

High School BASICS

Brought to you by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority



Keep your after-high school options open

Everybody should at least think about getting some education past high school. It can be at a technical school or a two-year college. It doesn't have to mean four years at a big university — there are lots of options out there to help you get the skills you need to succeed in the workplace and in life.

Don't limit yourself. You might change your mind next year, or five or ten years from now. That's why you need to do your best now — you never know what might happen or what opportunities might come your way. You need to be ready.

In high school, you'll hear terms like credit, GPA and transcript. If you understand what they mean, you'll be in better shape for whatever you want to do after high school.



What are credits?

A credit is what you earn for passing a class. In most cases, you earn 1 credit if you pass a class that lasts a year and 1/2 credit for a class that lasts one semester (like PE or Health). If you're in a public school, the state requires you to have so many credits in certain areas to get your diploma. You have minimum diploma requirements, which are the absolute least you can do to graduate. Then you have the Pre-College Curriculum, which outlines the types of classes that four-year public universities in Kentucky expect you to have taken before you can enroll.

You're better off if you start with Pre-College Curriculum courses now, even if you don't think you'll go to a four-year college. Like we said, you might change your mind. Here are the requirements:

Subject	Minimum Diploma Requirements Source: Kentucky Department of Education	Pre-College Curriculum Source: Council on Postsecondary Education
Language Arts	4 credits: English I, II, III and IV. Students must take language arts all four years of high school ¹	Same as minimum high school graduation requirements.
Mathematics	3 credits: Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II ²	Same as minimum high school graduation requirements.
Science	3 credits that must incorporate lab-based scientific investigation experiences and include content about biological, physical, earth, and space science, and underlying concepts	Same as minimum high school graduation requirements.
Social Studies	3 credits that include content about U.S. history, economics, government, world geography and world civilization	Same as minimum high school graduation requirements.
Health	1/2 credit that includes content about individual well-being, consumer decisions, personal and mental wellness, community services	Same as minimum high school graduation requirements.
Physical Education	1/2 credit that includes content about personal wellness, psychomotor, lifetime activity	Same as minimum high school graduation requirements.
History and Appreciation of Visual and Performing Arts	1 credit: history and appreciation of visual and performing arts or a standards-based specialized arts course	Same as minimum high school graduation requirements.
Foreign Language		2 credits of a single world language or demonstrated competency
Electives	7 credits, 4 of which must be standards-based	7 credits

In addition to high school graduation credits, students must demonstrate competency in technology. Beginning with the 2018–2019 school year, all students graduating with a regular diploma must pass a civics test before graduation. Students who enter high school beginning in 2020 will have to meet a financial literacy requirement.

¹ A public school student who does not meet the English/language arts or math college readiness benchmarks set by the Council on Postsecondary Education must take a basic English or math course if they attend a public college or university in Kentucky.

² A public school student must take a math course or its equivalent each year of high school. Instead of a fourth math course, a district may allow a student to substitute an occupational or technical course that prepares a student for a career path based on the student's ILP if the course meets the content standards in the Kentucky core academic standards.

Calculating your GPA

GPA stands for grade-point average. It's based on your grades divided by the number of credits you take. Here's how it works:

Let's assume your freshman year you take English, science, geometry, social studies, agriculture (all 1 credit each), plus health and PE (1/2 credit each) for a total of 6 credits. That year you get a B in English, a C in science and geometry, a D in social studies and an A in everything else. To calculate your GPA, letter grades are assigned a number value (see the Grade Key below) which is multiplied by the number of credits per class.

English:	1.0 credit	x	3.0 points	=	3.0 points
Science:	1.0 credit	x	2.0 points	=	2.0 points
Geometry:	1.0 credit	x	2.0 points	=	2.0 points
Social Studies:	1.0 credit	x	1.0 points	=	1.0 points
Agriculture:	1.0 credit	x	4.0 points	=	4.0 points
PE:	0.5 credit	x	4.0 points	=	2.0 points
Health:	0.5 credit	x	4.0 points	=	2.0 points
Total	6.0 credits				16.0 points

Grade Key	
Grade	Points
A	4.0
B	3.0
C	2.0
D	1.0
F	0.0

You then divide the total points, 16.0, by the total credits, 6.0, to find that your GPA for your freshman year is 2.67. As a sophomore you get three B's, two C's and one D. Your sophomore GPA is 2.33. But your cumulative GPA — which is based on all the grades in all the classes you've taken so far — is 2.5.

