students put all of this information together as they learn how to set realistic long-term goals for themselves. They finish this lesson by creating a Four-Year Action Plan to guide them towards graduation from high school.

Make It Local | This lesson requires substantial changes for each individual school and/or community. The lesson content addresses topics include truancy and dropout prevention, as well as graduation requirements. Information from San Francisco is included in many documents as a model; these documents will require significant revisions before they can be used in other settings. Please take time to read through this entire lesson and all included documents well in advance to allow yourself time to make the necessary adjustments.

Documents requiring revision include:

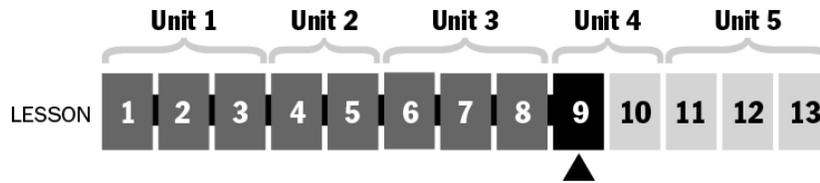
- Teacher Resources 9.3, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7
- Student Resources 9.1, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7

Since both PowerPoint presentations will require major revisions, they are not included as student readings in this lesson. Once you make alterations to the presentations, you can provide students with copies of them as readings if you so choose.

Advance Preparation

- Read Teacher Resource 9.1, Guide: High School Dropout Intervention, before this lesson.
- Class Period 4 offers the option of a Q&A session with a school college and career counselor, as well as a high school senior. It is recommended that you plan this classroom guest speaker well in advance with the counseling department.

This lesson is expected to take 8 class periods.



Lesson Framework

Learning Objectives

Each student will:

- Explain the most common reasons students give for dropping out of high school
- Summarize common long-term consequences of dropping out
- Explain the relationship between truancy and dropping out
- Summarize graduation requirements
- Interpret a high school transcript
- Decide how best to create a four-year high school action plan (portfolio component)

Academic Standards

- Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning (ASCA National Standards, A:A1.5)
- Apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance (ASCA National Standards, A:A2.4)
- Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family and peers (ASCA National Standards, A:B1.4)
- Understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success (ASCA National Standards, C:C1.1)
- Learn how to cope with peer pressure (ASCA National Standards, PS:C1.9)

21st Century Skills

This lesson focuses on the following 21st century skills:

- Academic competence: Students demonstrate academic skills and knowledge that allows them to graduate from high school (and meet a-g requirements) and be prepared for college or a career
- Communication skills: Students demonstrate listening, speaking, reading, writing, presenting, and non-verbal communication that clearly demonstrates their skills and knowledge
- Critical and creative thinking, reasoning, and solution seeking: Students demonstrate skills that help them acquire knowledge, comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, think dialectically and about their thinking (meta-cognition)

Assessment

ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	MEANS OF ASSESSMENT
Four-year high school action plan (Student Resource 9.9, portfolio component)	Assessment Criteria: My Four-Year Action Plan (Teacher Resource 9.8)

Prerequisites

- Understanding of personal talents and characteristics
- Preliminary career goals chosen for the future
- Grasp of the relationship between education, opportunities, and standard of living

Instructional Materials

Teacher Resources

- Teacher Resource 9.1, Guide: High School Dropout Intervention
- Teacher Resource 9.2, Posters: Four Corners Activities
- Teacher Resource 9.3, Interactive Presentation 1 Notes and Instructions: Truancy (includes separate PowerPoint file)
- Teacher Resource 9.4, Template: Cornell Notes (separate Word file)
- Teacher Resource 9.5, Interactive Presentation 2 Notes and Instructions: Graduating from High School (includes separate PowerPoint file)
- Teacher Resource 9.6, Bingo Guide: Graduating from High School
- Teacher Resource 9.7, Bingo Cards: Graduating from High School (separate Word file)

