

# Lesson 9

## Graduating from High School

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### Student Resources

Resource	Description
Student Resource 9.1	Example: Cornell Notes <b>Make It Local</b>   The example notes are based on the presentation on truancy. Modify the notes based on your changes to the presentation (Teacher Resource 9.3). Then remove this callout.
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) <b>Make It Local</b>   Create or obtain a document that lists all graduation requirements for your school or district; then remove this callout.
Student Resource 9.5	Planner: Preparing My Four-Year Action Plan <b>Make It Local</b>   Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district; then remove this callout.
Student Resource 9.6	Example: Four-Year Action Plan <b>Make It Local</b>   Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district; then remove this callout.
Student Resource 9.7	Worksheet: Four-Year Action Plan <b>Make It Local</b>   Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district; then remove this callout.

Student Resource 9.1

## Example: Cornell Notes

**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). Then remove this callout and re-save the file before distributing it to students.

Name: Jose del Campos

Date: January 12, 2012

Teacher: Ms. Hwang

Class: Plan Ahead

Topic
Truancy

Questions/Main Ideas	Notes
What does "truancy" mean?	Missing school without permission
Why is it a big deal?	Kids who cut school a lot are more likely to drop out (3 out of 4).
	Dropouts -- more likely to be in jail (75%) or murdered (94%)
	It's actually a law that kids are supposed to be in school.
Why does it matter if I'm late for class?	If you're more than 30 minutes late, that's a "tardy."

Questions/Main Ideas	Notes
	3 tardies = 1 unexcused absence
	3 unexcused absences = legal definition of being "truant"
What happens if a kid is truant?	Parents can get in trouble.
	Parents may have to pay fines or go to jail.
	The D.A.'s office prosecutes parents of habitual truants.
What happens if a parent goes to truancy court?	They can work with the district and court, plead guilty and pay a fine, or plead not guilty and present their case in court.
What happens if they work with the District?	They have to participate in a Parent Responsibility Plan to help their kid get back on track with school.
What if they plead guilty?	They pay a fine and it goes on their criminal record.
Does anything happen to the student if they're truant?	Older students (like us) face consequences.
	Consequences include fines, community service, and losing your driver's license (or delaying getting it).

### Summary

Being truant is a big deal. Kids who are frequently truant are more likely to

drop out, and drop outs are more likely to end up in jail or even dead. Truancy

also includes being late for class a lot (30 or more minutes late). If a kid is

truant, the parents can get into trouble with the D.A. and have to go to court.

They may have to pay fines or even go to jail. Kids who are truant can have to

pay fines, do community service, or lose or delay their chance to get a driver's

license.

Student Resource 9.2

## Reading: School Challenges

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### Reuben

"I was never a good student," Reuben says. "I don't remember a teacher ever saying something nice about me. I didn't act up or anything, but I just wasn't into school. I got bored real fast. After classes were over, I hung out and roamed around the city with my friends. I never did homework. And I didn't read well—I got held back in sixth grade because my teacher said I couldn't read at all. I could, but it took so long that I usually just gave up."

By the time Reuben's family moved to this country, Reuben had made a habit out of cutting school. "I must have missed about half my first semester of high school," he says. Instead he discovered a new talent: basketball. He played for hours every day and got good at it really fast.

One day, Reuben ditched school to go play basketball at the court nearby. But this time he got caught—the basketball coach saw him shooting hoops, right in the middle of the school day. "I thought he was going to call the cops, or at least my mom. But he just wanted to talk.

"He said he wished I was on the team at school. I tried to blow him off and said being on a school team was lame, but he didn't listen. He said they were raising money to go to a summer program with some NBA players, but the team was still pretty weak. They needed a good point guard—and I would be good at that position. But he said I couldn't join the team if I didn't show up for school.

"I told him if I showed up, I'd probably flunk all the tests. He said he had a hard time with school, too, and we started talking about it. He said he had a learning disability, which made it hard for him to read. A lot of what he said sounded like what happened to me.