Then you get a summer job, and you realize that's what you'd really like to do for a living. But it takes a four-year college degree. You decide to buckle down in class, and you get all A's as a junior and senior. Unfortunately, you find that many scholarships are based on your cumulative GPA. The 2.67 your freshman year and 2.33 as a sophomore mean your cumulative GPA for four years of high school is 3.25. That's not bad, but it may cost you several thousand dollars in scholarships. That's money you'll have to pay out of your own pocket or have to borrow in student loans.

That's why it's important to do the best you can now!

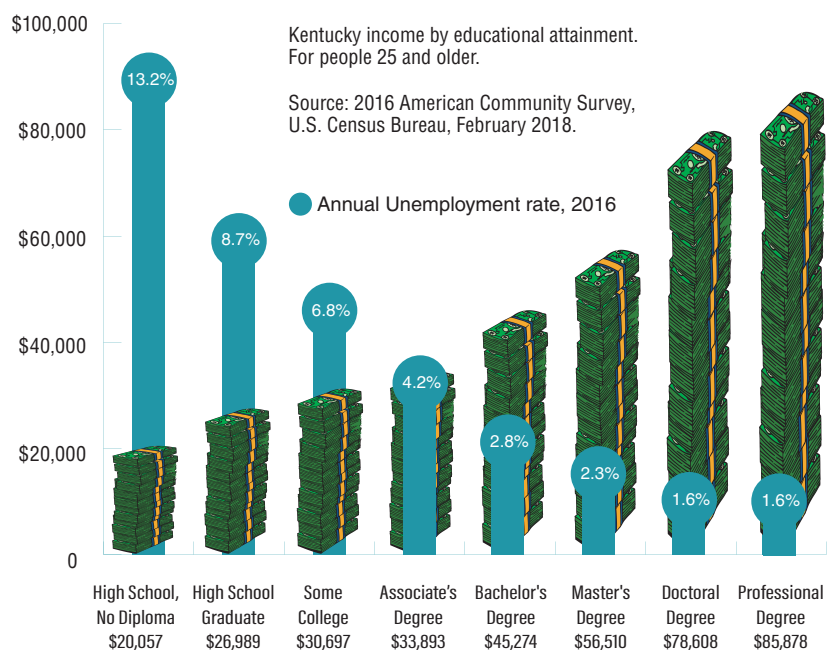
Working toward your diploma

The ultimate goal of high school is to receive your high school diploma. If you want to go to college, follow the Precollege Curriculum (see chart on page 1) when choosing your classes.

One way of helping yourself reach that goal is to make good use of your summer. It's a time to have fun and take a breather, but it's also a time you can get a head start on your fall classes. See if the school will let you borrow copies of the textbooks you'll be using when you go back in the fall. You don't have to read and remember each book, but setting time aside to get familiar with what you'll be studying can pay off big time.

The best way to do well in high school and prepare yourself for college is to read something more challenging than text messages and social media sites. No matter what you do in life, you'll have to read. That's especially true if your career goals mean getting some education after high school, whether that's a two-year degree, bachelor's degree or even higher.

HOW A COLLEGE DEGREE CAN STACK UP IN CASH



Understanding your transcript

The classes you take, the grades you get and your GPA are recorded on your transcript, along with your scores on tests like the PSAT and the ACT. Colleges look at your transcript when they decide how much financial aid to give you — or whether to admit you as a student in the first place.

A sample transcript is illustrated to the right. We haven't shown the top of the transcript. It will contain information about your school as well as your personal information: name, address, date of birth, gender and other data. Your transcript won't look exactly like this, but this should help you understand the type your school uses.

The weighted GPA includes any extra points earned for AP/IB classes. The AP Biology Class this student took as a junior gets a higher weight because it is more difficult than a normal high school class.

Many schools consider your weighted GPA for admissions and placement purposes but use the unweighted GPA when awarding scholarships.

Ask your counselor about Kentucky eTranscript, the quick and secure way to send your transcript to the colleges of your choice.

Earn college credit

Colleges and high schools work together to offer dual credit programs. With dual credit, you take courses which satisfy high school graduation requirements while earning college credit hours at the same time. Dual credit can put you ahead of the game and save you thousands of dollars in tuition, books and fees.

Kentucky's Dual Credit Scholarship Program is available to Kentucky high school students enrolled in dual credit courses through a participating Kentucky college or university. Students are eligible for up to two courses over their high school career. The award amount for 2018–2019 is \$56 per credit hour.

For more information about the Dual Credit Scholarship Program, visit the Paying for College section of kheaa.com.