- Teacher Resource 9.8, Assessment Criteria: My Four-Year Action Plan
- Teacher Resource 9.9, Key Vocabulary: Graduating from High School
- Teacher Resource 9.10, Bibliography: Graduating from High School

Student Resources

- Student Resource 9.1, Example: Cornell Notes
- Student Resource 9.2, Reading: School Challenges
- Student Resource 9.3, Reading and Practice: Setting Goals
- Student Resource 9.4, Graduation Requirements (separate Word file)
- Student Resource 9.5, Planner: Preparing My Four-Year Action Plan
- Student Resource 9.6, Example: Four-Year Action Plan
- Student Resource 9.7, Worksheet: Four-Year Action Plan

Equipment and Supplies

- Whiteboard or blackboard
- Poster board (eight pieces)
- Chart paper (four large pieces)
- LCD projector and computer for PowerPoint presentations

Lesson Steps

CLASS PERIOD 1

STEP 1, FOUR CORNERS

PART I: MAKING IT THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

25 minutes

SET-UP

This springboard activity occurs in two phases. The first phase requires the first four posters from Teacher Resource 9.2, Posters: Four Corners Activities. The second set of posters is for use in Part II.

Before class, prepare both sets of posters by cutting them apart; they will be sturdier if you affix them to poster board. Place the first four posters in four corners of the classroom.

The first set of posters is as follows:

- School is boring/Not motivated
- Have to go to work to support family
- School is too hard/Not prepared to do well
- Have to raise a child

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Ninth grade is a precarious time for most students; research shows that this is an especially important time for dropout intervention. When polled, approximately two-thirds of dropouts said they would have tried harder if more had been expected from them and if they'd received more of a wake-up call about the consequences of dropping out.

Many students do not realize the seriousness of their decision to drop out of high school. This activity, the first of two “Four Corners” activities, prompts students to consider some of the reasons why people drop out of high school.

Teacher Resource 9.1, Guide: High School Dropout Intervention, provides teachers with some additional guidance for this period-long, two-part springboard activity.

INSTRUCTION

- At the start of the period, instruct students to move to the corner that they think is the number one reason people drop out of high school.
- Prompt each group to discuss their choice. Call on each group to share why they think their choice is the reason most students give for dropping out. If a corner has not been chosen by any students, prompt discussion around that: why doesn't anyone think this reason is a major one for dropping out?
- Have students return to their seats so that you can read the following statistics (as an option, also note them on the board as you share them):

When 500 dropouts, aged 16–25, were interviewed, they gave many reasons for leaving school:

- 69% said they were not motivated to work hard

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- 47% said classes were not interesting
 - 45% entered high school poorly prepared by their earlier schooling
 - 35% said they were failing
 - 32% said they left to get a job
 - 25% left to become parents
 - 22% left to take care of a relative
- Ask students what their reactions are to these statistics. If students are comfortable sharing, have them consider what some other reasons might be (e.g., peer pressure, bullying, lack of encouragement) and which, if any, of the reasons resonate with them or other people they know.
- Have students return to their seats and prepare for the second Four Corners activity.

DIFFERENTIATION

If many of your English learners are recent immigrants, take time to explain the concept of “dropping out” from the American standpoint before beginning this activity. Different cultures may have different perceptions regarding this phenomenon.

If you have a large number of students with limited English proficiency, prepare a handout with the dropout facts listed above and have it translated into students’ primary languages.

STEP 2, FOUR CORNERS

PART II: WHY A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA MAKES A DIFFERENCE

25 minutes

SET-UP

Post the second set of posters in the four corners of the classroom. The second set of posters is as follows:

- 8 to 1: Likelihood that a high school dropout will go to prison compared to a high school graduate
- 54%: High school dropouts aged 16–24 with no job in 2009
- 32%: High school graduates aged 16–24 with

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The purpose of this, the second part of the Four Corners springboard activity, is to have students identify some of the effects of dropping out.

