

It's Not Too Soon

Congratulations--as eighth graders, you are the student leaders in your middle school. Next year you will go to high school, beginning the last leg of your journey through public education. Many eighth graders do not know that today is not too soon to begin thinking about what lies beyond high school. Will you go to college, vocational school, or the military? Will you seek employment? And will you be ready for these options?



Years ago, there were many good jobs available to young people with a high school diploma. Men and women were needed to build bridges, pave roads, and work in offices and factories using only the skills they had learned in high school. But that has changed. Today, many (if not most) well-paying jobs require some training after high school. Whether you decide to go to college, business school, or a training program, mastering certain skills before you go will help you.

One of these skills is note taking. What are the secrets to good note taking? Good note takers keep their notes neat and organized. If you can't read your notes the next day, they will not help you much! Second, to take good notes you must listen well and identify the main ideas—you won't be able to write down everything your teacher says, or copy all the details from the textbook. It's also helpful to use personal shorthand: abbreviations and symbols that allow you to write faster, like @ for "at" or → for "important!" Finally, good note takers go back to their notes and add cues or key words in the margin to help them study later. They may also summarize the main points at the bottom of the page.