"I kept skipping school, but Coach would show up more often and bug me about it. He asked me to read something for him and then talk about it. Afterwards, he said he knew somebody who might be able to help me."

The school basketball team was very successful with their fundraising, and they were almost guaranteed to go to that NBA workshop. "Coach told me if I met with this lady after school and did some tests, he might be able to get me on the team. So I went."

The lady was a learning specialist. Reuben was diagnosed with dyslexia and several other learning differences. "The lady explained that there were things I could do differently to help with my reading and other schoolwork. I got extra time to do my assignments, and they got a tutor who met with me during study hall. School still wasn't much fun, but I was able to keep up with my classes better. And Coach got me on the basketball team, so that helped.

"Now I'm in my senior year of high school. I wouldn't say I love school, but it's gotten better. I had to take summer classes to catch up on the stuff I missed, but next year I'm going to go to community college. I'm going to help pay for it by helping to coach a summer basketball camp.

"Where I come from, people don't get tested and teachers don't try to get through to kids like me. I know lots of people who dropped out of school. Coach was the only one who showed me a different way to go. Maybe I can do that for somebody else someday."

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## Sarah

"I already have more education than anyone else in my family," Sarah says, "and I'm only a sophomore in high school." Sarah's parents and grandparents run a small restaurant. "My mom quit school as soon as she could, to help her parents run the restaurant. My dad grew up in another country where there was a lot of violence, so he almost never went to school there, and by the time he got to America, he was already old enough to work."

Sarah's parents sent her and her older brother to school, but they were usually too busy to help them much with their homework. Sarah was a pretty good student, but her older brother was too wild to do well in school. "He got into trouble really early and had to spend time in juvenile hall. Once he got out, he went right back to his old friends and got in trouble again."

Last year, her brother was arrested again—and convicted. He's an adult now, so it's a prison sentence of at least five years. "My parents are angry, but they're also worried. They were hoping my brother would start behaving himself better. They needed his help with the restaurant. Now that's he gone, they've started depending on me. Since they didn't go to school very much, they don't see what the big deal is."

"I mean, this is my family's business, so they say I should just start working in it now and someday I'll own it. Owning a business is fine and everything, but I don't want to spend my whole life in the restaurant. But what can I do? My parents get me up in the morning and take me straight to the restaurant. Sometimes I could sneak out to go to class, but my dad and grandparents don't speak much English, so they want me to stay around to take people's orders or answer the phone. I've been absent so much the school marked me as a dropout. I'm not even sure they'll let me back in if I went to class now. I don't know what to do."

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## Brittany

"I did pretty well in school," Brittany said. "I liked English class—I like to read and I enjoyed writing poetry, although essays were kind of a pain. Math was the worst, but at least the teacher was cool."

Brittany got okay grades, but outside of school, things weren't going well. Brittany's mom worked two jobs to pay the bills, and her dad wasn't around much. After school, Brittany could pretty much do what she wanted, and she did. In her sophomore year, she started dating a guy who ran with one of the local gangs. "I knew he had a bad rep, but he was sweet to me," she says. "He took me out and gave me presents."

Brittany found out she was pregnant only a few days before her 17th birthday. "I was freaked out. I knew my mom would be really mad at me, and I wasn't sure how my boyfriend would feel. At first, I didn't even think about school."

Brittany's mom was angry, but agreed to help her figure out how to take care of the baby. Her boyfriend said he was okay with it, but he didn't spend as much time with her as he used to. "By the time I was six months pregnant, I almost never saw him," Brittany says. "Then my friends told me they saw him at the movies with another girl." Brittany knew she would have to raise her baby without his help.

"I went to school as long as I could," Brittany said. "But I didn't finish junior year." In fact, Brittany's daughter was born the same weekend as the school's junior prom. "All my friends were out partying—they didn't even find out I had the baby till a couple of days later."