It also prompts them to consider some of the resources that schools make available to help students stay in school, as well as what students themselves can do to make it through to graduation.

no job in 2009

- 13%: College graduates aged 16–24 with no job in 2009
- 9 to 1: Likelihood that a high school dropout will be a single parent living in poverty compared to a college graduate
- \$9,200: Average amount more per year that a high school graduate earns than a high school dropout
- \$1 million: Average lifetime amount that a college graduate earns more than a high school dropout

INSTRUCTION

- Once you have posted the new set of statistics, call on a different student to read each poster aloud.
- To illustrate the ratio on the first poster, have nine students gather at the front of the room. Have one student step forward as the single prisoner to have graduated from high school. Repeat with 10 students to illustrate the third poster (i.e., one college graduate who is a single parent living in poverty compared to nine high school dropouts in the same conditions).
- Ask: “Which of the effects of dropping out do you personally think is the most troubling or upsetting? Go to that corner.”
- Once students are in their corners, have them discuss the reasons why they chose that statistic among themselves. As students discuss for a few minutes, post a large sheet of chart paper in each corner of the classroom next to each group. If groups are large, you may want to post two pieces of chart paper.
- Have each group in turn share why they chose their reasons with the class. Summarize by saying that the class has just explored the main reasons dropouts give for leaving school, as well as the serious, lifelong consequences of dropping out.
- Now students need to think about how to prevent dropping out of school. Distribute markers to each group. Write the following two prompts on the board:
 - Things a school can do to help kids stay in school and graduate
 - Things students can do to stick it out and graduate from high school
- Tell students to write the headers “School” and “Students” on their chart paper. Tell them to write down their ideas under each header. Have each group present their ideas to the class. If students have trouble coming up with ideas, you can suggest afterschool programs, mentors, resources that are specific to your school, websites, and nonprofits that work with schools to help struggling students.
- Refer to Teacher Resource 9.1, Guide: High School Dropout Intervention, for possible prompts for further discussion regarding dropout intervention.

- Note that the ideas students came up with are proof that students and schools together can have a huge influence on whether students graduate. Collect the chart paper lists and let students know that they will be learning about what it takes to graduate from high school later in this lesson.

DIFFERENTIATION

If you have a large number of students with limited English proficiency, you may wish to have the second set of signs translated into students' primary languages, since these signs include more complex content.

Keep in mind that students' viewpoints on dropping out may be strongly influenced by their cultural backgrounds. Students whose families have historically been migrant workers or farmers may already have more education than most of their family members; students from other cultures that value education may never have considered dropping out because of the familial shame it would cause; students who recently arrived from another country may have no frame of reference for "dropping out" at all.

Consider taking time to discuss these varying viewpoints as a class. Encourage students not to stereotype or to make assumptions—a person who comes from a family of migrant workers may be more determined to get a good education because of seeing her family's experience, while a student from a wealthier home may take his education for granted—but to recognize that our familial and cultural backgrounds often play a role in how we approach education and career decisions.

CLASS PERIOD 2

STEP 3, PRESENTATION

TRUANCY

35 minutes

SET-UP

- Before this class period begins, review Teacher Resource 9.3, Interactive Presentation 1 Notes and Instructions: Truancy. Read over your notes and make sure you are prepared for the presentation.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

This presentation defines *truancy* under California state law and explains some of the legal consequences of truancy for both parents and students.

INSTRUCTION

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Make It Local | The presentation and presentation notes require substantial revision to ensure they reflect your school, district, and community practices regarding truancy.

