

Grade 7 Overview

For many students, grade 7 marks the transition to middle school. This can mean a whole range of adjustments – from interacting with students from outside their own neighborhoods to taking responsibility for their learning as they move from class to class. Several 7th-grade units focus on skills needed for academic success in this new environment.

Study Skills

A Time and Place to Study. The what, when, where, and how of effective studying.

Note-taking. How are notes used in the work world? Students look at the notes of waiters and wedding planners, doctors and landscapers, then practice techniques for taking notes in class.

Studying for Tests. How to review information presented in class, figure out what’s important, and memorize key facts.

Short-Term Planning. Making lists, prioritizing, and estimating time requirements help students make sure they accomplish their goals.

Stress Management. Yes, middle school can be stressful. In this workshop, students talk about healthy ways of dealing with it.

Grow Your Intelligence

Students learn about the structure of the brain and study recent research that supports the “growth” mindset: that intelligence can be improved through effort and practice. Students study examples of extraordinary achievement – including the legendary basketball skills of Michael Jordan and the mathematical accomplishments of students from Garfield High School in East L.A. Students compare how they currently spend their time with skills they’d like to improve in the future, and examine the effects of stereotyping on their own aspirations. (Based on the malleability of intelligence research of Dr. Carol Dweck and Dr. Lisa Blackwell and the stereotype threat research of Dr. Joshua Aronson and Dr. Claude Steele.)

Careers

Career exploration and education planning are at the heart of Roads to Success. Through a Roads to Success site license with Career Cruising, students take an interest inventory on the web, then research the career of their choice and present it at a 7th-grade Career Fair. Students also consider Bureau of Labor statistics that show the relationship between education and earnings (as well as the inverse correlation between education and unemployment).

Financial Education

Lessons on budgeting and “being a smart consumer” show students how planning can help them reach their goals.

Values and Success

Students consider what’s important to them and how their values might impact their career and education plans.

Grade 8 Overview

Careers

8th-graders continue to explore careers using the interest inventory and profiles found on Career Cruising, focusing on job description, working conditions, education needed, and the likes and dislikes of people working in the field.

High School Planning

Goal-setting and decision-making strategies are taught in the context of selecting courses for high school.

Education After High School

Students are introduced to the range of post-secondary options, from apprenticeships to 4-year colleges, and beyond. They learn how to evaluate 1- and 2-year programs, and develop a list of colleges of interest, choosing one to research in more detail.

Communication and Networking

8th-graders make their first foray into workplace communication. How is business phone and e-mail communication different from conversation with friends? Who's in their personal network and how can friends and acquaintances connect them with jobs? What kinds of questions yield information about business opportunities?

Community Makeover Challenge

In a multi-week unit, students identify a community problem and create a proposal for its solution. At each school, a panel of judges reviews proposals, with the winning class receiving up to \$500 to make their plan a reality.

Financial Ed

How far could a \$60 weekly paycheck stretch if you had a part-time job? Students allocate their hypothetical resources and are faced with unplanned-for dilemmas like buying an expensive pair of sneakers and replacing a lost CD. In a separate lesson, they figure out how long it would take to save for an I-pod, a year of community college, or another big-ticket item.

Grade 9 Overview

Careers

9th-graders are introduced to the idea of matching their skills and interests to career types. They use Career Cruising to explore job descriptions, earnings, and education needed for several careers, examine their personal values as they relate to the world of work, and review the daily activities of people who hold their favorite jobs.

Getting a Job

Students learn about jobs appropriate for 15- and 16-year-olds and the pros and cons of working while still in high school. They create an information card to assist in completing a job application, and practice interviewing skills. They discuss the expectations bosses have for employees and the things workers have a right to expect in return.

Education After High School

Students explore college entrance requirements and various forms of financial aid. They learn how employers and colleges use work experience and extracurricular activities to compare candidates. They discuss the pros and cons of going to college.

Financial Education

In this two-lesson unit, students take on the salaries and financial responsibilities of adult life. In week 1, students select careers obtainable with a high school education, then choose housing, transportation, and leisure options, attempting to create a balanced budget. In week 2, they try again, selecting careers from those requiring 2-year, 4-year, and graduate degrees.