"I wanted to go back to school, but I couldn't figure out how to do it. My mom needed both jobs even more now, because she was paying for the baby, too. And a baby takes a lot of attention—somebody has to be with her all the time. I couldn't afford to send her to a day care or anything, so I just stayed home with her. Some of my friends thought it was cool—they thought I sat around and watched TV all the time, but it wasn't like that. I had a lot of work to do around the house, just trying to take care of the baby. She cried a lot, and I didn't get much sleep for the first six months or so. Honestly, it was easier going to school."

Brittany missed most of her senior year staying home to take care of the baby. One day she was out buying diapers when she saw someone she knew. Sofia had been a year ahead of her in school. But Brittany was surprised to see Sofia shopping in the diaper aisle with two kids—a baby in a stroller and a little boy who was running up and down the aisle. Sofia remembered her and the two of them started talking.

It turned out that Sofia had also dropped out of school when she got pregnant with her first child. "But I thought you graduated," Brittany said. "Didn't I see you at the ceremony?"

"Yeah, I got to graduate. My dad found this program that helps young mothers. This organization runs a day care center, and the price is really low. But they won't take your kids unless you can prove you're going to school full-time, and you have to take these classes on the weekend about how to be a good mom. I managed to graduate from high school and I signed up to take classes to be a medical assistant. I had to drop out of that program when my daughter was born, but I'm going back soon, and I'm going to use that same day care program again."

"That sounds great," Brittany said. "Could I sign up for something like that?"

"Sure. I'm leaving my kids there tomorrow so I can meet with my advisor at the junior college. Want to come along? I'll introduce you to the woman in charge."

The next day Brittany met the women who run the day care center. She got her daughter signed up for day care, and soon she was back in school again. “It was weird, going back to school after so much time off,” she said, “and I don’t get to do anything fun, like go to dances or stuff like that. I have to spend time with my daughter and I’m signed up for these parenting classes on the weekend. But I’m on track to graduate in the spring, only a year behind my classmates. And I’m talking to Sofia about her medical assistant classes. I’m not sure if I want to do that or not, but I know I’ve got to get a good job so I can take care of my daughter.”

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## Marcus

“My mom did drugs for pretty much my whole life,” Marcus said. “My grandma raised me and my little sisters, because sometimes my mom would be fine, but other times, she was really messed up. Grandma worked really hard to help us in school and keep us on a good path. I tried to do well in school, but it was hard to concentrate. My mom would show up every few months and say she wanted us back and she and my grandma would get in loud arguments. Sometimes I stayed up all night, listening to them argue and trying to calm down my sisters. They were scared of my mom.”

But things got even worse when Marcus was nine. “My grandma passed away and we all ended up back with my mom. She was trying to clean up and take care of us, but that didn’t last very long and we ended up in foster care.”

After all this, school seemed pretty unimportant. “I kept going to school for awhile, because that’s what my grandma would have wanted, but I didn’t like it. The foster care people didn’t really care what I did, as long as I didn’t bug them too much, so I started skipping school. At first, I just skipped once in awhile, but the teachers didn’t seem to notice, so I started to ditch more and more. By the time I was 13, I’d pretty much dropped out.”

When Marcus was 15, his mother passed away. “She overdosed,” Marcus says. “I guess I should have seen it coming, but it really shook me up. I’d tried drugs once or twice, but after what happened to my mom, I never did again.”

Marcus decided something had to change. He made an appointment with his foster care social worker. “The social worker talked to me about my mom. He said he knew things had been rough and that maybe I’d made some mistakes, but this was a chance to start over and do things differently. I knew what he was talking about. The counselor helped me transfer to a school in a different neighborhood, so I could get away from some of the people I’d been hanging out with. It was scary to think about making such a big change, but I knew I needed to do it.”