- Set up this activity by asking students, “How many of you know someone who has cut class?” Many, if not most, students will raise their hands.
- Note that students rarely make up their minds to drop out of high school for no reason. It usually happens over time. Students who cut class once in awhile miss schoolwork and start to fall behind. Explain, if necessary, that students who cut class are known as *truants*. Because it’s against the law to skip school, *truancy* (or the act of missing school without permission) has serious consequences. The more students cut, the more they miss, until finally they might feel too far behind to come to school at all.
- Project the title slide of Teacher Resource 9.3 and explain that students are going to learn a little more about the potential consequences of truancy.
- Show the second slide (Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down). Call on a volunteer to read the first statement aloud. Then ask students to “vote” on whether they agree or disagree by holding up their arm with a “thumbs up” if they agree or a “thumbs down” if they disagree. If they are not sure, they can hold their thumb sideways or shake it in a “so-so” gesture. Repeat this process until students have “voted” on all four statements.
- Then show the rest of the presentation. Use the suggestions in Teacher Resource 9.3, Interactive Presentation 1 Notes and Instructions: Truancy, to stop at key points and conduct brief activities with the students. These will help students understand the content and help to keep them engaged with the material.
- When the presentation comes to an end, project the last slide and ask students: what did you learn from this presentation? Review the four statements and ask students to re-vote on each of them. Use this as a way to quickly check comprehension by looking for the following results:
 - Students should agree with the first statement (Most of the people in jail...).
 - Students should disagree with the second statement (Cutting class five times...).
 - Students should disagree with the third statement (Based on absences, not tardies...).
 - Students should agree with the fourth statement (Parents can get in trouble...).

DIFFERENTIATION

Before beginning this presentation, consider taking time to review unfamiliar English vocabulary with students, including words like *truancy*, *misdemeanor*, *habitual*, *consequences*, *prosecute*, *tardy*, or *homicide*. You may wish to use some of the vocabulary activities suggested in Lesson 8.

STEP 4, DISCUSSION
USING CORNELL NOTES

15 minutes

SET-UP

Before class, copy Teacher Resource 9.4, Template: Cornell Notes, and Student Resource 9.1, Example: Cornell Notes, for the class.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Students are introduced to the Cornell Notes method of note taking. They review a completed example of Cornell Notes based on the presentation they just viewed. This is preparation for using Cornell Notes themselves in the next class period.

INSTRUCTION

Make It Local | The example notes are based on the presentation on truancy. Modify the notes based on your changes to the presentation (Teacher Resource 9.3).

- Introduce Teacher Resource 9.4, Template: Cornell Notes, and Student Resource 9.1, Example: Cornell Notes. Explain that one very important skill for succeeding in school is taking good notes. Tell students that this approach to note taking works for any subject and that they will now become familiar with how to do it.
- Use the template and example to identify the key features of Cornell Notes—specifically, the Notes, Question/Main Idea, and Summary sections. Since the example is based on the presentation they just viewed, students should feel familiar with the content, but this can also be an excellent time to clear up any misunderstandings students might still have.
- Explain how this process of taking notes, identifying questions/main ideas, and summarizing the information after the notes are complete, will help students make sure they fully understand the information they are taking notes on. Answer any questions and tell students that in the next class period they will practice using Cornell Notes during a presentation.

DIFFERENTIATION

Cornell Notes may be a difficult note-taking method for English learners to understand. If you have a large number of English learners, you may wish to consider a different note-taking format or use one of the following adaptations:

- Take additional time to walk students through the process of completing a Cornell Notes template, so that English learners can more easily comprehend where different pieces of information belong.
- Create a revised version of the example Cornell Notes that include hints and suggestions in students' primary language(s) so that students can refer to both the example in English and the suggestions in their primary language when they begin using the format.
- Create a version of the Cornell Notes template that has the headings/content labels in students' primary language(s), but remind students that they need to practice taking their notes in English. Alternately, create a two-page version of the template that allows students to do Cornell Notes in their primary language on one side of the page and then translate their notes into English on the opposite side of the page.

CLASS PERIOD 3

STEP 5, PRESENTATION

GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

50 minutes

SET-UP

- Make copies of the Cornell Notes template (separate Word document). Prepare to show Teacher Resource 9.5, Interactive Presentation 2 Notes and Instructions: Graduating from High School.
- Before this class period begins, review Teacher Resource 9.5. Read over your notes and make sure you are prepared for the presentation.
- Fill in the blank PowerPoint slide in the presentation with information about the specific course options and pathways and/or academies at your school. Or, delete this slide and provide students with a handout of this information instead.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The purpose of this activity is to familiarize students with the vocabulary of graduation requirements and to lay out the steps necessary to graduate from high school. It also gives them the opportunity to practice taking Cornell Notes.

