

HIGH SCHOOL TERMINOLOGY

Academics – usually refer to those classes that are liberal or classical rather than technical or vocational.

Accelerated program – faster paced classes; usually related to classes targeted at the college-bound student.

Advanced Placement Program – college-level classes in various subjects, usually for juniors and seniors, taken to prepare for Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. AP exams are administered by the College Board. Homeschoolers can take the exams without taking a class, but have to register for the exam with the College Board. Colleges may grant credit or advanced standing to students who pass the test.

Apprenticeship – Employment and study under an experienced person, traditionally in a trade or skill

Class/course – a particular course of study, like Algebra I or Tennis.

Class – a group of students who are projected to graduate in the same year – “The Class of 2012.”

Class rank – The relative numerical position of a student in his or her graduating class, calculated by the high school on the basis of grade-point average. Homeschoolers are usually either at the top or bottom of their class as they are “one out of one.”

College-preparatory program – Courses in academic subjects (English, history and social studies, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and the arts) that stress preparation for college study.

Credit – Recognition of attendance or performance in a course or program that can be applied by a student toward the requirements for a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award. It can be considered “payment earned” for passing a class. It is common for a high school to grant one credit for passing one year long course.

Course Catalog – a listing of classes and description of classes offered by a school or program.

Diploma – a document or certificate indicating the successful completion of a required set of criteria. A diploma is usually granted by a high school upon successfully passing a certain number of credits and passing specific required classes. Home schools are recognized by the state of Minnesota as being legitimate programs, but do not have to follow the graduation standards set by the state for public schools. Parents issue the diploma to their home educated students when they graduate from high school.

Extracurricular – activities or classes that are not part of the school day. It is a dilemma for some home educated students to delineate between regular and extracurricular classes and activities, as they may believe that all activities and classes are part of the school day (which never ends!).

Elective – classes that are not required by the school or institution, but are chosen by the student. Thus, an elective can be Pre-calculus, golf, or advanced oil painting.

Grade –

9th, first year, freshman

10th, second year, sophomore

11th, third year, junior

12th, fourth year, senior

Grade/mark / score – a letter (i.e. A, B, C, D, F), number (e.g. 87%), or other mark (pass/fail) indicating the relative quality of a student's work.

Grade-point average (academic high school GPA) – The sum of grade points a student has earned in secondary school divided by the number of courses taken. The most common system of assigning numbers to grades gives four points for an A, three points for a B, two points for a C, one point for a D, and no points for a F. Un-weighted GPAs/assign the same weight to each course. Weighting gives students additional points for their grades in advanced or honors courses (typically five points for an A, four for a B, etc.)

Honors program – Any special program for very able students offering the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these.

Job-shadowing – Spending a short time (usually a few hours or a day) with a person in a career that a student wants to explore. This is a valuable experience for high school students!

Post-secondary education – Any education after high school.

Post-secondary Enrollment Options program (Minnesota; other states may call it Dual Credit) – the opportunity for a high school junior or senior to take classes at a public or private college, on campus or through distance education. The student must qualify under the particular college's PSEO requirements. In Minnesota tuition and books are paid for by the state.

Prerequisite – In education, a prerequisite is a class or condition that is necessary before a class can be taken.

Portfolio – a collection of materials or projects demonstrating what a student has learned in a particular class or activity.

Requirement – In education, a requirement is something that must happen or a class that must be taken in order to graduate.

Schedule – A student's program of classes, including days and times.

Syllabus – the outline of expectations of a particular course.

School term – How the school year is divided; the amount of time for the duration of a set of classes or a grading period.

Semester – two terms a year; **Trimester**- three terms a year; **Quarter** – four terms a year

Transcript – A record of all courses taken and grades earned in high school, prepared by the school or homeschool parent.

Vocation – a job or career

Vocational Training – specific instruction pertaining to a job or career

Selected Terminology for College Preparation

ACT – college entrance exam administered through ACT and which tests English, math, reading and science. The writing exam is optional.

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Financial aid application required for all federal student aid programs.

Financial aid – The package of loans, grants and work-study that is offered to each college-bound student who completes the FAFSA.

Loan – An amount of money borrowed and that must be paid back.

PSAT (Preliminary-SAT) – This is a practice test for those juniors and sophomores who wish to take the SATs. It also is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program. The PSAT is offered on two pre-determined dates in October.

SAT I – College entrance exam administered through the College Board, which tests Language Arts, Mathematics, and Writing Skills.

SAT II – specific subject tests, each administered by the College Board. These achievement tests are often used for admissions and placement purposes by a small number of highly competitive colleges.

Scholarship/grants – A financial or merit award that does not have to be paid back.