Marcus started going to his new school regularly. “I realized that I could do better in school if I just showed up every day. I went up to some of my teachers and explained a little bit about what happened before. They were pretty nice about it and a couple of them gave me extra assignments I could do to get caught up. I went to an afterschool program that helped me do better, too.” Marcus has finished his first two years of high school and is hoping to earn a 3.0 GPA next year for the first time ever.



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## Juliana

"My mom got pregnant with me when she was 15," Juliana says. "She managed to put herself through beauty school and got a job as a hair stylist. She got pregnant again when I was five years old, and again when I was 13. Between the new babies and trying to keep her job, she didn't have much time for me."

"I hated school. The lessons were boring. I don't think the teachers wanted to be there any more than we did. I knew I was pretty smart. I read a lot of books, and I used to get into these great conversations with this older woman who lived in our apartment building. She used to be a lawyer and we'd get into these long talks about politics and stuff. That was interesting. But we didn't have interesting talks like that in school.

"I have to babysit my little sisters at night when my mom goes out, and she goes out a lot. I didn't get a lot of sleep and I never got my homework done. I caught up on sleep in my morning classes, and my grades got even worse. The school sent letters home to tell my mom, but I'm the one who picks up the mail, so I just pulled them out before she could see them."

Juliana was on the verge of dropping out of school when she had an important talk with her neighbor. "She saw me throw out one of the school letters and she asked me about school and how I was doing. I told her all about it: how boring school was, how the teachers were mean, and how I was too tired to care about the stuff they were teaching anyway.

"I thought she was going to argue with me, but she just listened. When I finished complaining, she asked me one question: what did I want to do with my life? I just shrugged—I don't know what I want to do. She said maybe I needed to think about it. She said she thought I had a lot of potential, but I had to figure out what to do with it."

That conversation got Juliana thinking. "I hadn't thought much about a job or life after school. But I don't want to be like my mom—I know that. I realized that if I just slept through class all the time, I wasn't getting any more of an education than my mom got. That was kind of scary."

Juliana knew she had to make a change. "I figured the first thing was to start trying to get more sleep. I talked to my mom about it and she agreed to stay home more often or get someone else to take care of my sisters. Just being awake in class helped me do better on some of my homework, and I started making more time to do it. Now when I get home from school, I do my homework first before I turn the TV on. My neighbor invited me to come over and use her computer when I need it, so that makes it easier to do some assignments.

"I still don't like a lot of my classes, but this year my history teacher is pretty good. He also runs the debate team after school, and he convinced me to try that. It's really fun—a lot like the discussions I used to have with my neighbor. We meet after school a couple of times a week to get ready for our competitions, and the teacher has a really strict rule: if you didn't go to class that day, you can't come to practice. Sometimes, that's the only thing that gets me up in the morning—knowing that if I put up with my classes, I get to go to practice after school. But I know I'm going to have to do well in school so that I can have a better life. That's the most important thing to me right now."

### Student Resource 9.3

## Reading and Practice: Setting Goals

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read about goal setting and do the practice questions included in the reading. Examples are provided. You will use this approach to goal setting as you create your Four-Year Action Plan later in this lesson.

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### Setting Goals: What's the Point?

No matter how old we are, it's important to have a vision in mind of how we want our lives to be. Once you picture something you want, you can make a plan to achieve it. Goals can start as distant dreams (to become a doctor, to travel to Africa, to own a business). Or goals can be more like immediate wishes (to get a B in English, to make the basketball team). When you set a goal, you are giving yourself something to work toward and focus your efforts on, and that gives your life direction.

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### The DAPPS Rule

To really motivate you, a goal needs to have certain qualities. A tool you can use to help you set motivating goals is called the DAPPS rule. DAPPS stands for:

**Dated:** Motivating goals have specific time frames. **Short-term goals** are usually one month to a semester; **long-term goals** might be one year, four years, 10 years, etc.