INSTRUCTION

Make It Local | The presentation and presentation notes will need substantial revision to reflect the graduation requirements of your school or district.

- Introduce this activity by saying that in the last class period any misperceptions about the importance of staying in school were dispelled. Today, students will learn more about what they need to do in order to graduate. Distribute the Cornell Notes template and tell students to use the template to take notes on the presentation. Briefly review the template to make sure everyone remembers the key features of Cornell Notes—specifically, the Notes, Questions/Main Ideas, and Summary sections. Tell students to be thorough as they take notes, because they will need them later in this lesson and because you will be checking them.
- Then show the presentation. Use the suggestions in Teacher Resource 9.5, Interactive Presentation 2 Notes and Instructions: Graduating from High School, to stop at key points and conduct brief activities with the students. These will help students understand the content and help to keep them engaged with the material.
- When the presentation is complete, divide the class into groups of three or four and ask students to compare their Cornell Notes. Students should look for the following things (which may be posted on the board):
 - Did we put the same type of information in each section of the template?
 - Did we take notes on similar information? Or did my classmates write down stuff I thought was unimportant (or vice versa)?
- After students have had a few minutes to review in their groups, ask for a show of hands of how many students' notes look similar. Take this opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings about how to use

Cornell Notes.

- Then ask students: what questions do you have about graduating from high school? Guide students to recognize that they may have specific questions about the types of classes they need to take, the tests they need to pass, their involvement in extracurricular activities, or how their choice of a particular college may impact what they need to study.
- Ask students to write down their questions in their notebook, leaving space after each question to write down an answer. Explain that in the next class period they will have an opportunity to get answers to all these questions.
- If time remains, call on students, popcorn-style (at random), to respond to the following prompt: One new thing I learned from this presentation is....

DIFFERENTIATION

If you have a large number of English learners, you may wish to substitute the Preview-View-Review strategy for presenting this information. Begin by giving English learners a preview of this content in their primary language(s). This can be accomplished by providing them with a short translated reading, or having a bilingual teacher, student, or parent volunteer summarize what they should expect to learn during the presentation. Then show the presentation in English. When the presentation is complete, review the material with English learners in their primary language, but ask them to complete the Cornell Notes in English.

CLASS PERIOD 4

STEP 6, Q&A DISCUSSION

GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

25 minutes

SET-UP

Plan in advance to have a college and career counselor (and high school senior, if possible) come to class after you have presented the PowerPoint “Graduating from High School.” If this is not a possibility, you should be prepared to field the students’ questions yourself.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Even though the presentation answers many questions, it probably generated some as well, especially with regard to how the information pertains to students personally.

This activity gives students a chance to ask their questions. It is recommended that the teacher invite a college and career counselor (and high

school senior, if possible) for a Q&A session.

Meeting the counseling staff helps to establish rapport and gives the counselor a chance to let students know about the support mechanisms in place at your school. Students will also benefit from interaction with the senior, who can serve as a role model for the class.

INSTRUCTION

- Briefly remind students of appropriate guest speaker behavior guidelines and active listening skills. Introduce guest speaker(s) and explain that they are here to answer students' questions on the graduation requirements.
- Facilitate a Q&A session with the guest speaker(s) by calling on students popcorn-style (at random) to ask the questions they developed in their groups. Make sure students don't repeat questions that have already been asked.
- Instruct students to add the answers to their notebooks as they are explained.
- Make sure that students know how to reach the guest speaker(s) if they have more questions or need future guidance.
- Tell students to review their Cornell Notes briefly before they are collected and assessed for credit/no credit.