Ad Apprentices

In this unit, students are charged with planning a 30-second videotaped public service announcement that conveys a key concept from Roads to Success. They work together in teams – analyzing existing public service announcements, selecting a topic, and figuring out what story they want to tell and how to tell it. The winning proposal is videotaped, edited, and made available for viewing on the Roads to Success website.

Grade 10 Overview

Careers

Career research continues to be a main theme. Students examine career outlooks for various fields and compare their own values, interests, and abilities with job requirements. They identify the characteristics of their ideal jobs, and make tentative career choices.

Finding a Job

Students explore the benefits of entry-level jobs, then survey local employers regarding qualities most desired in job candidates. Students identify their own workplace skills and give examples that demonstrate their acquisition of these skills. This unit concludes with mock interview participation and feedback.

Test Prep

Students discuss reasons to take the PSAT (or, where applicable, the ACT Plan) and review the types of questions included on the test. This unit also includes a review of sample post-secondary tests required for job placement and advancement, an illustration that reading and math skills are needed by both college- and workforce-bound students.

Education After High School

Students compare tech/trade school, community college, and 4-year college options, and get an overview of the path to college application and acceptance. Students compare their academic achievement with the proficiency required in their chosen fields, and set short-term goals for improvement as needed. Students list questions about college, and go on a campus visit to get them answered. The financial aid process is explored.

Money Matters

A senior-year scenario gives students a chance to consider some of the financial decisions they'll soon face: saving for school expenses, ATM/debit card use, credit card considerations, and reading the fine print in a contract.

Grade 11

In Grades 11 and 12, the focus shifts from exploration and self-discovery to identifying post-secondary training opportunities and completing the steps needed to access them.

Test Prep

Students receive information about the ACT and SAT, and become familiar with the format of the test most commonly taken in their region. One class period is spent working through sample problems together; another is devoted to online registration. A final lesson explores standardized tests commonly used in workforce development and employee screening: the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), and the ACT WorkKeys Foundational and Personal Assessments.

Job Shadow

In this project-based learning unit, students create resumes and cover letters, research companies, and practice informational interviewing skills. Workplace behavior – including everything from attire to office gossip to personal phone calls – is discussed. (Tie-tying instructions are provided.) This unit culminates in a structured visit to a workplace, complete with written employer feedback and the requisite thank-you note.

Education After High School

Students compare their district's high school graduation requirements, a list of recommended courses for college-bound students, and Career Cruising's list of suggested courses for their chosen careers. Based on this information, they select courses for their senior year. College majors are discussed. Two lessons are devoted to educational options other than 4-year colleges, including community colleges, tech and trade schools, apprenticeships, and the military. Students spend four lessons researching college using Peterson's college search tool and the College Board's Academic Tracker. College application and financial aid information is briefly reviewed.

Money Matters

Students consider the advantages and disadvantages of credit card use and the reasons why good credit is important. They investigate potential car purchases and the cost of buying, operating, and insuring a car. Finally, they examine cost and other considerations when renting an apartment and explore their rights and responsibilities as spelled out in a typical lease.

Grade 12

Grade 12 will focus on the activities students need to make the transition to the next step, whether it's college or career.

Your College/Work Application

Students spend five weeks writing a personal essay suitable for a college application or self-presentation during a job interview. This essay will serve as a way for students to crystallize their thoughts about what they have to offer the world, whether they're workforce- or college-bound. Students review their resumes, and receive instructions on requesting references and assembling information needed for a job or school application.

Financial Aid

Students conduct scholarship searches and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). They'll be provided with guidelines for comparing financial aid packages.

Getting Ready for the Workforce

Continuing the work begun in the Grade 11 Job Shadow unit, students practice the skills needed to successfully search for work. They'll focus on company research, interviewing techniques, and successful job-hunting strategies. All students will submit a Post-Graduation Action Plan that details next steps for college or career attainment.

“Freshman Year” Budget

Students create a budget based on their anticipated career or education path following graduation.

Next Steps

Students consider what it takes to get ahead in the workplace and make the most of their college experience.