#### Practice

*A short-term goal is something you can accomplish within this semester.*

*Examples: I want to make the JV soccer team; I want to get a B on my big science project; I want to get on the honor roll; I want to be in the school play; I want to run for Student Council.*

**Your turn: write down one short-term goal you could set for this semester:**

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*A long-term goal is something you want to accomplish that is a year or more away. For example, all of you have a goal to graduate from high school.*

*Other examples: I want to go to college; I want to get a job as a veterinary technician; I want to move out of my mom's apartment; I want to buy a car.*

**Your turn: write down one long-term goal (besides graduating from high school) you could set for yourself:**

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**Achievable:** Goals that you find really motivating are challenging but achievable. It's unrealistic to plan to run a marathon in a month if the only exercise you've been getting is lifting the TV remote. It's more realistic to set a goal to be able to run a mile in a month's time.

### Practice

*Olivia wants to be the star in the school play. But she's never been in a play in her entire life! It's unrealistic for her to expect to get the lead in the next school play. She needs to set realistic, smaller goals that will help her reach her bigger goal. For example, she might set a goal to get any role, even a small one, in the next play. She might set a goal to take a drama class next year. She might join the drama club at her school so she gets practice. These are achievable goals that can help her eventually achieve her big goal of being the star!*

**Your turn:** write down one (or more) achievable goals for yourself. **HINT:** Achievable goals can be smaller steps to help you achieve one of your long-term goals. For example, if your overall goal is to get on the honor roll before you graduate, one achievable goal might be to raise your GPA this semester from a 2.0 to a 2.5.

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**Personal:** Motivating goals must be meaningful and valuable to you, not someone else. Your relatives might mean well when they talk about how you are going to become a doctor; but if you have no interest at all in becoming a doctor, you will not be motivated to reach this goal.

**Positive:** Motivating goals focus your energy and thoughts on what you *do* want, not what you *don't* want. Instead of a negative goal "not to fail math," set a positive goal "to get a B or higher in math."

### Practice

**Revise these example goals so that they are positive, not negative.**

Negative Goal: Not to be the only one of my friends still stuck on the JV team

Positive Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Goal: Not to flunk any of my finals

Positive Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific:** Motivating goals are specific so that you have definite ways to tell when you meet them. It's not enough to say, "My goal is to do better this semester" or "My goal is to work harder." How will you know you've achieved it? What measureable evidence will you have? To truly motivate you, your goals need to be specific: "I will complete every assignment in math class this semester to the best of my ability and ask for help when I don't understand something" or "I will complete all of my graduation requirements by the end of senior year so that I will receive my high school diploma in 20\_\_\_\_."

## Practice

*Take one of your goals and revise it so it is more specific.*

*Example: I want to go to college. Possible revisions: I want to go to Harvard: I want to go to our local community college; I want to go to an SEC school.*

**Your turn:** write down your original goal, and then write down one or more revised versions that are more specific.

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## Starting with the End in Mind

Travelers use maps to locate their destination and figure out the best route to get there. In a similar way, people who set goals find that sketching out smaller steps, also known as an **action plan**, helps them to stay focused. If your goal is to graduate from high school, it will help if you create a four-year plan that will show you which classes and tests you will need to take every year in order to meet your graduation requirements.

Having goals doesn't mean that you can't change what you want out of life as you grow and mature or that life won't throw you some curveballs, but it does mean that *you* will always be responsible for your life's direction.

Student Resource 9.5

## Planner: Preparing My Four-Year Action Plan

**Make It Local** | Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district; then remove this callout and re-save the file before distributing it to students.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** You are going to create a four-year action plan that will help you achieve your goal to graduate from high school. To help you organize your action plan, complete the following prompts.

### PART I. Graduation as a DAPPS Goal

I will graduate from high school in \_\_\_\_\_.

Graduating from high school is important to me because:

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This is a positive goal for me because:

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To pass all of my courses with a C or better, and to accomplish the other steps toward my goal to graduate, I need to take care of myself and stay focused. Specific steps I can take to help keep myself on track are:

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## PART II. My Graduation Requirements

Use Student Resource 9.4, Graduation Requirements, your school's course listings, and any other information your teacher provides to fill in the following charts on required courses. Be sure to note if any course you plan to take is AP or Honors.