DIFFERENTIATION

Before the arrival of the guest speaker(s), work with English learners to identify some questions they can ask. Assign a question to an English learner and let the student know that you will be calling on her during the guest speaker's visit. Help her to practice her question so that she feels confident about speaking in front of the class. This allows English learners to feel more a part of the classroom interaction.

If you have a large number of students with limited English proficiency, you may wish to arrange for an additional guest speaker(s) who can address students in their primary language(s). The additional guest speaker(s) may also wish to address the added challenges of pursuing an education for students who are still learning English. Encourage the speaker(s) to emphasize potential long-term benefits for students who become fluently bilingual (for example, many colleges expect students to learn a second language, and many companies value employees who speak more than one language).

STEP 7, BINGO

TERMINOLOGY FOR GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

25 minutes

SET-UP

Read Teacher Resource 9.6, Bingo Guide: Graduating from High School, for preparation and game instructions.

Prepare copies of bingo cards for students from Teacher Resource 9.7, Bingo Cards: Graduating from High School, and sets of bingo markers/placeholders.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

This activity holds students accountable for knowing the graduation requirements. It is also a fun way to solidify their understanding of what it takes to graduate from high school and to increase their comfort level with this terminology.

Make It Local | The bingo cards and clues are based on the presentations. Revise both the cards and clues based on your changes to the “Graduating from High School” presentation.

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- Hand out a bingo card and one set of bingo placeholders to each student.
- Save one bingo card and one set of placeholders for yourself to use as the call card.
- Tell students to begin by putting a placeholder on the square labeled “FREE BINGO SPACE.”
- Read the definitions of the terms in random order (or share any other information you wish about them) aloud. Tell students to put a bingo marker on the correct term.
- Cover your call card with placeholders as you read each definition.
- Allow students to help each other by saying the term out loud when you give the definition.
- Tell students that the first to cover five terms in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) should call out “Bingo!”
- Have the student who calls “Bingo!” read the terms he covered aloud so you can make sure his answers match the call card.
- Optional: Give extra credit to the winner or some small reward that you deem appropriate. The winner could also call a round. Play as many rounds of bingo as time allows to reinforce vocabulary.
- At the end of the activity, collect the bingo cards and placeholders from students. Before moving on to the next activity, be sure to answer any remaining questions students may have about graduation requirements and remind them of the specific resources available at your school.

DIFFERENTIATION

If you have a large number of students who have recently arrived in the United States, you may need to explain the concept of a bingo game in more detail or even play a practice round.

CLASS PERIOD 5

STEP 8, READING

SCHOOL CHALLENGES, DECISIONS, AND CONSEQUENCES

50 minutes

SET-UP

Prepare copies of Student Resource 9.2, Reading: School Challenges.

Write the following prompts on the board:

- What challenges or problems did this student face?
- How did the student respond to them?

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

This reading uses anecdotes about individual students to illustrate different ways of handling adversity. It reinforces the seriousness of the choices they make and shows students some of the ways to persist in order to graduate.

INSTRUCTION

- Explain to students that they will be reading profiles of five students who have faced major challenges when it comes to sticking it out in high school.
- Distribute Student Resource 9.2, Reading: School Challenges.
- Point to the two prompts and explain that each story describes some challenges that a student faces and how this student responds to those challenges. Instruct students to write “challenge” or “response” in the margin each time they come upon one or the other as they read.
- After they have finished reading, have students briefly compare their responses with a neighbor.
- Ask volunteers to share the challenges and responses in each profile. Ask the rest of the class if they agree or disagree, and why.

DIFFERENTIATION

If you have a large number of students with limited English proficiency, have the two prompts translated into students' primary language(s). You may also wish to work through the first story together, modeling how to identify and label challenges and responses in the reading.

Ensure that all students understand such idiomatic expressions as “sticking it out.”

CLASS PERIOD 6

STEP 9, READING

SETTING GOALS

50 minutes

SET-UP

Prepare copies of Student Resource 9.3, Reading and Practice: Setting Goals.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Students take another step in effective goal setting by learning the DAPPS rule and applying it. The DAPPS acronym (Dated, Achievable, Personal, Positive, Specific) is a mnemonic device that provides students with a tool for setting motivating goals.

