

HOMESCHOOL COLLEGE USA'S Curriculum for High Schoolers

Please note: This document is aimed at students who are looking for curriculum that can be used to meet the requirements for high school graduation. If you are an adult learner who never finished high school, you may find the information contained within helpful if you have decided to earn your GED (http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/test/Intro_TestTaker.htm).

1. HOW THIS PROGRAM WORKS:

The curriculum provided by Homeschool College USA (HC USA) is not a standard step-by-step plan. It is a guideline with free resources found on the internet. The suggested High School Courses (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/highschool/index.html>) are not mandatory, but highly recommended as they will provide a good foundation as a college-prep education.

It is also recommended that the student follow these courses as they are listed. While there is leeway with electives such as art appreciation and ethics, it is important that the core classes - maths, sciences, histories, and language arts - be done in the correct order to ensure that the student is prepared for each level.

HC USA is NOT an accredited school. It does not issue transcripts or diplomas. Students under 18 who use HC USA are considered homeschoolers and must be certain they are abiding with the laws of accountability that govern their states. (<http://www.hslda.org/laws/default.asp>).

The idea behind HC USA is pretty simple. If you are going to study any particular course, such as world history, in order to graduate high school, why not tailor your studies to a corresponding college-level exam when possible, and earn college credit for your hard work? While some courses, like drawing, don't necessarily lend themselves to this style of schooling, there are many subjects that do. It is possible, in fact, to earn a college degree – an Associate's or even Bachelor's – entirely through testing and exams from an accredited college. The three best known schools for using credit by exams are Excelsior (<https://www.excelsior.edu/>), Thomas Edison College (<http://www.tesc.edu/>), and Charter Oak State College (<http://www.charteroak.edu/>).

There are several benefits to following this program. The first: You save time. By combining much of your high school required studies with college-level exam prep, you can drastically reduce the amount of time it will take for you to earn your college degree.

The second: You save money. Getting a traditional college degree costs many thousands of dollars – money you may not have. Rather than getting yourself locked into a burdensome loan that takes years or even decades to pay off, you can earn your degree for a fraction of the typical costs. In addition, you only pay for each college-level exam when you are ready to take it. This means you do not have to have all the required fees up front. You can expect to pay about \$100 - \$150 per test, depending on the type of test and where you take it. Your largest single expense will be your college fees, such as enrollment and graduation fees. You can expect a final total of somewhere around \$8500 - \$10,000 for a bachelor's degree. It may be less; this is a conservative estimate. Broken down over four years, this is \$177 - \$208 per month. If you are old enough to get a job, you can start earning this money yourself, even working part-time.

The third: You can work around a schedule that suits YOU. According to some studies the "traditional" method of public school education is actually only truly effective for 1 in 6 students. Another 3 students can manage in this method "adequately" while the remaining 2 are at a distinct disadvantage because the system works against their particular abilities/needs. In part, this is due to differing learning styles. It is also simple human nature. Some people do well with balancing multiple studies/courses at once, others don't. Some people are "morning" people, others aren't. If the traditional 8:00 – 3:00, Monday – Friday, 6-class schedule doesn't work for you, you don't have to follow it. You can choose to study only one or two classes intensively at a time. You may complete school work on weekends and take a few week days off. You might prefer to do the bulk of your studies in the evening. Whatever schedule you choose, it can and should be the one that works best for you.

The fourth: Each course presented at HC USA gives several primary sources and additional resources for you to learn from. If you find one online textbook or website is not working for you, you can switch to another. In a regular school setting, you have no choice in this matter. You are stuck with the textbook your teacher or school assigns you, whether you are benefiting from it or not.

Even if you are not planning on taking any college-level exams at this time, you can still follow the same courses. For one, things may change for you in the future, where testing may become a viable option, and two, you will still achieve a good high-school level education.

2. WHERE TO START:

You need to begin with reading several files.

High School Courses (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/highschool/index.html>) – This file lists the recommended courses.

HS Courses Alternative (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/examsdegree.pdf>) – This document is an example of courses a student can take to earn a college degree from Excelsior College by examination. At the bottom, you will find a list of which of these courses could be used to concurrently earn a high school diploma. This course of study varies somewhat from the general recommended list. Keep in mind, all of the courses on this list are college-level. If you are a high school freshman, they may be above your current abilities. *Also note – this document is ONLY AN EXAMPLE. If you are interested in earning a bachelor's degree from Excelsior, you should speak with an academic counselor to put together an official course of study that will meet all requirements for graduation.*

The Supplies List (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/supplies.pdf>) This is a short list of the supplies you will need. Mostly, they are the same supplies you would purchase to attend a public school.

Study Journals (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/studyjournals1.pdf>) As you will be responsible for your own education, keeping a study journal for each course is extremely important.

Getting Started (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/gettingstarted.pdf>) A short guide that details where to begin and how to put together an official Record of Study.

3. DESIGNING YOUR STUDY SCHEDULE:

The courses at HC USA do not come with detailed lesson plans. You are provided with several free resources and a short, recommended study program. It is up to you how, when, and how long you will work on any given subject. Most of the courses have at least one downloadable textbook. You should keep a copy on your hard drive and make a back-up on a CD or flashdrive. (This is VERY important. Websites tend to come and go on the internet and you may find that a site you're using is suddenly missing-in-action half-way through your studies. It is advisable when beginning a course to download as much as possible of all the materials you intend to use.)

Start by making a general plan. You may want to use a quarter form (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/quarterplanner.pdf>) to sketch out how much of each subject you want to cover each week. For instance, you may list certain units, chapters, or sections of a textbook you plan to read through-out a certain week.

Next, make a regular weekly schedule. This is where you will detail which courses you will study on what days. (<http://www.homeschoolcollegeusa.com/weeklyplanner.pdf>). You may want to study each of your subjects daily, or you may choose to study only certain courses on certain days, such as western civilizations on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and computer technology on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

It is important that you also set "finish" goals for yourself – a deadline for when you want to have completed a given course. While not set-in-stone, it helps to have a set date when determining how much content you need to study per week and how much time you should devote to it. If you plan on taking any college-level exams, you may want to coordinate your studies with certain exam dates. Locate your local testing centers in order to get exam schedules.

CLEP Locations: http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_clep/searchCLEPTestCenter.jsp

ECE (Excelsior) Locations:

https://www.excelsior.edu/Excelsior_College/Excelsior_College_Examinations/Registering_f_or_Excelsior_College_Exams

DDST (Dantes) Locations: <http://www.getcollegecredit.com/search.html>

See this for TECEP exams: <http://www.tesc.edu/701.php>

Take the time now to put together your study journals for each course you will be starting, your record of study notebook, and your quarter and weekly schedules. Download all materials that you can and you are ready to begin.

Remember: Consistency is the key to success. Make a vow to stick with your studies on a regular schedule and you will see positive progress. You CAN do this!

Final note: If your state has specific requirements, such as reading lists or attendance logs, you can find more free forms at the Donna Young website. (<http://www.donnayoung.org>)