Courses Taken 2018-2019 Grade 09

Course	Grade	GPA Value		
		Unweighted	Weighted	Credit
Soc. Studies	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
English I	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
Spanish I	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
Int. Science	A	4.0	4.0	1.00
Geometry	A	4.0	4.0	1.00
Health	A	2.0	2.0	0.50
Phys. Ed.	C	1.0	1.0	0.50
Total this year:		20.0	20.0	6.00
Unweighted GPA for 2018-2019:			3.33	
Weighted GPA for 2018-2019:			3.33	
Cumulative Unweighted GPA:			3.33	
Cumulative Weighted GPA:			3.33	

Courses Taken 2019-2020 Grade 10

Course	Grade	GPA Value		
		Unweighted	Weighted	Credit
World Civ.	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
English II	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
Spanish II	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
Biology	A	4.0	4.0	1.00
Algebra II	A	4.0	4.0	1.00
Arts & Hum.	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
Total this year:		20.0	20.0	6.00
Cumulative:		40.0	40.0	12.00
Unweighted GPA for 2019-2020:			3.33	
Weighted GPA for 2019-2020:			3.33	
Cumulative Unweighted GPA:			3.33	
Cumulative Weighted GPA:			3.33	

Courses Taken 2020-2021 Grade 11

Course	Grade	GPA Value		
		Unweighted	Weighted	Credit
U.S. History	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
English III	B	3.0	3.0	1.00
AP Biology	A	4.0	5.0	1.00
Chemistry	A	4.0	4.0	1.00
Trigonometry	A	4.0	4.0	1.00
Health Sciences	A	4.0	4.0	1.00
Total this year:		22.0	23.0	6.00
Cumulative:		62.0	63.0	18.00
Unweighted GPA for 2020-2021:			3.67	
Weighted GPA for 2020-2021:			3.83	
Cumulative Unweighted GPA:			3.44	
Cumulative Weighted GPA:			3.50	

Transcript Statistics

GPA Type	Class Rank
Weighted GPA	28 of 295
Unweighted GPA	39 of 295

KEES

During high school, you can earn money for college through the state’s Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program. After each year of high school, KHEAA will notify you if you have earned a KEES award.

KHEAA will also post KEES awards online at the end of each school year. You will have to create a user ID and password to look at your data at kheaa.com for the first time. If you don’t find a record or if your data is incorrect, tell your school counselor.

You may qualify for KEES if you earn a 2.5 GPA or better at the end of a high school year. If you have a composite score of at least a 15 on the ACT or 710 on the SAT and have earned at least one award based on your GPA, you can also earn a bonus award. Bonus awards range from \$36 to \$500.

Students who graduate after three full years in a certified Kentucky high school will earn a KEES Early Graduate award to make up for the missing fourth year. The award amount is averaged from your previous three years of KEES earnings and will be added to your total scholarship.

You don’t have to apply for your KEES award. It will be sent to your college when the school reports that you are enrolled. KEES awards are funded by Kentucky Lottery proceeds. For more information, see the KEES Frequently Asked Questions section on kheaa.com, call 800.928.8926, ext. 7395, or write kees@kheaa.com.

KEES Award Amounts

GPA	Bonus Amount	ACT Score	Bonus Amount
4.00	\$500	28 or above	\$500
3.90	\$475	27	\$464
3.80	\$450	26	\$428
3.75	\$437	25	\$393
3.70	\$425	24	\$357
3.60	\$400	23	\$321
3.50	\$375	22	\$286
3.40	\$350	21	\$250
3.30	\$325	20	\$214
3.25	\$312	19	\$179
3.20	\$300	18	\$143
3.10	\$275	17	\$107
3.00	\$250	16	\$71
2.90	\$225	15	\$36
2.80	\$200		
2.75	\$187		
2.70	\$175		
2.60	\$150		
2.50	\$125		

Amounts may change based on funding.

Earn even more money for your grades

If college may be in your future, you should check to see if your high school offers Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and/or Cambridge Advanced International (CAI) programs.

Students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches during *any year* of high school and make qualifying scores on AP, IB or CAI exams are eligible for bonus awards for exams. The chart at right shows the amounts that will be awarded for each score. There is no limit to the number of AP/IB/CAI bonus awards a student can receive.

AP, IB and CAI let you get a taste of college work because they are taught more like college courses. If you score well on AP, IB or CAI exams, you may also earn college credits before you graduate from high school, saving you time and money.

Students eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch

AP Exam Score	IB Exam Score	CAI Exam Score	Amount
5	7	a*, a, b	\$300
4	6	c, d	\$250
3	5	e	\$200

Visit kheaa.com to check your KEES account. Click on the Sign In button



at top right. Access or create your free MyKHEAA account, which you can use to apply for scholarships, access the KHEAA ILP and request “Getting the Facts” — an individual breakdown of college costs and estimated financial aid.



KHEAA.COM



KHEAA is the state agency that administers KEES and other financial aid programs and provides free information about college planning and financial aid.