INSTRUCTION

- Distribute copies of Student Resource 9.3, Reading and Practice: Setting Goals.
- Go over the reading as a class and have students note that they are asked to practice setting goals as they learn about the DAPPS method of goal setting. They should pay close attention to the DAPPS rule discussed in the reading so they will know how to formulate their goals.
- Have students read Setting Goals. When they have finished, ask them to pair with a neighbor and share the goals they set. After a few minutes, ask volunteers to answer each of the questions; check in with the class to make sure everyone agrees. Ask volunteers to share their goals. Have the class put the goal through the DAPPS acronym. Does it fit all of the criteria of a goal that is achievable? Use this opportunity to help students understand how to use DAPPS to clarify their goals to themselves.
- You may wish to collect the reading to assess student responses for credit/no credit.
- Let students know that they will be creating a four-year action plan to help them achieve their long-term goal of graduation in the next class period.

DIFFERENTIATION

The process of goal setting in English may be difficult for English learners. Rather than having students attempt goal setting on their own, consider working through the reading and examples as a class.

You may wish to provide two versions of the worksheet—one in students' primary language(s) that they can use as a reference, as well as the original worksheet in English, which students complete. Alternately, you may wish to provide a bilingual tutor or assistant to answer English learners' questions as they work through the worksheet in English.

CLASS PERIOD 7

STEP 10, PREPARATION

MY FOUR-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

50 minutes

SET-UP

Prepare copies of:

- Student Resource 9.5, Planner: Preparing My Four-Year Action Plan
- Student Resource 9.4, Graduation Requirements (separate Word file)
- Your school's course listings

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

This activity prepares students for creating a four-year action plan. Specifically, students consider which required and elective courses they plan to take in each grade in order to graduate from high school.

This activity also requires students to use the resources they have learned about earlier in this lesson (a-g requirements, standardized testing information, course listings, etc.).

INSTRUCTION

Make It Local | Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district.

- Explain to students that they are about to put what they have learned about planning and goal setting toward the development of a four-year action plan. This plan will cover not only required courses they plan to take in order to graduate, but it will also include electives and any tests they need to take to prepare for their post-high school ambitions. They will also include which co-curricular activities they plan to participate in. Remind them that becoming involved in activities for fun will be one key means of staying motivated and getting through those aspects of high school that are more difficult.
- As a class, review Student Resource 9.5, Planner: Preparing My Four-Year Action Plan, which has students frame their goal to graduate using the DAPPS rule and includes prompts on the required classes, electives, co-curricular activities, and standardized tests students anticipate taking over the next four years.
- Answer any questions students may have about this assignment. Distribute Student Resource 9.4, Graduation Requirements, and copies of your school’s course listings for students to use as references.
- Have students gather any additional materials they may need to fill out their assignment sheet. You may wish to return their Cornell Notes from earlier in the lesson.
- Give students the rest of the period to go over the course listings and start filling out the assignment sheet. When about 10 minutes are left of the class period, have students share their work with a neighbor. Each student should offer constructive suggestions for improvement, if she can think of any, and accept them from the classmate.
- Let them know they must complete the assignment sheet for homework and come to the next period prepared to “translate” their courses, tests, and activities into a four-year action plan.

DIFFERENTIATION

Navigating the planning process and making sense of the requirements and documents can be difficult for English learners. Consider having bilingual aides available to help English learners work their way through the four-year action plan. Alternately, allow English learners additional time to complete their four-year action plans with your assistance.

Providing a version of the Graduation Requirements in students’ primary language(s) can also aid English learners.

CLASS PERIOD 8

STEP 11, ORGANIZER

MY FOUR-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

50 minutes

SET-UP

Prepare copies of Student Resource 9.6, Example: Four-Year Action Plan, and Student Resource 9.7, Worksheet: Four-Year Action Plan.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

In this activity, students use Student Resource 9.7 and their planning and goal-setting skills to create a four-year high school action plan, a key component of their portfolios.