1. I need a minimum of four years of English classes. I plan to take:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		
12th		

2. I need a minimum of three years of math classes. I plan to take:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		
12th		

3. I need a minimum of two years of lab science classes. I plan to take:

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GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		
12th		

4. I need a minimum of three years of social science/history classes. I plan to take:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		
12th		

5. I need at least two years of the same language other than English. I plan to take:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		
12th		

6. I need at least one year of the same visual or performing arts class. I plan to take:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		

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12th		
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7. I need at least one year of an advanced course in math, arts, English, lab science, language other than English, or social science/history. I plan to take:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		
12th		

8. In addition to the a-g required courses above, I have to take the CAHSEE in the spring semester of 10th grade. I also need to take one semester of college and career prep and one semester of health education. Finally, I have to take two years of physical education. I plan to complete these requirements by taking:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th	<b>Plan Ahead</b>	
10th		CAHSEE
11th		
12th		

9. Some of the co-curricular activities (sports, clubs, community service, etc.) I plan to get involved in are:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th		



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12th		

10. In addition to the PSAT, the other college entrance tests I plan to take are:

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
9th		
10th		
11th	PSAT	
12th		

Student Resource 9.6

## Example: Four-Year Action Plan

**Make It Local** | Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district; then remove this callout and re-save the file before distributing it to students.

Student Name: Melavia Stravinski

Date: November 15, 2012

Course/Activity	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
English ("b")	English 9	English 10	American Lit.	European Lit.
Math ("c")	Geometry (Hon.)	Adv. Alg. (Hon.)	Statistics (AP)	Calculus (AP)
Science ("d")	Biology Hon.	Chemistry (Hon.)	Environmental Science	Physics (AP)
History/Soc. Sci. ("a")		*Modern World (also fulfills g)	US History (AP)	Econ (Fall) US Gov (Spring)
Language Other Than English ("e")	Chinese 1	Chinese 2	Chinese 3	
Visual and Performing Arts ("f")			Art 1 (Fall) Art 2 (Spring)	
Electives ("g")		*Modern World		Journalism
College and Career	<b>Plan Ahead</b>			
Health Education	Health			
Physical Education	PE			
Required Tests		CAHSEE		
College Admissions Tests		Practice PSAT PLAN	PSAT (Fall) SAT (Spring) ACT (Spring)	Re-take SAT (?) SAT Subject Tests

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Co-Curricular Activities	Basketball Chinese New Year parade float	Basketball	Basketball Prom Committee	Basketball
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Student Resource 9.7

## Worksheet: Four-Year Action Plan

**Make It Local** | Modify the action plan based on graduation requirements for your school or district; then remove this callout and re-save the file before distributing it to students.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Use the information from your planner to complete your Four-Year Action Plan. Note the assessment criteria on the next page to understand how your work will be assessed.

Course/Activity	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
English ("b")				
Math ("c")				
Science ("d")				
History/Soc. Sci. ("a")				
Language Other Than English ("e")				
Visual and Performing Arts ("f")				
Electives ("g")				
College and Career				
Health Education				
Physical Education				
Required Tests				
College Admissions Tests				

Co-Curricular Activities				
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After you have completed your four-year action plan, check to make sure it meets or exceeds the following assessment criteria:

- The four-year action plan meets all a-g requirements in a logical order.
- The four-year action plan maps when all other graduation requirements will be met, including required courses and tests, according to a realistic timetable.
- The four-year action plan contains co-curricular activities that show a willingness to participate in a range of activities or a strong commitment to specific activities (such as sports or music).
- The four-year action plan includes college admissions tests, scheduled for the appropriate academic years.
- The four-year action plan is comprehensive, neat, legible, and presentable.