INSTRUCTION

Make It Local | Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district.

- Distribute Student Resource 9.6, Example: Four-Year Action Plan. Have them note the layout, including the required courses, additional electives, standardized tests, and possible co-curricular activities. Ensure understanding by asking volunteers to explain where to find a particular piece of information.
- Next, distribute the blank action plans (Student Resource 9.7, Worksheet: Four-Year Action Plan).
- Then, have students take out Student Resource 9.5, Planner: Preparing My Four-Year Action Plan, the graphic organizers they completed for homework, to use to fill out their four-year action plans.
- You will need to circulate around the room and check in with each student individually to make sure that all the graduation requirements are accounted for. You will also need to make sure students understand when tests such as the PSAT, SAT, and ACT occur.
- Remind students that meeting graduation requirements and obtaining a C grade or higher in core courses will also help them gain admission to four-year colleges.
- Toward the end of the period, write the following questions on the board:
 - Which grad requirements seem like the biggest hurdles?
 - How do you plan to deal with any hurdles?
- Have students get into groups of four, discuss the questions on the board, and share their plans. Call on one or two groups to share their thoughts on the discussion questions.
- At the end of the period, have students turn in their action plans for assessment (you may wish to have them staple their assignment sheets underneath their plans). Also instruct students to save a copy of the action plan in their digital portfolios. After you have assessed the action plans, consider adding a copy of the assignment with your notes/comments to student portfolios as well.

DIFFERENTIATION

Group students homogeneously—that is, by primary language—to facilitate discussion for English learners.

ENHANCED PORTFOLIO OPTION

Have students expand their action plans by creating a PowerPoint or other type of digital presentation. The presentation should include at least 3-4 slides for each year of high school: 1-2 slides on the courses the student plans to take and the tests the student needs to pass, and 1-2 slides on co-curricular activities the student plans to engage in. Each slide should list the courses/tests/activities and include relevant graphics. In the notes section of each slide, students should write a brief explanation of why they chose those courses/tests/activities. Have students include the presentation in their digital portfolios.

Extensions

Enrichment

- Present students (and parents) with information on relaxation and stress management. See “Helping Teenagers with Stress” at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry website (http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/helping_teenagers_with_stress) or “Teaching Our Teenagers How to Relax During High Stress Periods” at Associated Content (http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/180305/teenagers_stress_methods_for_relaxation.html).
- Have students set additional short-term and long-term DAPPS goals (with corresponding action plans) for the semester (e.g., to get a B in math, to train to try out for a sport, to learn how to play the guitar). Then have students share these with the class.
- Have students research another popular goal-setting mnemonic that could be used with students known as SMART goals. For more information, see the Wikipedia entry on SMART Criteria (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria). Students can compare SMART goals with DAPPS.
- Talk to some seniors who would make good interview subjects for your students. Have students share their Four-Year Action Plans with the seniors and talk with them about their own high school experiences, what their plans would have/did look like, and what some of their other goals are.

Cross-Curricular Integration

- Math: Have students graph the graduation and dropout statistics at your school over the last decade. Compare these numbers to statewide statistics. What, if any, conclusions can they draw based on the graph?

Plan Ahead Lesson 9
Graduating from High School

- English/Language Arts: A koan that captures the underlying theme of this lesson is by the inspirational speaker Martin Rutte: “You have to do it by yourself, and you can’t do it alone.” Ask students to write about how this koan applies to them personally. Discuss the characteristics of the koan and its purpose in Zen Buddhism. After studying some more examples, ask students to write their own koan. Swap koans and have classmates try to explain the meaning of each other’s koans.
- English/Language Arts: Have students follow a character’s goal or mission throughout the course of a novel or a short story. Students develop an action plan that traces the steps the character takes to reach (or not reach) that goal.